

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

## News Flash

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### **Ethiopia: Escalating violence leaves at least six dead**

Amnesty International expressed serious concern at escalating violence in Ethiopia today, after learning that police reportedly shot dead six people and wounded at least 25.

The killings took place during street protests against the election results announced in September of the 15 May 2005 elections. Protests against the police shootings are currently taking place in the Piazza district of Addis Ababa.

Yesterday, thirty drivers who joined the protests by honking their horns were detained. Large numbers of suspected members of the CUD are reportedly being taken from their homes by police. At least five leaders of the CUD have been detained: the President of the CUD, Hailu Shawel (MP), who was reportedly beaten on arrest; the Vice-President of the CUD, Birtukan Mideksa; Dr Berhanu Nega (MP), Major of Addis Ababa; Getachew Mengiste (MP), senior member of the CUD; and Gizachew Shifferaw, a member of the Executive Committee of the CUD. Professor Mesfin Woldemariam (aged 73), the former Chair of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council who is ill with a painful spinal complaint, was also reportedly detained from his home today.

Amnesty International condemns the excessive use of force by the police and the arbitrary detention of members and suspected members of the CUD. The organization calls on the government to stop the use of excessive and lethal force against protesters and to either immediately charge or release anyone detained in relation to the protests. Amnesty International considers those named above to be prisoners of conscience arrested solely for the non-violent expression of their political opinions and calls for their immediate and unconditional release and guarantees that they will be not be ill-treated.

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