

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023



A community-led human rights organisation focused on Eritrea and Eritrean refugees registered in England and Wales (1198077)

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# WHO WE ARE

One Day Seyoum (ODS) is a community-led organisation focused on human rights abuses in Eritrea and against Eritrean refugees. We organise campaigns and publish research to push for change. We produce media, art and events to raise awareness about the issues we work on. We run support programmes helping Eritrean refugees with asylum-related issues, mental health and professional development. We organise capacity building initiatives to increase the strength of the movement.

A decade since its founding, ODS is one of the most prominent Eritrean human rights organisations in exile. We have over 500 members and combine virtual and in-person activities to achieve impact. Our membership mostly comprises of young people (18-35 years old) and are a mix of Eritrea and diaspora-born Eritreans, and allies. ODS focuses heavily on community engagement and has provided a unique space for people across the movement to learn and get involved.

We are regularly invited to speak and collaborate by institutions like the United Nations, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and news organisations like CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera.



# FOREWORD

2023 marked One Day Seyoum's ten year anniversary. It was a complicated anniversary, mixed with sadness of how the situation for Eritreans remain extremely dire; and with pride of the work we have accomplished and impact we still have managed to have. Ultimately, it was a reminder of the importance of tenacity. Whilst writing an impact report about our first decade, we were able to review and reflect on all of our work and see how much we have developed throughout the years. It is because of all those years and the lessons we have learnt that we now run the strong and impactful programmes we run and have the community that make it all possible. In the Eritrean context, real change is going to require a lot of time and we are more committed than ever to continue this work until we reach our goals, no matter how long that will take.

Last year we decided that One Day Seyoum needed to become a professional, funded and staffed organisation if we wanted to increase our impact. This journey continued to be a priority this year, with endless strategy planning meetings, paperwork and networking, all whilst still running our programmes.

The most exciting part of 2023 was witnessing the growth of the Eritrean human rights movement. When we started in 2013, the movement was relatively small. We have seen how it has slowly grown over the years and the biggest growth happened in 2023 due to the rise of young Eritrean survivors all over the world. Witnessing their anger and passion has filled us with both pride and inspiration. At the same time, many of their actions reminded us of the gaps in the movement that we urgently need to address if we want better results now and in the future. We had been building a capacity building programme since 2022 to address these issues and launched it in 2023 with a specific focus on the new young activists.

As we embark on a new decade, we are very excited to continue our mission and take our work to new heights. We are, as always, immensely grateful to all members, volunteers and supporters who make it all possible.

**Vanessa Tsehay**  
**Founder and Executive Director**



# ACTIVITIES

## Capacity Building Programme

Eritrea is the only country in Africa without any independent media and one of the only countries in the world without any independent civil society groups. All known critics of the government have either been unlawfully detained or fled the country. Anyone suspected of mobilising people or criticising the government risks detention without trial. Due to this severe censorship and repression, it is impossible for the local population to participate in any human rights campaigning without facing major risks to their safety. That is why all human rights campaigning is led by the Eritrean diaspora. However, the campaigning capacity in the Eritrean diaspora is limited. There are no professional and fully funded and staffed civil society groups. The country's most active campaigners are doing as much as they can in between full-time work commitments but have not received the necessary training or support to conduct strategic campaigning. This is having an impact on their mobilisation and advocacy efforts. As the human rights and humanitarian situation in Eritrea continues to deteriorate, the need for a robust and strategic civil society is stronger than ever. There is also a need to invest into youth campaigners, especially those who have fled Eritrea themselves, and help support the country's future leaders in civil society and politics.

This is why we decided to start a capacity building programme for Eritrean campaigners. The programme is a long term initiative with different components. In 2023, we launched the programme with a pilot activity in Kampala, Uganda that was conducted in partnership with Amnesty International. We organised a one-week in-person training for 15 Eritrean youth campaigners with lived experiences of the Eritrean dictatorship and migration. All participants lived in Kampala as refugees and were conducting their activism despite threats from supporters of the Eritrean government.

