

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 25/012/2004

23 November 2004

Further Information on UA 180/04 (AFR 25/006/2004, 21 May 2004) and follow-ups (AFR 25/008/2004, 19 July 2004; AFR 25/011/2004, 28 September 2004) - Fear of torture/arbitrary detention/prisoners of conscience

ETHIOPIA **Diribi Demissie (m), President of the Mecha Tulema Association (MTA)**
Gemechu Feyera (m), MTA Vice-President
Sentayehu Workneh (m), MTA Treasurer

(m); **Aduugna Daba (m); Alemayehu Gerba (m); Bekuma Yemdo (m); Bilisuma Debare**

(m); **Kebebo Bobassa (m); Milkessa Dandana (m); Talila Bulbula (m); Tolessa Debella**
Bayissa Belay (m); Ebissa Melaku (m); Legesse Yebetu (m); Teshale Tesfaye (m);
Bogale Shifferaw; Zewdu (second name unknown) (m) – students

New names: Dabassa Wakjira (m), journalist
Nega Kefane Gudata (m), NGO worker

Diribi Demissie, Gemechu Feyera and Sentayehu Workneh were released on 15 November, on bail of 10,000 birr (US\$1,230) each. The Central Prison authorities had initially refused to release the men, after the Supreme Court rejected a prosecution appeal against the releases, which had been ordered by the High Court.

Other detainees are also applying for release on bail.

Amnesty International considered the three men to be prisoners of conscience. They are the leaders of the long-established Oromo welfare organisation, the Mecha Tulema Association, which the government appears determined to shut down. They deny charges of inciting armed uprising and membership of the armed opposition Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which have been laid against them and 25 others still detained and applying for provisional release. Those still detained include 22 students (including most of the students named above), Ethiopian Television deputy news editor Dabassa Wakjira, and Nega Kefane Gudata of the Oromo Development Association. Ayelew Itisa, a secretary in the MTA office, has been released on bail.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- welcoming the release on bail of Diribi Demissie, Gemechu Feyera and Sentayehu Workneh, whom Amnesty International considered to be prisoners of conscience;
- asking the authorities to respond swiftly to applications for bail by others facing the same charges, such as Dabassa Wakjira and Nega Kefane Gudata;
- asking for assurances that all will be tried promptly and fairly, in accordance with international standards for fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister

His Excellency Meles Zenawi

Office of the Prime Minister

P O Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: + 251 1 552020
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice
Mr Harke Haroye
Ministry of Justice
P O Box 1370
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: + 251 1 520874
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Chief Administrator of Prisons (Addis Ababa)

Mr Abraham Wolde-Aregay
Central Prison
P O Box 2234
Addis Ababa

Salutation: Dear Sir

Mr Kemal Bedri
President of the Supreme Court
Federal Supreme Court
P O Box 6166
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Salutation: Dear President of the Supreme Court

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 4 January 2005.