



3.1.2011

## ERITREA Protest outside embassy in London calls for resignation of President Afewerki

Around 20 activists from the Eritrean diaspora in the United Kingdom held an impromptu demonstration outside the Eritrean Embassy in London yesterday, calling on the Eritrean president to stand down.

The "Isaias Must Go" protest was inspired by the popular uprisings that led to the departure of the presidents of Tunisia and Egypt. As the initially silent protestors held up banners listing the range of human rights violations underway in Eritrea and calling for the departure of President Isaias Afewerki and his regime, they met with smiles, thumbs up and offers of support and encouragement from passers-by and people in surrounding offices.

Elsa Chyrum of Human Rights Concern-Eritrea said, "The human rights situation in Eritrea is going from bad to worse. The people are suffering multiple abuses by the worst oppressor in Africa. He is unelected, there is no parliament, no independent media – the abuses are endless. We are here to say 'enough is enough', and we hope that Eritrean activists in other countries will join us to protest until this dictatorship is gone forever."

Another activist, Ibrahim Noor, concurred, informing CSW that the group was there to "protest the gross violations of human rights by the most brutal regime in East Africa, and to give a voice to the voiceless people of Eritrea." Several younger protestors also lamented the appalling human rights abuses in Eritrea, including arbitrary attention, rape of female army conscripts, torture and the indefinite military service regime, which they described as "slavery". "We need change, as simple as that. We need change - and rule of law," said one young activist.

Referring specifically to events in Egypt and Tunisia, Eritrean activist Damana Ismail told CSW, "I strongly believe that the Eritrea's turn is coming very soon and let us prepare for that day starting from now. We are going to protest until this man leaves the country".

CSW Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "CSW endorses the sentiments and aspirations of yesterday's protest and commends the organizers. The international community cannot continue to stand by as the Eritrean regime under President Isaias Afewerki perpetrates appalling human rights abuses against its own people. We are committed to working with all Eritrean citizens who are striving to see an end to this flagrant injustice, and to stand with them until all of Eritrea's citizens enjoy the rights and freedoms enshrined in the nation's constitution."

### **Notes to Editors:**

1. Photographs are available from the Press Office.