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Eritrea: Situation of people returning after spending time abroad or seeking asylum or refugee status
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

According to an 8 January 2009 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report, in June 2008, Egypt returned as many as 1,200 Eritreans to Eritrea and as of December 2008 at least 740 of the returnees remained imprisoned in a military detention facility in Eritrea. The report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) provides details on several incidents where Egyptian authorities returned Eritreans to Eritrea, and indicates that Eritrean asylum seekers deported from Egypt face "detention and the risk of torture" in Eritrea (HRW 8 Jan. 2009). An undated report from Amnesty International (AI) USA states that refugees and asylum seekers from Eritrea are at "grave risk for detention, torture, and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" if deported to Eritrea. A 26 January 2009 AI USA report states that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has issued guidelines that oppose the return of unsuccessful Eritrean asylum seekers to Eritrea because of Eritrea's history of "human rights violations."

In 7 April 2009 correspondence, the Assistant Editor of the *World Refugee Survey*, the annual report of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), an organization that assists in the resettlement of refugees and the provision of services to immigrants in the United States (US), stated that Eritreans who requested asylum abroad after 1993 are "at risk of long-term imprisonment, torture, and other punishment" if involuntarily returned to Eritrea.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Amnesty International (AI) USA. 26 January 2009. "Egypt - Dozens of Eritrean Asylum-Seekers." <www.amnestyusa.org/actioncenter/actions/uaa34808.pdf> [Accessed 8 Apr. 2009]

_____. N.d. "Government Reformers, Journalists and Political Prisoners." <www.amnestyusa.org/all-countries/eritrea/more-on-eritrea/page.do?id=1551001> [Accessed 8 Apr. 2009]

Human Rights Watch (HRW). 8 January 2009. "Egypt: Stop Deporting Eritrean Asylum Seekers." <<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/01/08/egypt-stop-deporting-eritrean-asylum-seekers>> [Accessed 2 Apr. 2009)

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI). 7 April 2009. Correspondence from the Assistant Editor.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral source: A professor at the University of California in Los Angeles did not respond to a request for information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sources, including: Africa Research Bulletin, Afrol.com, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Center for Gender and Refugee Studies (CGRS), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Forced Migration Online (FMO), Freedom House, International Crisis Group, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Migration News, Refugee Council USA, Relief Web, United Kingdom Border Agency, United Nations (UN) Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), United States (US) Conference of Catholic Bishops - Migration and Refugee Services.

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