

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 25/29/98

2 December 1998

Further information on UA 137/98 (AFR 25/13/98, 30 April 1998) and follow-up (AFR 25/22/98, 1 July 1998) - Health concern

ETHIOPIA Dr Asrat Woldeyes

Dr Asrat Woldeyes, 70, a political prisoner since 1994, is seriously ill in custody in Black Lion Hospital, Addis Ababa, and his life may be at risk, according to reliable information received by Amnesty International.

Dr Asrat has been in hospital since January 1998. His condition deteriorated in mid-November, and, as when he fell seriously ill in April, the government security officers guarding him did not let the doctors conduct tests until they had received high-level government permission, which took two days. Dr Asrat was given tests and medication for a heart condition - he had a bypass operation abroad some years ago. He seemed to recover.

However, on about 28 November his condition deteriorated considerably: he was unable to eat and was put on an intravenous drip. He is weak and anxious about his heart condition, and is apparently suffering from moderate heart failure. The doctors are not allowed to give him or his family details of their diagnosis or treatment. They have now reportedly advised the government that they do not have the facilities in Ethiopia to give Dr Asrat the treatment he needs.

Amnesty International fears for Dr Asrat's safety because of his life-threatening medical condition and the security service's constant oppressive interference with his treatment. Amnesty International is appealing to the Ethiopian government to allow him to go abroad for urgent specialist medical treatment not available in Ethiopia.

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

- expressing fear for the safety of Dr Asrat Woldeyes, who is seriously ill in custody in hospital with a life-threatening heart complaint;
- expressing concern at the constant interference in his treatment by the security service;
- appealing for Dr Asrat to be allowed to go abroad for the necessary specialist medical treatment, which is not available in Ethiopia.

APPEALS TO: (Please note: fax tones can be difficult to obtain)

His Excellency Meles Zenawi

Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Office, P O Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telegrams: Prime Minister Meles, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: + 2511 552030

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Kifle Gebre-Medhin, General Manager, Public Security

Office of the Prime Minister, P O Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telegrams: Security Director Kifle, Prime Minister's Office, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: + 2511 552030

Salutation: Dear Sir

Mr Werede-Wold Wolde, Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
P O Box 1370, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: + 2511 550278 / 550722

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

His Excellency President Negaso Gidada

Office of the President, P O Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: + 2511 552030

Dr Adem Ibrahim

Minister of Health, Ministry of Health, P O Box 1234, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: +2511 519366

The Chief Administrator

Black Lion Hospital, PO Box 5647, 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 12 January 1999.