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Fear of t

**ETHIOPIA** Mossisa Duressa, Ethiopian Red Cross official, 55  
Tassew Begashaw, medical doctor  
Mulugetta Tirfessa Tufa, insurance company employee

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of three Oromo detainees in Ethiopia who recently "disappeared" after they were arrested. All three are at risk of torture. Mossisa Duressa is diabetic and requires daily insulin injections, and Mulugetta Tirfessa Tufa was under long-term medical treatment for a leg injury.

Mossisa Duressa [photo], local chairperson of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society in Nekemte, Oromia region, was arrested by security officers in Nekemte, 250 km west of the capital, Addis Ababa, on 15 August 1999. He has "disappeared" and police and security officers have refused to say where he is held or to allow access to him or to allow his family to send medication for him. He was reportedly one of several people arrested when Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) leaflets were circulated in the town. He denies any connection with the OLF. Those accused of OLF links are frequently tortured in secret incommunicado detention. Mossisa Duressa, married with three children, is also personnel director of the Ethiopian Evangelical Mekane Yesus Church (a member of the Lutheran World Federation), which as a largely Oromo church has also been targeted by the government in the past for suspected OLF links.

Tassew Begashaw, a doctor working for the private Tarika Clinic in Addis Ababa, was arrested in Addis Ababa on 15 August. He also belongs to the Oromo ethnic group and was reportedly accused of giving medical treatment to OLF suspects. He too at first "disappeared", but according to unofficial sources he is held incommunicado at Maikelawi criminal investigation centre in Addis Ababa, where torture or ill-treatment of political prisoners has been reported.

Mulugetta Tirfessa Tufa, who works for the Awash Insurance Company, was arrested in Addis Ababa on 19 August and "disappeared". He is reportedly also held incommunicado at Maikelawi criminal investigation centre. He had previously been arrested in 1995 and detained without charge or trial for some months in Nazareth, 80 km south of Addis Ababa, on suspicion of supporting the OLF. He was still having medical treatment for a leg injury in 1992. The reason for his latest arrest is not known.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since the OLF left the government coalition in 1992, tens of thousands of members of the Oromo ethnic group (or "nationality") have been detained, mostly without charge or trial and illegally, for alleged involvement with the OLF, which has been fighting the government in the Oromia region in south, west and east Ethiopia. Some thousands of Oromos are believed to be currently detained, some of whom may be prisoners of conscience with no connection to the armed opposition.

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

- expressing fears for the safety of three recently-arrested Oromo political prisoners, Mossisa Durissa, whose whereabouts since his arrest in Nekemte are not known, and Tassew Megashaw and Mulugetta Tirfessa Tufa, who are reportedly detained incommunicado without charge or trial in Maikelawi prison in Addis Ababa;

- urging the authorities to guarantee they are not tortured or ill-treated, and are given immediate access to their families, legal counsel and medical treatment by doctors of their choice - particularly for Mossisa Duressa's diabetes and Mulugetta Tirfessa Tufa's previous leg injury;
- appealing for them to be taken to court without further delay, as required by the law and constitution within 48 hours of arrest, and either charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial, or released.

**APPEALS TO:**

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 Kinfu Gebre-Medhin, General Manager, Public Security

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

**Telegrams: Security Director Kinfu, 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**

Mr Kuma Demeksa, President of Oromia, Oromia Regional State Council, P O Box 62297, 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 26 October 1999.