

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 23/03/94  
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UA 111/94      Rape and torture/legal concern

17 March 1994

DJIBOUTI:

Rape:            At least 12 girls and women

Detained and reportedly ill-treated: At least 20 civilians, including Ahmed Meko, "Okal" for Oueima, and his brother, Ali Meko

Torture and death in custody: Hassan Douba Aramis, 55

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Amnesty International has received further reports of abuses against members of the Afar ethnic group committed by government troops in areas of renewed fighting with the *Front pour la restauration de l'unité et de la démocratie* (FRUD, Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy). The FRUD draws its support mainly from the Afar ethnic group.

At least a dozen girls and women from the Afar ethnic group were reportedly raped by government soldiers between 3 and 10 March in the regions of Oueima and Mabla in the north of the country. Names of several of the victims have been received by Amnesty International but these are not being published for fear of reprisal. One of the victims was later taken to hospital. Another victim is said to have been previously raped by government soldiers in January.

In the region of Day on 24 February a civilian, **Abdallah Ahmed Abdallah**, was reportedly summarily executed by soldiers when he protested about the rape of his sister-in-law by soldiers.

Amnesty International is also concerned about reports of the detention and ill-treatment of civilian members of the Afar ethnic group in the regions of Oueima and Mabla between 3 and 10 March. At least twenty civilians, including **Ahmed Meko**, the "Okal" (community leader) for Oueima, and his brother, **Ali Meko**, are currently detained in military barracks 9 kilometres from Tadjourah in Mabla region. In Oueima region government forces also reportedly arrested several dozen civilians, including some wounded, most of whom are detained at a military post at Assageyla.

Amnesty International has previously received reliable reports of widespread torture of detainees in military and police custody. On 26 February **Hassan Douba Aramis**, a 55 year-old civilian arrested earlier, probably for suspected support of FRUD, died in military detention at Soura, near Randa, allegedly as a result of torture.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

FRUD has been fighting the government since 1991. Major human rights abuses, including extrajudicial executions, torture and rape, committed against civilians from the Afar ethnic group by government forces have been previously reported, particularly in August and September 1993 and January 1994 (see UA 328/93, 16 September 1993 and UA 06/94, 12 January 1994).

Between 3 and 10 March 1994 the Djibouti government reportedly carried out a new military offensive against the FRUD in the regions of Mabla and Oueima in the north of the country. It would seem that these recent abuses, including extrajudicial executions, have been further reprisal actions against civilians

from the Afar community.

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

- expressing concern at the reports of rape of girls and women and the arbitrary detentions of civilians in the regions of Oueima and Mabla between 3 and 10 March 1994;
- calling for an urgent independent investigation into the reports of the rape of girls and women during the course of military action against FRUD and that urging that any members of the security forces suspected of carrying out or failing to stop these abuses be brought to justice;
- calling for civilian detainees to be either brought to court without delay and charged with a recognizable criminal offence, or released;
- seeking assurances that, as a protection against torture or ill-treatment, detainees are immediately given access to their families, doctors and lawyers;
- calling for a public inquest to be established without delay into the death in custody of Hassan Douba Aramis.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) Son Excellence Hassan Gouled Aptidon  
Président de la République  
La Présidence, BP 6  
Djibouti, République de Djibouti

**Telegrams: Président Hassan Gouled, Djibouti**

**Telexes: 5871 DJ**

**Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République**

2) Monsieur Ahmed Boulaleh Barreh  
Ministre de la Défense nationale  
Ministère de la Défense nationale  
BP 1905, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

**Telegrams: Ministre de la Défense Barreh, Djibouti Telexes: 5871 DJ**

**Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre**

3) Monsieur Idriss Harbi Farah  
Ministre de l'Intérieure  
Ministère de l'Intérieure  
BP 2086, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

**Telegrams: Ministre de l'Intérieure Farah, Djibouti Telexes: 5871 DJ**

**Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre**

4) Monsieur Moumin Bahdon Farah  
Ministre de la Justice  
Ministère de la Justice  
BP 12, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

**Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice Farah, Djibouti Telexes: 5871 DJ**

**Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre**

**COPIES TO:**

Monsieur Mohamed Ali Afkada  
Procureur Général  
BP 12, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

**Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174**

Monsieur Badoul Said Ibrahim  
Président de l'Assemblée National  
BP 138  
Djibouti  
République de Djibouti  
BP 138, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

Association pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des libertés  
BP 2410, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

and to diplomatic representatives of Djibouti accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 28 April 1994.