

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 177/02 (AFR 25/013/2002, 13 June 2002, AFR 25/013/2002, 13 June) and follow-up (AFR 25/017/2002, 28 June 2002) - Fear of torture / Police use of excessive force

ETHIOPIA

**Birru Bale (m), former administrative head of Sidama zone
Tamire Tessema (m)
Tesfaye Adola (m)
Basha Bariso (m)
Tamru Debessa Shire (m), member of the Sidama zone council
Samuel Gerasa Sanchamo (m), regional agricultural official
Petros Chama (m), municipality employee
Alemu Esayas Ataro (m), police lieutenant
Seyoum Sunbaso (m), driver
Yakob Shefe Buche (m), aged 15, school student
Samuel Efo Aneso (m), aged 20, school student
Hatiya Ware Guto (m), schoolteacher
Tesfaye Genbusa (m), trader
Matewos Letimo Yona (m), farmer
Solomon Shemana Lala (m) Sidama Development Association staff
Alemu Negussie Gasara (m) Sidama Development Association staff
Scores of others, including children**

Birru Bale and most of the other people named above have now been released. However, a number of others remain in detention.

Those named above were among hundreds of individuals arrested in May and June in Awassa, the capital of the Southern Region State. They were arrested in connection with a demonstration in Awassa on 24 May, during which police and federal soldiers opened fire on peaceful protesters, killing at least 25 and wounding many others.

In early August the Supreme Court of the Southern Region State ordered the Federal Police Commission to improve its treatment of scores of detainees suspected of involvement in the 24 May demonstration. The Court warned the Police Commission against violations of the human rights of suspects in police custody, after considering a plea by 50 detainees alleging routine late-night beatings by police officers.

In September the European Union (EU) sent a delegation to Awassa and to Tepi (another town in the Southern Region State that was the scene of numerous killings) to conduct its own investigation into events in the region. The EU condemned the killings and has put pressure on the Ethiopian authorities to conduct an impartial investigation into the events.

On 18 October it was reported that Prime Minister Meles Zenawi pledged to crack down on human rights abuses such as the shooting of peaceful demonstrators in Awassa. He said the government would take action against regional officials who may have been implicated in the killings. Amnesty International has received reports indicating that members of the federal government were involved in

giving the order to the security forces to shoot demonstrators and that federal security forces were also involved in the shootings. The organization is continuing to monitor the situation and pressing the government to set up an independent and impartial investigation into these killings.

Many thanks to all who took action on this case. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation of those still detained, and use longer-term campaigning methods on their behalf.