






When Will the Eritrean Dictator elect a pope for his regime?

The Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Tigrinya: ቤተ ክርስቲያን ተዋህዶ ኤርትራ⁽¹⁾) is one of the Oriental Orthodox Churches with its headquarters in Asmara, Eritrea. Its autocephaly⁽²⁾ was recognised by Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria, Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church, after Eritrea gained its independence from Ethiopia in 1993 ⁽³⁾. The first Patriarch of Eritrea was Abune Phillipos (1901-2002), who was appointed by Pope Shenouda on 7 May 1999 but was succeeded by Abune Yacob.⁽⁴⁾

So, in general, what can be said is that the two current institutions of Eritrea, the state and the church, institutions that do not yet know the eight parts of speech in Tigriyna, have coexisted since 1901. The first The Patriarch of Eritrea who tried to keep the church away from being armed by the dictatorial government of Isaias Afwerki against the Eritrean people was Abune Antonios. Because of this he not only lost his job but also paid his dear life. As we see in "Brief Biographies of Our Patriarchs", he is a martyr not only for his religion but also for justice. This highly responsible father (in all sense) will always be remembered and regarded as a hero of justice and religious leader by the Eritrean people and history.

Now the question is: when will the Eritrean dictator directly or indirectly elect a patriarch of Eritrea? And his henchmen, the priest Habtom Russom Habte and the layman Yoftahe Dimetros Gebre-mariam,... will they continue or be replaced by someone remains to be seen.

	I. Abune Merkorios from May 1988 -1991		II. Abune Paulos from 1992 to his death in 2012	III. Abune Phillipos from 7 or 8 May 1998 - 27 September 2001	
	IV. Abune Yacob from 4 December 2022- 1 December 2003		V. Abune Antonios from 23 April 2004- 2006		VI. Abune Dioskoros from 13 June 2021 - 2 December 2022

Footnote

- (1) እታ ኤርትራዊት ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ (ተዋሐድ) ክርስቲያንቤት not ቤተ ክርስቲያን ተዋህዶ ኤርትራ)
- (2) autocephaly f.n. ኣውቶቶፋልያ autocefalia (እታ ትሕድርቲ/ናብራ ናይ ግብቡእ ናይ ሓንቲ ክርስቲያንቤት ትገዝእ ካብ ባዕላ La condizione giuridica di una Chiesa che si governi da sé)
- (3) (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church)
- (4) Twitter | Facebook | Contact: info@britishorthodox.org | RSS Feed | © The British Orthodox Church 2019 all rights reserved Privacy Policy | Registered charity number: 267387

Short biographies of our patriarchs all according to Wikipedia

- I. **Abune Merkorios** (born Ze-Libanos Fanta; 14 June 1938 – 3 March 2022[1]) was an Ethiopian bishop and the fourth Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church,

elected after the death of Abuna Takla Haymanot in [May 1988](#). Merkorios remained Patriarch for three years until [1991](#), when the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) overthrew the Communist military junta known as Derg in Addis Ababa.[2] After spending almost three decades living in exile, he was allowed to return to Addis Ababa and be recognized as Patriarch alongside Abune Mathias.[3]



. Abune Merkorios' tenure of Archbishop of Gondar included the period known as the "Red Terror" in Ethiopia, and which was carried out with particular brutality in the town and province of Gondar under the governorship of Melaku Teferra, a particularly notorious member of the Derg. Abune Merkorios would later face accusations of not only having kept silent during the horrors of the "Red Terror" in Gondar, but of having a particularly close relationship with Governor Melaku.

Abune Merkorios was ousted by EPRDF regime in 1991, particularly on the orders of then Prime Minister Tamrat Layne.

[...] The following year he fled to Kenya, later relocating to the United States in 1997, where churches had begun to secede from the synod in Ethiopia following the leadership of Abuna Yesehaq. These churches formed a synod in exile and eventually both synods were mutually excommunicated.[3]

[...] With the encouragement of the newly elected Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, On 1 August 2018, Abune Merkorios entered Ethiopia for the first time in 26 years, flying together with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

On 4 March 2022, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced Abune Merkorios death.

- II. **Abune Paulos** (born Gebremedhin Woldeyohannes; 3 November 1936 – 16 August 2012)[1] was an Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Patriarch from [1992](#) to his death in [2012](#). His full title was "His Holiness Abuna Paulos, Fifth Patriarch of the Orthodox Tewahido Church of Ethiopia, Ichege of the see of Saint Tekle Haymanot, Archbishop of Axum and one of the seven serving Presidents of the World Council of Churches." Abune Paulos was a scholar and peace advocate and a former exile in the United States who has worked on reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea.