The training was divided into two parts. The first part focused on campaigning theory and tools. The participants were given group exercises throughout the sessions to properly engage with the material and apply it to their context. This part was led by an experienced campaigns trainer from Amnesty International with some sessions delivered by other Amnesty staff working on the topics. The second part was focused on practical examples from Eritrean campaigning to strengthen the participants' knowledge about the movement and give them ideas for their own work. One of the speakers in the second part was the esteemed activist Meron Estefanos.

The training was received with overwhelmingly positive feedback from the participants both in person and in a later post-training feedback form. They expressed that they have never experienced this kind of learning before, that the sessions were perfectly suited for their needs and that they wished to immediately continue the programme, even if it had to be online. Based on the feedback and our own reflections, we started planning the next activities of the programme.

# ACTIVITIES

## Advocacy

In 2023, we continued conducting high-level advocacy. Some of our public engagements included speeches by our executive director Vanessa Tsehay at the United Nations and at the European Union. In March, Vanessa was invited by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to speak about Eritrea at the UN Human Rights Council. Her speech focused on how tired she and the wider movement are of fighting for change and was widely circulated after being shared by the United Nations's official social media channels. In October, Vanessa was invited to speak at a roundtable about Eritrea at the European Parliament. Her speech focused on the European Union's complicity in the Eritrean human rights crisis.

## Campaign for Eritrean Refugees in Kenya

In November 2023, we started receiving reports about the treatment of Eritrean refugees by state authorities in Kenya. These reports were coming from different locations in the country and were indicating that groups of Eritrean refugees were not only denied access to asylum procedures, but also that the detention centres in which they are held are overcrowded and in poor and unsanitary conditions. The health of several Eritrean refugees had rapidly deteriorated as a result of these conditions.

We launched a public campaign and extensive casework on behalf of the detained groups in close association with their family members. We published a press release based on interviews with the detained, their lawyers and local organisations who were involved. We launched a social media campaign encouraging our community to target the Department of Refugee Services and Commissioner for Refugee Affairs. We instantly received a reply and we worked closely with the commissioners team to address the concerns.

## Fundraiser for Eritrean refugees fleeing the Sudan war

There were 75,000 Eritrean refugees living in Sudan's capital Khartoum when war broke out in April 2023. Many were unable to afford the inflated cost of bus tickets out of Khartoum. They were stranded in a war zone, terrified for their lives and lacking the most basic necessities. But even those who were able to scrape together enough money to purchase bus tickets are struggling. Even after reaching the safety of neighbouring towns, the refugees still encountered a lack of food, housing and medical support. International organisations which are supposed to support refugees have completely abandoned Eritreans caught in the middle of the war. The UNHCR only provided support to those who present themselves at one of their camps — but these camps are notorious for terrible living conditions, poor sanitation, lack of food and clean water, as well as limited medical support.

We came together with Eritrean activists in Sudan and in the diaspora to launch a fundraiser to support Eritrean refugees who had been affected by the war. We ran the public GoFundMe that raised 9400 GBP and also separately collected larger private donations that was channelled to the same fund. We published situation reports and personal testimonies and also spoke at online events to raise awareness about the situation and about how people can help. We worked with our members in Sudan to identify grantees and distribute the funds.

# ACTIVITIES

## **Legal case against harmful UK migration legislation (Nationality and Borders Act 2022)**

Section 12 of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, which came into force on 28th June 2022 changes how the United Kingdom's Home Office deals with asylum claims. Section 12 allows for 'differential treatment' of refugees, depending on how they came to the UK. When determining an asylum claim, the Home Office can deem someone a 'Group 1' or 'Group 2' refugee, depending on how they arrived into the UK. If, at the end of someone's case, the Home Office consider that they have not travelled 'directly' to the UK – they will be a Group 2 refugee.

Under the Nationality and Borders Act, you cannot have 'come directly' to the UK if you travelled through another country outside the UK, unless you can show that you could not reasonably be expected to have sought protection under the Refugee Convention in that country. If their asylum claim is accepted by the Home Office, 'Group 2' refugees get 2 ½ years status instead of 5. They would have reduced rights to reunite with their families, and would have to make four applications to eventually get settlement in the UK, instead of one.

