

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 64/007/2004

16 July 2004

**Further Information on UA 67/04 (AFR 64/001/2004, 18 February 2004) Fear of torture / fear of ill/treatment/ Detention without charge**

ERITREA	Akberet Gebremichael (f), aged 30	]	
	Asmerom Beraki (m), aged 50	]	
	Gebrehiwet Tedla (m), aged 87	]	
	Gebreselassie Adhanom (m), aged 94	]	
	Mikias Gebru (m), aged 19	]	
	Rebka Gebretensae (f), aged 39	]	Jehovah's Witnesses
	Samson Tesfalem (m), aged 24	]	
	Sertsu Yilma (m), aged 55	]	
	Tedros Atsbeha (m), aged 25	]	
	Tekle Gebrehiwet (m), aged 40	]	
	Tsegaberhan Berhe (m), aged 41	]	
	Yemane Tsegay (m), aged 41	]	

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It is now known that 38 not 28 Jehovah's Witnesses were arrested at a religious service in a private home in the capital Asmara on 24 January. Of these, eight children, including one as young as six, have been released. Three children were released after three days in police custody, whilst five others were released in the following months. Eighteen adults have also been released without charge. They were, however, reportedly warned not to worship or conduct religious activities again.

Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of the 12 remaining Jehovah's Witnesses named above. They include Gebrehiwet Tedla and Gebreselassie Adhanom who are 94 and 87 years-old respectively. They are being detained incommunicado at an unknown location, without charge or trial and may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment. Concern for them is heightened by the fact that three Jehovah's Witnesses have been detained without charge or trial in Sawa army barracks since 1996 for refusing military service, whilst seven others have been in detention since 2001.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern that 12 Jehovah's Witnesses named above, who were arrested in Asmara on 24 January are still secretly detained without charge;
- expressing fears for their safety and health on account of being detained incommunicado and in secret, and urging the authorities to disclose their whereabouts in custody and give immediate access to their families, medical doctors and legal representatives;
- appealing for them to be released unconditionally without further delay, particularly Gebrehiwet Tedla and Gebreselassie Adhanom on account of their advanced age and probable poor health in prison;
- stating that their detention is illegal, as the Eritrean Constitution and laws require that arrested persons are brought before a court within 48 hours and may not be held without charge beyond 28 days;
- appealing to the authorities to stop the arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment and persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses on account of their religious beliefs.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency Issayas Afewerki  
President of the State of Eritrea  
Office of the President

P O Box 257  
Asmara, Eritrea

**Fax:** + 2911 126422  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Ms Fawzia Hashim  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
P O Box 241  
Asmara, Eritrea

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

**COPIES TO:**

Brigadier Abraham Andom  
Commissioner of Police  
Ministry of Internal Affairs  
P O Box 1223  
Asmara, Eritrea

Mr Semere Beyene  
Director, Department of Religious Affairs  
Ministry of Local Government  
P O Box 225  
Asmara, Eritrea

and to diplomatic representatives of Eritrea accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending after 30 August 2004