

OPINION The Swedish journalist Dawit Isaak has been held prisoner in Eritrean for eight years - without committing any crime. The Swedish Union of Journalists demands his immediate release.



Eight years is a long time in the life of any man.

Eight years without seeing your children is a nightmare for any parent.

Only a felon has to face eight years in prison in a society governed by law.

No human being with any knowledge, empathy and humanity wants another human being to spend eight years in an Eritrean prison, whatever crime this person has committed.

Dawit Isaak has committed no crime at all. He has put into practice freedom of speech and freedom of the press - a work that every democracy values. He has not even broken Eritrean law. Freedom of the press is guaranteed in Eritrea since 1996.

Dawit Isaak is a Swedish citizen. He is a journalist, born in Eritrea in 1964. He was a member of the staff of the newspaper Setit, founded 1997. In 2001 Setit and other free newspapers were closed down and journalists as well as other staff arrested. Some of them are dead today. Some of them, like Dawit Isaak, are in prison or prison-camps since almost eight years without trial, without verdict.

The information from Eritrea is uncertain, sometimes contradictory and difficult to estimate the value of.

We know from prisoners that have survived Eritrean prisons and camps that the conditions are barbarous with no respect for life, health or dignity. Prisoners are kept in containers and left to die of thirst, starvation, cold, heat and assault.

We know that Dawit Isaak is a diabetic and suffers from high blood pressure.

We are deeply despaired by the fact that none of the work and none of the efforts in all these years has led to Dawit Isaak's release.

The information we have received the last weeks has increased our agony and concern and we believe that time is running out.

“Release Swedish journalist Dawit Isaak”

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During the last months the case of Dawit Isaak has drawn more attention in the Swedish media.

The Swedish Union of Journalists, Journalistförbundet, and the International Federation of Journalists will continue to work for the freedom of Dawit Isaak.

We hope for growing international attention to put pressure on the Eritrean government.

Now is the time to do everything and spare no efforts to get Dawit Isaak free, before it is too late.



Agneta Lindblom Hulthén

President of the [Swedish Union of Journalists](#)