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Although an incident in which dissident Eritrean soldiers seized the country's information ministry earlier this week is now being downplayed as not a coup attempt, a heightened tension between political and faith groups remains. The Christian persecution watchdog group Open Doors says that at least 10 leaders of churches banned by the government have been arrested.

"The arrest of 10 church leaders in Eritrea could be the start of another wave of systematic persecution in this unpredictable, tiny country bordering the Red Sea," says Open Doors USA Media Relations Director Jerry Dykstra. "The Muslim and Christian population is almost split 50-50. But President Isaias Afewerki has targeted independent Christians over the last decade. A government official once declared there are three enemies which need to be eradicated — HIV/AIDS, the regime in Ethiopia and independent Christians."

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