

Press Release

Hamburg, 24.May 2024

New guest of the foundation: Amir Aman Kiyaro - Journalist from Ethiopia

The Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People has welcomed the Ethiopian journalist Amir Aman Kiyaro as a foundation guest. The foundation supports people worldwide who courageously speak out against injustice and offers them protection and peace in Hamburg for a certain period of time.

Amir Aman Kiyaro has been reporting for more than three years as a freelance journalist for the Associated Press (AP) on the armed conflict in the Ethiopian administrative zone of Tigray, as well as on the consequences of climate change in the region. Before that, he worked as a freelance correspondent for the British. Channel 4 News and other international media houses.

In November 2021, he traveled to the war zone and wrote about the fighting between Ethiopian government forces and the Oromo Liberation Army, as well as the consequences of the war for the local population. Because he had interviewed fighters of the rebel liberation army, he and his cameraman Thomas Engida were accused of "terrorism", "collaboration with Ethiopia's enemies" and of violating an imposed state of emergency one day after their return. After four months in custody, the two were released on bail in April 2022. The case was later dropped. For fear of reprisals by state bodies, Amir Aman Kiyaro's report from the front has not been published to date.

Amir Kiyaro tells of long interrogations, mistreatment and catastrophic conditions during his time in prison. His family was often physically assaulted or held for hours during their restricted "five-minute prison visits".

A documentary on state television portrayed him as a "collaborator of Ethiopia's enemies". Hate comments and death threats on social media were the result of this smear campaign. It took a number of attempts to obtain new accreditation as a journalist.

Amir Kiyaro and his family want to distance themselves from the events, they feel they are being watched and are vulnerable. The foundation grants them a 12-month temporary relocation so that they can recharge their batteries and make new contacts.

The "Committee to Protect for Journalists" in New York campaigned for the award-winning video journalist and nominated us.

Press contact: Martina Bäurle, executive manager of the Hamburg Foundation for politically persecuted people