

Eritrean radio station gets award

On June 6, the London-based charity World One Media presented Radio Erena with an award on behalf of their commitment to reporting Eritrean politics, social issues, and local culture in the face of great adversity.



Biniam Simon of Radio Erena.

Eritrea is a country located on the horn of Africa, bordered by Sudan, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Since President Afewerki came to power in 1993, crimes of enslavement, imprisonment, torture, rape, murder, and other inhumane acts have been committed as a part of a campaign to instill fear in the Eritrean people [according to the United Nations Human Rights Council \(UNHRC\)](#).

[According to an estimate](#) by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), between 4,000 and 5,000 Eritreans flee their country each month.

Here's why you may not have heard about it says Reporters Without Borders:

- Independent media has not existed in Eritrea since 2001, when President Isaias Afewerki ordered an intense crackdown on all media outlets, democratic institutions, and opposition-led movements.
- Eritrea ranks 179th out of 180 on RSF's 2017 [World Press Freedom Index](#).
- At least 11 journalists are currently detained in Eritrea according to [RSF's barometer](#), including [Dawit Isaak](#), who has been in prison for 16 years.
- At least [seven journalists have died](#) in detention since their imprisonment.

In response to the media crackdown in Eritrea, *Radio Erena* was launched in 2009 with the support of RSF, and remains the only independent source of information accessible to Eritreans. *Radio Erena* is a Paris-based radio station which produces daily coverage of Eritrean and international news, as well as cultural, societal, political, and entertainment programs. The station gives Eritreans an outlet of information that differs from the media imposed on them by President Isaias.

Radio Erena was created by Biniam Simon, a journalist who fled Eritrea for France in 2007 in search of an outlet to provide fellow Eritreans independently reported news. With the support of RSF, Simon launched *Radio Erena* two years later.

“We at RSF have made a commitment to defend press freedom all over the world. Though Eritrea may not be a part of our daily rhetoric, it has a population of over 4 million people. This means that over 4 million people are being deprived of independently reported news every day.”

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