- III. **His Holiness Abune Phillipos**: He was born in [Endadeko](#), Ighelehames, Akeleguzay, Eritrea and began his religious training at the Debre Bizen Monastery at the age of eleven, and took monastic and priestly vows there. He was raised to the rank of Bishop and then Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church at Addis Ababa, but then left that church to join the Eritrean Synod when the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church broke away from the Ethiopian church upon the independence of Eritrea. He was elevated to the rank of Patriarch of Eritrea in [7 or 8 May 1999](#). Term ended [27 September 2001](#). Phillipos died after a long illness on September 18, 2002 at Asmara and was buried at the Debre Bizen Monastery. He was succeeded by Yacob. Installed

- IV. **Abune Yacob** (5 July 1924 – 1 December 2003) [Installed 4 December 2002. Term ended 1 December 2003] was the second patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo

Church. Born, raised and ordained in Eritrea, initially he had been made an archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and had even served briefly as locum tenens (acting patriarch) of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church following the abdication of Patriarch Merkorios in 1991. However, following the split of the Eritrean Orthodox Church from the Ethiopian Church, he moved to the Eritrean synod as a native Eritrean. He succeeded Phillipos, the first patriarch of the church, after the autocephaly of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church was recognised in 1994. He reigned only briefly before his death on 1 December 2003. He was succeeded by Antonios.



- V. **Abune Antonios** (Tigrinya: ኣቡነ ኣንጦንዮስ; 12 July 1927 – 9 February 2022) was the third Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church. He was appointed **23 April 2004**. And he was illegally and forcefully deposed by the Eritrean government in **2006**, and was placed under house arrest thereafter. My tweet of 7.12.22



Abune Antonios, born July 12, 1927 in Hemberti village, Hamasien province, is Zerai Deres in our time? Emily Bontrager's article of February 15, 2022 provides part of the answer: "Abune Antonios, Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church and a prisoner of conscience for 16 years, died on Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at the age of 94. For 16 years, Antonios had been held in solitary confinement for opposing government interference within the

Eritrean Orthodox Church. While he was patriarch, Antonios refused the Eritrean government's order to excommunicate 3,000 government opponents. He also demanded "that the government release imprisoned Christians accused of treason," according to the Human Rights Commission."

Vocabulary building

1. to excommunicate TRANSITIVE VERB ገዝተው scomunicare e.g. Martin Luther was excommunicated by the Pope

ማርቲን ሉተር ነበረ ግዝተው ብ እቲ ጳጳስ Martin Lutero fu scomunicato dal papa

2. treason MASCULINE NOUN ክሕደት (ክሐደ), ክድዓት (ክድዐ), ጥልመት (ጣለመ)

tradimento. E.g. high treason በርረኽ/ ነዊሕ ክሕደት/ክድዓት/ጥልመት alto tradimento

- VI. His Holiness Abune Dioskoros
Abune Dioskoros (born Dioskoros Hagos Mendefera; 1935 – 21 December 2015) was the fourth Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church, appointed in April 2007. Term ended **21 December 2015**.

Bishop

Born in 1935, Dioskoros was consecrated as bishop of the **Seraye** district in the feast of Pentecost on 19 May 1994 by Coptic Orthodox Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria. In 2004 he was transferred to the Diocese of the South West, where was a ruling bishop until his disputed election as the head of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church on 19 April 2007.

Patriarch

Dioskoros' appointment was made possible because the regime in Eritrea changed the rules for the appointment, so that the Holy Synod of the church could assign a layman to be the new Patriarch. The removal of Antonios (1927-2022), the former legal Patriarch, at the behest of the Eritrean government was denounced by Coptic Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church who have refused to recognize Dioskoros as legitimate Patriarch of Eritrea, as did several Eritrean churches, particularly in the diaspora, which continued to endorse his predecessor.



In October 2014 the Union of Eritrean Monasteries issued a decree excommunicating Dioskoros' governmental allies, the priest Habtom Russom Habte and the layman Yoftahe Dimetros Gebremariam, citing a long list of alleged abuses during their administration during Dioskoros' reign. However, Dioskoros was not directly excommunicated in the process. The Eritrean Government accused several monks of being a major force behind the excommunication letter. A number of the monks allegedly involved decided to escape and take refuge in Ethiopia.

Dioskoros died on 21 December 2015. Since his death, the position of patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church fell vacant until 2021, with the election of Qerlos.[8]

VII. **Abune Qerlos** (1928 – 2 December 2022) was the **fifth Patriarch** of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

Appointed **13 June 2021**. Term ended **2 December 2022**.

Ecclesiastical career

Prior to the election of Qerlos, the position of patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church had been left vacant since the death of Abune Dioskoros in 2015. On 13 May 2021, Qerlos was elected Patriarch of Eritrea. His ordination and enthronement as Patriarch took place on 13 June.

Personal life and death

Qerlos died on 2 December 2022, at the age of 94



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