

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 25/14/94  
Distr: UA/SC

UA 194/94

Legal Concern / Fear of torture

19 May 1994

**ETHIOPIA Hassan Jirreh Kalinle, former president of the Regional Assembly (parliament) of Region Five (the Ogaden), member of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)**

**Ahmed Ali Dahir, former Vice-president of the Regional Assembly, ONLF representative**

**Shukri Yasin, mayor of Godey**

**Abdillahi Kalaas, businessmen**

**Hassan Mohamed Farah, restaurant owner**

- and eight other members of the Regional Assembly

- and hundreds of other ONLF members and supporters

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The former President, former Vice-president and eight other ONLF representatives in the Regional Assembly (regional parliament) in Region Five were arrested by government troops on 13 May 1994 in the regional capital of Godey. They had earlier been removed from their posts and a new regional government appointed, with Jijiga designated as the new regional capital. Hundreds of other ONLF supporters are also reported to have been arrested in other parts of the region.

Hassan Jirreh Kalinle and Ahmed Ali Dahir are said to have been transferred to detention in Addis Ababa, where their whereabouts are not known. Many other detainees are held in military custody in Godey. There have been allegations of ill-treatment of detainees.

In view of these allegations and reports of the torture of others arrested recently in the Region Five, Amnesty International fears for the physical safety of the detainees listed above.

Region Five, also known as the Ogaden, is in eastern Ethiopia and borders Somalia. It is inhabited predominantly by ethnic Somalis. The ONLF is a recognized political party which won the regional elections in Region Five in early 1993.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

A conflict between the ONLF and the central government has arisen since 1992 over ONLF demands for a referendum on independence for the region, which the government and certain pro-government Somali groups opposed. The Transitional Charter adopted as an interim constitution in 1991 affirms the right of nationalities and peoples to "self-determination up to independence".

Earlier in 1994 many ONLF members were detained and others killed by government troops belonging to the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) (see UA 75/94, AFR 25/08/94, 24 February 1994). The worst incident occurred in Wardheer town on 22 February when soldiers seeking to detain the ONLF General Secretary shot dead some 50 demonstrators, including several ONLF representatives. There has been no official statement clarifying this incident.

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

- expressing concern at the recent arrests of the former President and

Vice-president and eight other members of the Region Five regional assembly and hundreds of other ONLF members and supporters;

- urging that they are immediately brought before a court as required by the law and either charged with a recognizably criminal offence or released;
- expressing fears about their treatment in military custody and appealing for them to be given access to their families, legal counsel and, if needed, to medical treatment.

#### **APPEALS TO**

1) His Excellency President Meles Zenawi  
Office of the President  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Telegrams: President Meles, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

**Faxes: + 251 1 514300 or 511244 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

2) Mr Seye Abraha  
Minister of Defence  
Ministry of Defence  
P OP Box 1373

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Telegrams: Defence Minister, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

**Faxes: + 251 1 514300 or 511244**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

3) Mr Kinfu Gebre-Medhin  
Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs (head of security)  
Ministry of Internal Affairs  
P O Box 5721

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Telegrams: Vice-Minister Kinfu, Internal Affairs, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

**Faxes: + 251 1 514300 or 511244**

**Salutation: Dear Vice-Minister**

#### **COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1) Mr Hassan Shiffa  
Coordinator of Police and Prison Administration  
Ministry of Internal Affairs  
P O Box 5721, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2) Mr Meheteme Solomon  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
P O Box 1370, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

and to diplomatic representatives of Ethiopia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 June 1994.