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UA 75/94 Extrajudicial Executions / Fear for safety /
Torture and Ill-treatment 24 February 1994

Amnesty International fears for the safety of many people detained since late January 1994 in different towns in south-eastern Ethiopia, an area inhabited mainly by ethnic Somalis. This fear is increased by reports of the killing, wounding, torture or ill-treatment of some of those detained, and reports of several other killings by government troops in these areas.

Reports indicate that Mohamed Omer Tuber, Abdullahi Ganey and Deeg Mohamud Arab were killed after being arrested by soldiers, that Hajio Dama and Dulane Hassan Nur were ill-treated in detention and that Goyare Aden Olhaye was shot and wounded in custody. Many other detainees, perhaps as many as a few hundred, are being held in Godey, the regional capital, Kebri Dahar, Wardheer, Galafo, Danane and other south-eastern towns. It seems that some were detained after demonstrations against the central government, and that all the detainees are members or supporters of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) party. The ONLF won the majority of seats in the regional assembly elected in January 1993 for Region Five, the "Somali Region".

The ONLF has called since early 1992 - most recently at a press conference in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, on 28 January 1994 - for a referendum on self-determination and independence for the region, known also as the Ogaden (and called "Ogadenia" by the ONLF). The Ethiopian government, which is headed by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), whose former guerrilla force constitutes the present Ethiopian security forces, opposes this. Instead it supports different ethnic Somali parties which reject independence for the region and work with the EPRDF. In the past two years there have been sporadic outbreaks of violence between central government troops and government opponents in this remote, under-developed and disturbed region, where there has been famine among both Ethiopian Somalis and refugees from neighbouring Somalia.

Several ONLF members have been detained or killed in the past two years on account of their opposition to the central government. An ONLF central committee member, Kaafi Yusuf Ali, was detained in Kebri Dahar in January 1992 and died in custody in July that year, allegedly as a result of torture. The same month, Mohamed Sheikh Mohamud Iraad, another ONLF central committee member, was shot dead by soldiers in Dagabur and Abdirashid Sulub Anshur, editor of the ONLF publication, was killed by troops in Kebri Dahar. Several senior ONLF officials arrested in Babile near Harar in June 1993 have "disappeared" and are feared dead, including Makaddin Mohamed Ali, Sheikh Abdirahman and Omar Hassan Ahmed.

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

- expressing concern at reports of the extrajudicial execution by government soldiers of Mohamed Omer Tubeh, Deeg Mohamud Arab and Abdullahi Ganey in Kebri Dahar and Wardheer;
- calling for an impartial inquiry into these reports and other recent killings by soldiers in the region, for its findings to be made public, and for any soldiers found responsible for unlawful killings to be brought to justice;
- calling for guarantees of the safety of those detained in different towns in south-eastern Ethiopia and investigation into allegations of torture or ill-treatment of Hajio Dama and Dulane Hassan Nur in Godey prison and Deeg Uraaq in Wardheer prison;
- urging that all detainees be immediately released if they are not promptly charged with recognizably criminal offences and given fair and early trials;
- appealing for detainees to be humanely treated and given immediate and regular access to their families, lawyers and medical treatment where needed.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency President Meles Zenawi
Office of the President
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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

2) Mr Seye Abraha
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
P OP Box 1373
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telegrams: Defence Minister, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 251 1 514300 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Mr Kinfe Gebre-Medhin
Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs (head of security)
Ministry of Internal Affairs
P O Box 5721
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telegrams: Vice-Minister Kinfe, Internal Affairs, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 251 1 514300 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Salutation: Dear Vice-Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Mr Hassan Shiffa
Coordinator of Police and Prison Administration
Ministry of Internal Affairs
P O Box 5721, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2) Mr Meheteme Solomon
Minister of Justice
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 7 April 1994.