

Walta Information Center

Eritrean gov't detains Muslims for opposing interference in religion

Addis Ababa, February 16, 2007 (WIC) - Eritrean Muslims who expressed growing resistance against the government's appointment of their Muftih have been arrested and jailed, Compass Direct News said yesterday.

In reaction to open protests in the town of Keren, 55 Muslims were arrested and jailed.

According to local Muslims, the official pretext was that the arrested individuals had been detained on charges of either dodging their obligatory military service or helping their children flee the country to avoid military duty.

Since then, Keren sources have confirmed that at least 35 more Muslims have disappeared in the city and are presumed to be under arrest.

For more than a year, 69 Muslims have been incarcerated in "Wongel Mermera" for opposing the government-appointed Muftih.

They include Taha Mohammed Noor, a prominent national figure arrested in November 2005 for protesting government interference in the religious affairs of Eritrea's Muslim community, constituting nearly half the national population, Compass Direct stated.

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