

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 25/05/97

Please limit appeals to 30 per section.

EXTRA 40/97

Ill-treatment / prisoners of conscience

24 March 1997

ETHIOPIA200 university students

Some 200 students of Addis Ababa University were arrested at a peaceful demonstration on 21 March 1997. Riot police stopped the demonstration near the Supreme Court and arrested demonstrators, beating some of them. Police declared that the demonstration was unauthorized and illegal. Those arrested are being held at Shogele Meda police barracks in Addis Ababa. There are reports of beatings and ill-treatment of the detained students. They have not been taken to court within the prescribed 48-hour limit or charged with any offence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The demonstrators were protesting at a recent land re-distribution proclamation of the Amhara Regional State Council. They were supporting complaints by peasant farmers in the Amhara Region, over 1,000 of whom are camped in Addis Ababa in protest. Other farmers have reportedly been detained in Gojjam and other areas. Under the new proclamation, land over one hectare held by people who had been officials of the peasant associations of the former Mengistu Haile-Mariam government (1974-1991) was confiscated and re-distributed to others.

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

- expressing concern at the arrests at a peaceful demonstration of some 200 university students, and at reported beatings and ill-treatment of students in police custody;
- asking why the detainees have not been taken to court within the prescribed 48-hours;
- calling for an immediate investigation into reports of their treatment in Shogele Meda police barracks;
- appealing for their immediate and unconditional release as prisoners of conscience, held for the non-violent expression of their opinions.

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 Mahteme Solomon
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
P O Box 1370, Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: +2511 550722

Salutation: Dear Minister

Colonel Legesse Tegegne
Commissioner of Police
Ministry of Justice
P O Box 1370
Addis Ababa

Telegrams: Police Commissioner, Justice Ministry, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: +2511 550722

COPIES TO:

- Mr Kemal Bedri, Chief Justice, Supreme Court, P O Box 6166, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, **Fax: +2511 550278**
- Mr Seyoum Mesfin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P O Box 393, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, **Fax: +2511 514300**
- Dr Mogesse Ashenafi, President, Addis Ababa University, P O Box 1176, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, **Fax: +2511 550911**

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 21 April 1997.