

## Eritrean Patriarch Abune Antonios (m)

**Adoption Status:** Not Adopted

**Country:** Eritrea

**Occupation:** Head of the Eritrean Orthodox Church and spiritual leader of more than two-million people.

**Detained Since:** May 27, 2007

**Charges:** N/A

**Sentence:** N/A



**Additional:** Patriarch Antonios was deposed by the government in 2006 and placed under house arrest after he protested the Eritrean Department of Religious Affairs' interference in his church's affairs. In January 2005, the Patriarch's annual Nativity message was not broadcast or televised and the Eritrean Holy Synod met in August 2005 with the main purpose of removing all executive authority from the Patriarch. He was allowed to officiate at church services but prohibited from having any administrative role in church affairs. Among the accusations brought against the Patriarch, were his reluctance to excommunicate 3,000 members of the Medhane Alem, an Orthodox Sunday School movement and his demands that the government release imprisoned Christians accused of treason.

In January 2006, he was officially removed from his position as head of the Eritrean Orthodox Church and spiritual leader of more than two-million persons and placed under house arrest. On May 27, 2007, the government installed Bishop Dioscoros of Mendefera as the new Patriarch. That same day, Abune Antonios was forcibly removed from his residence and transported to an undisclosed location. Since then, he has been prevented from communicating with the outside world and reportedly denied medical care.

**Not Adopted**