

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 25 per section.

UA 357/94 "Disappearance" / Fear of Ill-treatment 27 September 1994

**ETHIOPIAAsfaw Gemechu, former Ministry of Agriculture employee
Baricha Kumsa, 38, teacher
Bekelle Wolde-Michael, 58, merchant
Beressa Begna, school student
Diyama Kefeni, 55, teacher
Fufa Sori, teacher, former political detainee
Geremaw (second name not known, *kebele* (urban-dwellers association)
chairman
Lomi Daba (f), 13, school student
Napu Bekelle, son of Bekelle Wolde-Michael (above)
Negussie Jiressa, merchant
Olli Atomsa, 64, retired civil servant, diabetic
and many others**

Between 7 and 14 September 1994 those listed above were detained in the towns of Ambo and Guder (west of Addis Ababa), following the funeral on 6 September of a local man who may have been the victim of an extrajudicial execution. In total over 70 people are believed to have been detained and arrests are reported to be continuing. One man, Asfaw Gemechu, has "disappeared". There have been allegations that some detainees have been beaten, giving rise to fears of further ill-treatment.

Most of those named above attended the Ethiopian Orthodox Church funeral in Ambo of Derara Kefana, an elderly businessman there (owner of a hotel). Reports indicate that he was shot and killed near his home by soldiers on 3 September after being told to raise his hands to surrender. At the funeral, several people criticised the killing and called for those responsible to be brought to justice. Although full details of the shooting are not yet clear, it seems that Derara Kefana did not resist arrest. His body was taken to a hospital in Addis Ababa for a post-mortem examination but there has been no inquest yet.

The majority of the detainees are being held incommunicado in Ambo and Guder police stations, where some have allegedly been beaten. They reportedly went on hunger-strike for some days. None of the detainees has been brought to court or charged, although the law requires that they be brought to court within 48 hours and either charged or remanded for investigation in connection with a specific offence, or released.

Asfaw Gemechu was reportedly abducted by security or military officials in Ambo on 13 September on a visit from Addis Ababa. His "disappearance" is believed to be linked to the arrests of critics of Derara Kefana's killing.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Two weeks before the killing of Derara Kefana, a local government administrator (a military official) called a public meeting to warn people in this largely Oromo-populated area against supporting the activities of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) armed forces. He reportedly named several people, including Derara Kefana, as OLF supporters and threatened action against them.

In the past two years Amnesty International has received reports from Ambo

and surrounding areas of the detention without charge or trial of many Oromos alleged to be OLF supporters, and of torture and extrajudicial executions by soldiers. Amnesty International believes many were arrested because they supported the political objectives of the OLF (which was an open political organization from May 1991 to June 1992) and not because of any actual evidence of involvement in the OLF's current armed opposition.

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 in Ambo and Guder, apparently in connection with criticisms of the killing by soldiers of Derara Kefana, pointing out that the detainees have been held without charge beyond the 48-hour limit prescribed by law;
- seeking assurances of the humane treatment of the detainees and urging that they be given immediate access to their families and legal representatives, and medical treatment if required (particularly for Olli Atomsa who is a diabetic), and calling for them to be either brought to court and charged with a recognizable criminal offence or released without further delay;
- expressing fears for the safety of Asfaw Gemechu who has reportedly "disappeared" after being abducted by security officials on 13 September, and, if that was the case, calling for him to be immediately placed in lawful custody or released;
- calling for an impartial inquiry into the alleged extrajudicial execution of Derara Kefana and for anyone responsible for unlawfully killing him to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO

1) Mr Hassan Shiffa

Coordinator of Police and Prison Administration

Ministry of Internal Affairs

P O Box 5721, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: + 251 1 552020 (or 514300, 511244 or 514042, via Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Telegrams: Hassan Shiffa, Ministry Internal Affairs, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Salutation: Dear Sir

2) Mr Mahteme Solomon

Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice

P O Box 1370, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: + 251 1 550722

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Mr Kinfe Gebre-Medhin

Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs (head of security)

Ministry of Internal Affairs

P O Box 5721

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: + 251 1 552020 (or 514300, 511244 or 514042, via Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Mr Kemal Bedri

President of the Supreme Court
Ministry of Justice
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Mr Seye Abreha
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
P O Box 1373, 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 9 November 1994.