

21 June 2002

Further information on UA 101/02 (AFR 25/010/2002, 3 April 2002) and follow-ups (AFR 25/014/2002, 19 April 2002) - Fear of torture / Excessive use of force by security forces / Incommunicado detention

ETHIOPIA Hundreds of school students & others arrested in Oromia region

Bekele Jirata (m) - vice-president of Macha Tulama Association, agricultural engineer

Gemeda Dinagde (m) & Dereje Sibu (m), medical doctors, Nekemte

Wakjira Abdissa (m) - medical doctor in Gimbi

Ayana Kabata (m), Tesfaye Burayu (m) & Getachew Ummata (m) - teachers in Nekemte

Biratu Qanani (m), Atsede Tola (f) & Lemlem Tesfaye (f) - students in Nekemte

Zelalem Abebe (m) & Bekele Tedla (m) - students in Najo

Biratu Qanani (m), Berhanu Ismail (m) & Tadelle Kalbassa (m) - teachers in Mendi

Mohamed Aberra (m), Ahmed Said (m) & Meseret Tamiru (f) - students in Gimbi

Tolessa Debela (m) & Daniel Gemechu (m), Addis Ababa University students

New Names: Dinkenesh Deressa Kitila (f) - mother of four children

Professor Ephraim Mammo (m) - retired President of Alemayehu University in Harar (eastern Ethiopia), former Dean of the College of Veterinary Science, was arrested in the western town of Dembi Dollo in early June, and remains in detention.

aged 64

Following demonstrations by school children in late March and April, hundreds more people including Dinkenesh Deressa Kitila and Professor Ephraim Mammo have been arrested. Some of the detainees are being held incommunicado and are at risk of torture. Others may have "disappeared" or could be detained for long periods without charge or trial.

Dinkenesh Deressa Kitila, a production manager for Total Oil company in Addis Ababa and a mother of four children, was arrested in Addis Ababa on 7 June.

Professor Ephraim Mammo, retired President of Alemayehu University in Harar (eastern Ethiopia), former Dean of the College of Veterinary Science, was arrested in the western town of Dembi Dollo in early June, and remains in detention.

Hundreds of Oromos have been detained on suspicion of being Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) supporters. Few detainees have in the past been brought before a court within 48 hours as required by law, and most were never charged even after years of detention. Those who were charged did not receive fair trials. Many of those recently arrested might be prisoners of conscience who did not advocate support for the OLF.

Only a few of those arrested in connection with the student demonstrations have been released - some, for example, in Nekemte town in western Oromia, and several Oromo students from the University of Addis Ababa, were then dismissed from their studies. The government has not so far established an independent inquiry into the killings of several students in the demonstrations. There have been reports of further arbitrary killings of students and others in separate incidents during these arrests.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Dinkenesh Deressa Kitila, Professor Ephraim Mammo and hundreds of others detained as part of a continuing pattern of arrests, connected to the demonstrations in Oromia region;
- calling for investigations into allegations of torture during incommunicado detention or "disappearances";
- calling for the detainees to be given immediate access to their families and legal representatives, any medical treatment they may need and access to an appropriate international humanitarian organization such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC);
- stating that those detained who are children under 18 should be treated in accordance with Ethiopia's human rights obligations as a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- urging that those arrested be either charged with recognizable criminal offences and given a prompt and fair trial, or released;
- repeating requests for an independent and impartial inquiry into the shootings of demonstrators and others killed during the arrest operation.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Meles Zenawi
Prime Minister
Prime Minister's Office

P O Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telegrams: Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: + 251 1 552 020 (this number may be difficult to get through to but please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Major Befkadu Tolera
Federal Commissioner of Police
Ministry of Justice

P O Box 21321, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telegrams: Federal Commissioner of Police, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: + 251 1 517 775

Salutation: Dear Commissioner

Mr Juneidin Sado
President of Oromia Region
Oromia Regional State Council

P O Box 62297, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia *(note amended address)*

Telegram: Oromia President Juneidin Sado, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Salutation: Dear Regional President

COPIES TO:

Mr Getachew Assefa
General Manager of Public Security

Prime Minister's Office
P O Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
**Fax:+ 251 1 552 020 (this number may be difficult to get through to but please
keep trying)**
Salutation:Dear Sir

Mr Harke Haroye
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
P O Box 1370, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telegram: Minister of Justice, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax:+ 251 1 517 775
Salutation:Dear Minister

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 2 August 2002.