In 2023, we supported a legal case challenging this section with an expert statement. The case argued that it is effectively impossible for the vast majority of Eritrean refugees to satisfy this criteria and this legislation is discriminatory because it will create a scenario whereby almost 100% of Eritrean refugees are 'second-class'. The case was successful but the legislation was overturned by the more harmful Illegal Migration Act 2023.

## **Campaign for Eritrean refugees getting kidnapped in Khartoum, Sudan**

In early 2022, we started receiving reports about Sudanese security officials kidnapping refugees off the streets of Sudan's capital Khartoum – sometimes even from their homes or workplaces. A vast majority of the affected refugees were Eritreans. We started documenting these cases - interviewing refugees who were still in detention and refugees who had been freed. Once we had collected enough information, we launched a public campaign calling on Sudanese authorities to immediately stop these kidnappings. We published our findings and launched a petition. We mobilised our community to raise awareness about the issue online and to sign and spread the petition.

We launched the campaign in 2022 and continued working on it until May 2023 when the war broke out and kidnappings stopped. Our focus then shifted to supporting Eritrean refugees who were affected by the war, as outlined in this report.

# ACTIVITIES

## **Campaign for Ciham Ali, a US-Eritrean national who has been imprisoned since 2012**

Ciham Ali is a US-Eritrean national born in Los Angeles and raised in Eritrea. On 8 December 2012, when she was just 15 years of age, she was arrested by the Eritrean authorities. 10 years later, she remains detained without ever having been tried or charged. Ciham has not had access to her family and lawyers since she was arrested. Her family does not even know where she is being held or her state of health. Under international law, this amounts to an enforced disappearance. Ciham was arrested at the border to Sudan as she tried to flee the country. This happened shortly after her father Ali Abdu, then a foreign minister in President Isaias Afwerki's government, defected and fled to exile. Despite being a US national, the US government has not intervened in her case. We believe that the complete silence and inactivity from the US government on behalf of their citizen has contributed to Ciham's continued detention by the Eritrean authorities.

We have actively campaigned for Ciham for several years, targeting a variety of political actors with ties to Ciham. In 2021, we launched the #FreeCiham campaign with Amnesty International specifically targeting United State secretary of state Antony Blinken. We mobilised support for the campaign through a petition and started organising online and in-person events to raise awareness about her case and increase support for the campaign. The aim of the campaign was also to show solidarity with Ciham and her loved ones. We also started a lobbying campaign in DC alongside the mobilisation efforts. We continued these activities in 2023. Our key public action was a campaign and an event for her birthday where we used the occasion to raise awareness about her online, gather people involved in the campaign or interested in learning more in the event.

## **Birthday campaigns for Eritrean political prisoners**

Petros Solomon was formerly Eritrea's Minister of Foreign Affairs and one of the critics imprisoned without trial in 2001. His wife Aster Yohannes, who was studying in the US at the time of his detention, flew back to be with their kids but was immediately taken from the airport and also imprisoned without trial. Neither of them have been seen since. Their birthdays fall in the same week and we ran a campaign with their daughter Hanna Petros to highlight their cases on social media.



# ACTIVITIES

## **Eritrean festival protests**

We have organised several campaigns and protests against the Eritrean pro-government festivals that are organised every year in cities across the world. In 2023, these protests were led by the Brigade Nehamedu movement. They received global press coverage due to the violence that had broken out at all of the protests. However, the news coverage was often inaccurate and harmful due to the lack of understanding about the Eritrean context. We ran a media and social media campaign to help shape the narrative about the protests and protestors. We did several press interviews, including in Sweden and Canada, and ran a social media campaign that managed to engage a large audience.

## **Events and Conferences**

We regularly attend and speak at events to raise awareness about the issues we work on and to foster connections that can help us further our mission. Our executive director gave the keynote speech at ERISAT's annual symposium in Los Angeles. ERISAT is an Eritrean TV channel that transmits into Eritrea using satellite, circumventing the government's ban on independent media. She also spoke at a panel discussion in Frankfurt, Germany, organised by United4Eritrea (an Eritrean human rights organisation based in Germany). The discussion focused on the current state of the movement. We also attended several international conferences, such as the African Drive for Democracy in Arusha, Tanzania and the Oslo Freedom Forum in Oslo, Norway.

