

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 23/04/94
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UA 225/94 Possible Extrajudicial Executions \ Legal
Concern \ Fear of torture

10 June 1994

DJIBOUTI

Demonstrators in Ariba

Killed: Fatouma Mohamed Ali (f)
Nasser Mohamed Youssouf
and at least two others

Detained: Addis Awalo Ali
Mohamed Daoud
Nour Barkat
Haidara Ashad
Dalle Ali Cheicko
Daoud Ali

On 5 June 1994 at least four peaceful demonstrators were killed and over 20 others injured, six seriously, by members of the Djiboutian *Force d'Action Rapide*, Quick Action Force, - part of the armed forces. The victims were shot during a peaceful demonstration by displaced people in Ariba, a suburb of Djibouti-ville. Six other people have been held since 5 June in an army detention centre, and it is feared that they may be at risk of torture.

The demonstration was in protest at the government-ordered destruction between 2 and 5 June of temporary shelters for displaced people. The latter have fled to Ariba from areas in the north of the country affected by the civil war, including Gorabous, Randa, Obock and Yoboki. Witnesses to the shooting claim that bodies were taken away in lorries. Amnesty International fears that if the destruction of the temporary shelters continues, any displaced people protesting against such action could also be at risk of further human rights violations.

About 600 people were arrested and taken to Nagad prison, but all were released the following day. A further six people (listed above) have been held since 5 June in an army detention centre 52 kilometres from Djibouti. Amnesty International has previously received reliable reports of widespread torture of detainees in military and police custody, and there is concern for the physical integrity of the six detainees.

Between 1,500 and 2,000 people fleeing the shootings sought refuge in the Roman Catholic cathedral. One young child died from dehydration there. Despite protests by the Bishop the police forcibly expelled them from the cathedral. 12 men who drove some of the families to the cathedral were arrested but later released.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Most of the displaced people in Ariba are members of the Afar community. Since 1991 there has been fighting in the country between the government and *Le Front pour la Restauration de l'unité et de la démocratie (FRUD)*, Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy, which is mainly supported by members of the Afar ethnic group.

Major human rights abuses, including extrajudicial executions, torture and rape, committed as reprisal actions against civilians from the Afar ethnic group by government forces have been previously reported, particularly in August

and September 1993 and January and March 1994 (see UAs 328/93, AFR 23/04/93, 16 September 1993; UA 06/94, AFR 23/01/94, 12 January 1994; UA 110/94, AFR 23/02/94, 17 March; and UA 111/94, AFR 23/03/94, 17 March).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in French or in your own language:

- expressing concern that at least four demonstrators were shot dead and over 20 wounded by *la Force d'Action Rapide* during a peaceful demonstration held in Ariba on 5 June 1994;
- urging the authorities to give clear public instructions to the armed forces prohibiting unlawful and arbitrary killings of unarmed civilians and urging that those responsible for the killings are brought to justice;
- calling for an independent inquiry into the use of firearms and lethal force by *la Force d'Action Rapide* against peaceful demonstrators, in contravention of the UN's Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (adopted by the 8th UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders 7th September 1990);
- expressing concern that six civilians are still being detained (naming some or all);
- seeking assurances that, as a protection against torture or ill-treatment, detainees are given immediate access to relatives and lawyers;
- calling for their release without delay if they are being detained solely for peacefully exercising their basic rights to non-violent freedom of expression.

APPEALS TO

1) Son Excellence Hassan Gouled Aptidon
Président de la République
La Présidence, BP 6
Djibouti, République de Djibouti

Telegrams: Président Hassan Gouled, Djibouti

Telexes: 5871 DJ

Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République

2) Monsieur Ahmed Boulaleh Barreh
Ministre de la Défense nationale
Ministère de la Défense nationale
BP 1905, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

Telegrams: Ministre de la Défense Barreh, Djibouti

Telexes: 5871 DJ

Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

3) Monsieur Idriss Harbi Farah
Ministre de l'Intérieure
Ministère de l'Intérieure
BP 2086, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

Telegrams: Ministre de l'Intérieure Farah, Djibouti

Telexes: 5871 DJ

Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

4) Monsieur Moumin Bahdon Farah
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice

BP 12, Djibouti, République de Djibouti
Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice Farah, Djibouti
Telexes: 5871 DJ
Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Monsieur Mohamed Ali Afkada
Procureur Général
BP 12, Djibouti, République de Djibouti
Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174

Monsieur Badoul Said Ibrahim
Président de l'Assemblée National
BP 138, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

Association pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des libertés
BP 2410, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

and to diplomatic representatives of Djibouti accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 July 1994.