

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 305/91 (AFR 23/05/91, 11 September) and follow-up AFR 23/06 91 (15 October) - Medical Concern

DJIBOUTI:Aref Mohamed Aref, lawyer,

and Ali Aref Bourhane, politician (new name)

Amnesty International is concerned about the health of Aref Mohamed Aref and his uncle, Ali Aref Bourhane, as they have reportedly been refused their regular supply of food since 26 October 1991. They are held at Ali-Adde prison at Dikhil, a remote prison near the Ethiopian border.

In early September 1991 the prison authorities stopped providing food for Aref Mohamed Aref and Ali Aref Bourhane. Their families, unable to visit them regularly because of the distance, then arranged for food to be provided by a supplier in Dikhil. The military guards at the prison, however, have now refused to accept this food for the two detainees who have been left with only biscuits to eat.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Aref Mohamed Aref, 39, a lawyer who has previously defended political prisoners in Djibouti, was arrested on 13 January 1991 together with his uncle, Ali Aref Bourhane, 57, a prominent government opponent and former Prime Minister (président du gouvernement) before independence from France in 1977, and many other members of the Afar ethnic group. They and over a dozen others are awaiting trial for attempting to overthrow the government (atteinte à la sécurité de l'Etat), for which the death penalty could be imposed. Amnesty International believes they could be prisoners of conscience.

Aref Mohamed Aref was sent back to Ali-Adde prison from hospital in the capital, Djibouti, in early October 1991 after medical treatment in hospital for tachycardia (abnormally rapid heartbeat) and food poisoning.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/faxes/airmail letters in French if possible:

- expressing concern at reports that Maître Aref Mohamed Aref and Ali Aref Bourhane have been refused their daily food supply from their relatives and urging that they be given a proper diet immediately;
- expressing concern that they are being held in a remote prison where conditions are poor and medical facilities are inadequate and their relatives do not have regular access to them;
- urging that they be examined by a doctor to ensure that the two men, and particularly Aref Mohamed Aref, have not suffered physiological damage as a consequence of being deprived of food and that they receive any necessary medical

treatment;

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- explaining also Amnesty International's concern that they and others arrested with them have been held for a long period in pre-trial detention, and that the court which would try their case, the State Security Tribunal, does not meet international standards of impartiality;

- expressing the fear that they may be detained solely on account of their non-violent opposition to the government.

APPEALS TO:

1.

Son Excellence Monsieur Hassan Gouled APTIDON

Son Excellence

Président de la République

La Présidence

Djibouti, République de Djibouti

Telegrams: President Aptidon, La Presidence, Djibouti

Faxes: + 253 3550 49; + 253 3501 74

2.

Son Excellence Monsieur Barkad Gourad HAMADOU

Son Excellence

Premier Ministre

Office du Premier Ministre

BP 2086, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

Telegrams: Premier Ministre Hamadou, Djibouti

3.

Monsieur Ahmed Boulaleh BARREH

Monsieur

Ministre de l'Intérieur

Ministère de l'Intérieur

BP 2086, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

Telegrams: Ministre de l'Interieur Barreh, Djibouti

4.

Monsieur Ismael Omar GUELLE

Monsieur

Chef du cabinet présidentiel

La Présidence

BP 6, Djibouti, République de Djibouti

Telegrams: Chef du cabinet presidentiel, Djibouti

COPIES TO:

1.

Mohamed Djama ELABE

Ministère de la Santé

Ministre de la Santé

Djibouti, République de Djibouti

2.

Monsieur Ougoureh Hassan IBRAHIM
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
BP 12
Djibouti, République de Djibouti

3.

Monsieur Moumin Bahdon FARAH
Ministre des Affaires Etrangères
Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
BP 1863
Djibouti, République de Djibouti

and to diplomatic representatives of Djibouti in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 December 1991.