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ETHIOPIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDS THE DERGUE TRIAL

An Amnesty International delegate is visiting Ethiopia from 23 to 29 June 1996 to attend the proceedings in the ongoing trial of 45 members of the former military government, known as the Dergue, who are charged with genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out between 1974 and 1991.

Professor Daniel Nsereko is Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Botswana. He is a Ugandan citizen.

Professor Nsereko will attend the trial proceedings as an observer and will report his findings to the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International. He will not be making public statements or giving media interviews during his visit.

The trial started in December 1994 with pre-trial applications, when an earlier Amnesty International representative was in attendance. The prosecution case, which began in early 1996, is still at an early stage. This is the first of a planned series of trials of over 1,500 former officials, most of whom have been detained since 1991. The remainder are still to be charged. The trial is being held in the Central High Court in Addis Ababa and is expected to continue for a long time yet.

Amnesty International is observing this important political trial in line with its support of a policy of "no impunity for human rights violators" and in order to ensure that the trial conforms to recognized international standards of fair trial. The organization has campaigned vigorously against the persistent pattern of gross human rights violations during the 17 year brutal dictatorship of the Dergue and Workers Party of Ethiopia government headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Mengistu Haile-Mariam, who is currently in exile in Zimbabwe and being tried *in absentia* in the current trial in Ethiopia.

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