



Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change  
Chairman of the Executive Office

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### **STATEMENT TO THE PRESS**

The EPDJ regime has, since accession to power in Eritrea, been violating the dignity of our citizens, and desecrating the traditions and cultures of our society. As a matter of fact, we have been continuously exposing the injustice and cruelties the regime has been committing against our spiritual leaders.

Consistent with its dictatorial behavior, thus, the regime has been keeping in detention His Holiness Abuna Antonius, the legitimate patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Eritrea; the whole world is very well aware of this fact.

In the past few days, information coming from inside the country confirms that His Holiness has fallen sick and his condition is worrisome. The inhuman treatment to which this highly regarded spiritual leader has been subjected to is a clear manifestation of the oppressive nature of the regime that has been shamelessly disrespecting the faiths of our people.

The Executive Office of the Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change demands immediate freedom for His Holiness so that he would regain his rightful place among his compatriots from other faiths who have been loud in raising their voices. Indeed, this is an historic moment facing the entire people of Eritrea, Christians and Muslims in unison, to firmly condemn this heinous action of the regime.

Moreover, we strongly call on all governments and human rights organizations to accord the condition of His Holiness the weight it deserves and put meaningful pressure on the dictatorial regime.

The Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change  
Executive Office

30 January 2012.