## **Community mobilisation:**

Having a large, informed and motivated community is essential to us. It makes it possible for us to do more work, as we have more individuals volunteering in our team. It also makes our work more successful - as we have more individuals taking action with our campaigns and sharing our informative content online. Our membership is free and offers a space for Eritreans and allies who want to, learn more about human rights issues affecting Eritreans, get to know like-minded people passionate about human rights and Eritrea, stay informed about our initiatives and support in any way you want, work directly with our teams when they have time and get trainings on skills beneficial to the movement. In 2023, we continued to grow and foster our community through our membership. We organised regular members meetings, sent out members newsletter, organised training sessions on campaigning and recruited new members online. By the end of 2023, we had 490 members in over 150 cities worldwide.



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Our total income was 8358.98 GBP. This came from our Sudan fundraiser and magazine sales.

Our expenditure was 18729.32 GBP. These costs covered our relief work in Sudan, costs for freelancers, travel costs and all logistical costs (website, domains and email etc). Since a vast majority of the income only was for our relief work in Sudan, we used the reserves from the previous year to cover all other expenses.

Our remaining cash funds at the end of the financial year were 7683.75 GBP.

# GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Our governing document is a 'constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose only voting members are its charity trustees.

There must be at least three charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. The maximum number of charity trustees is 10. The charity trustees may not appoint any charity trustee if as a result the number of charity trustees would exceed the maximum.

Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed [for a term of 2 years] by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

A charity trustee ceases to hold office if he or she: (a) retires by notifying the CIO in writing (but only if enough charity trustees will remain in office when the notice of resignation takes effect to form a quorum for meetings); (b) is absent without the permission of the charity trustees from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the trustees resolve that his or her office be vacated; (c) dies; (d) in the written opinion, given to the company, of a registered medical practitioner treating that person, has become physically or mentally incapable of acting as a director and may remain so for more than three months; (e) is disqualified from acting as a charity trustee by virtue of sections 178-180 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision).

Any person retiring as a charity trustee is eligible for reappointment.

# TRUSTEES

**During the period 2023, the following persons were trustees:**

Andom Ghebreghiorgis - Appointed as trustee on 28/02/2022.

Haben Fecadu - Appointed as trustee on 28/02/2022.

Andrew Gregg - Appointed as trustee on 28/02/2022.

Vanessa Tsehay - Appointed as trustee on 28/02/2022, resigned on 20/02/2023.



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

One Day Seyoum

1198077

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

01/01/2023

To

31/12/2023

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
	59	8,300	-	8,359	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b> (Gross income for AR)	59	8,300	-	8,359	-
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total receipts</b>	59	8,300	-	8,359	-
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Domain	10	-	-	10	10
Website hosting	558	-	-	558	482
Sudan relief work		2,001	-	2,001	-
Email marketing service	125	-	-	125	-
Freelancers	15,625	-	-	15,625	-
Travel expenses	410	-	-	410	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	16,728	2,001	-	18,729	492
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	16,728	2,001	-	18,729	492
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	- 16,669	6,299	-	- 10,370	- 492
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	- 16,669	6,299	-	- 10,370	- 492

### Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Funds from Sudan fundraiser		5,124	-
	Remaining cash funds from 2023 and 2024	2,559	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	2,559	5,124	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account (s))	Agreement Error	Agreement Error	OK





		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	Details			
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Details			
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	Details			
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Haben Fecadu	26 / 11 / 2024
	Andrew Gregg	27 / 11 / 2024

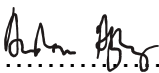
# TRUSTEE DECLARATIONS

## Declarations


The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees.

Andom Ghebreghiorgis

Signature .....  ..... Date 02 / 12 / 2024 .....

Haben Fecadu

Signature .....  ..... Date 26 / 11 / 2024 .....

Andrew Gregg

Signature .....  ..... Date 15 / 12 / 2024 .....