

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 25/031/2006

06 October 2006

Further Information on UA 255/06 (AFR 25/08/2006, 26 September 2006) and follow-up (AFR 25/030/2006) - Detention without charge/Incommunicado detention/ Fear for safety

ETHIOPIA	Wasihun Melese (m)] teachers and trade unionists
	Anteneh Getnet (m), aged 43]

Amnesty International welcomes the release on bail of Wasihun Melese and Anteneh Getnet on 5 October. They have not been charged with any offence. After a first court hearing on 25 September, their case was adjourned until 9 October and the police given an additional two weeks to bring charges against them.

Wasihun Melese is a teacher at Addis Ketema High School in Addis Ababa and a prominent activist in the Addis Ababa branch of the ETA. He is an elected member of the ETA's National Executive Committee. Anteneh Getnet is also a teacher and ETA activist who had been in the ETA's office when he was arrested by three plainclothes police officers on 23 September. Anteneh Getnet was previously abducted and beaten in May 2006, allegedly by members of the security forces. He is still suffering from injuries sustained when he was beaten.

The ETA, which is affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and Education International (EI), is the oldest trade union in Ethiopia, to which half a million teachers in primary, secondary and higher educational institutions belong. The ETA has been critical of government education policies and has been subject to numerous government attempts to close it through court cases which are continuing. There have been attempts by the Ethiopian authorities to replace it with a pro-government union created with the same name.

The ETA issued statements criticizing the government in connection with the post-election crisis in mid-2005. In two incidents in June and November 2005, over 80 opposition party supporters were killed by the security forces, and seven police officers were also killed by demonstrators protesting at alleged election fraud in the May 2005 elections.

Thank you very much for your work on this appeal, which Amnesty International believes contributed greatly to the release on bail of Wasihun Melese and Anteneh Getnet. Amnesty International will continue to monitor their situation but no further appeals are required at present.