

# CASE STUDY

## ESKINDER NEGA



### JAILED FOR CRITICISING THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT

Eskinder Nega is a journalist and blogger from Ethiopia who has been sentenced to 18 years in prison.

Eskinder was arrested in September 2011 after making speeches and writing articles criticising the government and calling for freedom of expression to be respected.

The Ethiopian authorities claim that Eskinder is in detention for breaking the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation law and not as a result of his work as a journalist. They say that his detention is in no way a violation of his freedom of expression, but punishment for breaking the law. However, they do not give any evidence to support their claim.

Amnesty International considers Eskinder to be a prisoner of conscience. A prisoner of conscience is someone who has neither used nor advocated violence and who has been jailed solely because of their beliefs, origins or status.

### PRESS FREEDOM IN ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia the same political party has ruled for more than twenty-five years.

Most media outlets are connected with the government and there have been repeated crackdowns on free speech, private media and independent reporting and analysis.

The Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, the law that Eskinder was convicted of breaking, is frequently used to silence dissenting voices in Ethiopia. Since its introduction in 2009, the law has been used to prosecute members of opposition political parties, independent journalists and peaceful protesters more than any other groups.



(R-L) Eskinder Nega, baby son Nafkot and wife Serkalem Fasil  
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'Maybe this could be the year when freedom of expression and association will be respected ... Maybe this could be the year when Ethiopians will no more be imprisoned for their political convictions.'

**Eskinder Nega, days before his arrest**

### TAKE ACTION

Using activity sheet 5 write an appeal letter to the Ethiopian prime minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, asking him to release Eskinder and for the government to stop imprisoning and harassing journalists, and others, simply for exercising their right to free speech.

Start your letter: Dear Prime Minister,

Using activity sheet 4 write a solidarity letter to Eskinder's wife Serkalem, letting her know that you support her and her family and that you have written to the prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn about Eskinder's case.

Start your letter: Dear Serkalem,

Find out more about Amnesty International and free speech at [www.amnesty.org.uk/freespeech](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/freespeech)