

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 147/93 Fear of ill-treatment/Legal concern

30 April 1993

ETHIOPIA:

Dr Alemayehu Teferra, former President of Addis Ababa University

and 18 university students, arrested two weeks later:

Anteneh Aregaw (psychology student)	Marye Aberra (management)
Anteneh Ownetu	Tadesse Zemamem (economics)
Bahru Temesgen	Teshome Bimerew (languages)
Berhanu Mulunesh	Tesfaye (second name not known)
Gite (second name not known)	Yehualeshet Girma (electrical engineering)
Getaneh Aberra (law)	Yohannes Negash (library science)
Habtam Alemachew (political science)	Yohannes Seifu (law)
Haile Berke	Zelalem Mulatu
Hizbadam Gela (languages)	and one other

Amnesty International is concerned about the treatment and legal status of Dr Alemayehu Teferra, former President of Addis Ababa University and a former professor and dean of civil engineering, who was arrested on about 9 April 1993 in Addis Ababa. He is detained without charge and is held incommunicado in Maikelawi security prison in Addis Ababa. This was a notorious detention and torture centre under the previous government of President Mengistu Haile-Mariam. The present government of President Meles Zenawi is now using it to hold political prisoners, including members of the former government, and also opponents of the current government, some of whom have allegedly been tortured. Conditions in the prison are harsh.

The government has reportedly accused Dr Alemayehu Teferra of involvement in the "Red Terror" campaign by the former government of President Mengistu Haile-Mariam in 1977-1978, in which the authorities extrajudicially executed some thousands of "anti-revolutionary" government opponents and detained and tortured tens of thousands more in Addis Ababa, and more elsewhere. Dr Alemayehu Teferra had at that time been chairman of a local urban-dwellers association (*kebelle*) in Addis Ababa but he was apparently exonerated of human rights crimes by the new authorities in 1991. On 18 January 1993 he was dismissed from his university post, to which he was elected in 1991, when the government closed the university after an anti-government demonstration at the university on 4 January, in which at least one student and reportedly several others were killed by the security forces. The real reason for his imprisonment seems to be his criticism of the present government over the security forces' action at the 4 January demonstration.

The 18 students were arrested on 22 April 1993 for demonstrating against the dismissal of 41 university professors and lecturers and 11 other students, apparently on account of their opposition to the government concerning the university demonstration issue (when the staff association issued a critical letter). They are detained without charge or further explanation, and are probably also held in Maikelawi security prison.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International had already expressed concern about the 4 January shooting of the student demonstrators (UA 01/93, AFR 25/01/93, 5 January 1993 with follow-up of 10 February, AFR 25/03/93). The demonstrators were expressing their opposition to the independence referendum on Eritrea, which took place as scheduled on 22 April 1993, with a vote overwhelmingly favourable to Eritrea (already *de facto* separate from Ethiopia) becoming an independent state in late May. The government stated that one student, later named as Tesfahun Worku, was killed and 13 others were wounded in the demonstration. Unofficial sources have put the figures much higher. The government in late February set up a commission of inquiry into the incident, to be headed by the

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President of the Supreme Court, and to report its findings to the Council of Representatives (parliament) within three months. It has apparently not yet taken evidence from the university community. The university was re-opened on 5 April under close government control, with a new president, Dr Duri Mohamed, who is also Minister of Planning and Development. Before classes start, students must re-apply for registration and faculty staff must apply for new two-year contracts for their previously permanent jobs.

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

- expressing concern at the recent arrest of Dr Alemayehu Teferra, former President of Addis Ababa University, and 18 students, apparently all for their peaceful criticisms of the government;
- appealing for their immediate and unconditional release, if they are not to be charged with recognizably criminal offences;
- in the meantime urging that they be treated humanely in custody, and allowed immediate and regular access to their families, lawyers and medical doctors, if necessary.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency President Meles Zenawi **Salutation: Your Excellency**
Office of the President
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telegrams: President Meles Zenawi, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 251 1 514300 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

2) Mr Meheteme Solomon **Salutation: Dear Minister**
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
P O Box 1370
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telegrams: Minister of Justice Meheteme Solomon, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 251 1 514300 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Mr Hassen Shifa **Ministry of Internal Affairs**
Head of Police and Prison Administration **P O Box 2556**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2) Dr Duri Mohamed
Acting President
Addis Ababa University
P O Box 1176
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

3) Ms Genet Zewde
Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
P O Box 1367
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

4) Mr Kamal Bedri
President of the Supreme Court
Ministry of Justice
P O Box 1370
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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 11 June 1993.