

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 25/17/94
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This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 25 per Section.

20 July 1994

Further information on UA 35/94 (AFR 25/05/94, 2 February 1994 and follow-ups (AFR 25/09/94, 25 February, AFR 25/10/94, 14 April, AFR 25/13/94, 18 May) - Legal Concern / Fear of Ill-Treatment

ETHIOPIA Arrests of Journalists:

Tefera Asmare (sentenced to 18 months imprisonment)
Meleskachew Amha (detained without charge)
Berehane Mewa (detained without charge)
Daniel Kifle (sentenced to 18 months imprisonment)
Wolde-Ghiorgis Wolde-Michael (detained without charge)
Eyob Demeke (released)

"Disappearances": Mesfin Shifferaw ("reappeared")
Nayk Kassaye (still "disappeared")

New names: Habtamu Belete (Editor in Chief of *Ruhama* magazine)
Girma Endrias (Editor of *Ruhama* magazine)
Melaku Tadesse (Editor-in-Chief of *Lubar* magazine)
Tesfaye Tadesse (Publisher of *Lubar* magazine)
Mulugetta Lule (Editor of *Tobia*, Ethiopian Free Journalists Association Vice Chairman)

Daniel Kifle, arrested on 15 January 1994, was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment under the Press Law on 1 June on account of articles based on a clandestine opposition radio broadcast, that alleged corruption by the Prime Minister and claimed that Eritrean troops were deployed in Ethiopia.

Mulugetta Lule was sentenced on 1 June to a suspended one-year prison term and fined for publishing a communiqué by the Kefagne rebel fighting group. The communiqué had claimed heavy casualties by government troops, which were denied by the government. His case is currently under appeal.

Mesfin Shifferaw has "re-appeared" (details still unclear). Nayk Kassaye is still "disappeared".

Tefera Asmare, who is currently serving a two-year sentence, was given an 18-month suspended sentence on 29 June for allegedly disseminating false information. The appeal against his sentence to two years imprisonment is still pending before the Supreme Court.

Meleskachew Amha and Berehane Mewa are still detained without charge and with bail refused. They have been held on repeatedly renewed 14-day court orders requested by the police for investigation. On 24 June, a judge is reported to have closed the 2nd investigation file against them in court, on the grounds that the police had been given sufficient remand time for their investigation.

However Meleskachew Ama and Berehane Mewa were not released and they were subsequently detained illegally for six days until 30 June, when the police opened a third file against them. They are held at the Central Investigations Office. They have access to their families but no official access to their lawyers.

Wolde-Ghiorgis Wolde Michael is reportedly held without charge or access to lawyers and relatives in Shashamane (175 kms south of Addis Ababa). There is concern that he may have been physically ill-treated.

Melaku Tadesse, Habtamu Belete and Girma Endrias were sentenced to six months imprisonment for contempt of court around 7 July. They had been arrested in Addis Ababa in mid-June with Tesfaye Tadesse, who remains in detention, and were held by the police for questioning in connection with published articles criticising government troops and officials. Several court cases involving journalists provisionally released on bond are still continuing, including against Kefale Mammo, chairman of the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association and editor of *Ruh* magazine.

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

- expressing concern about continuing arrests and the detention without charge of journalists and publishers, also the sentencing of Tefera Asmare and Daniel Kifle to prison terms, on account of articles they published which did not advocate violence;
- requesting a full investigation by the authorities into the "disappearance" of Nayk Kassaye;
- calling for the immediate release of these journalists as prisoners of conscience and withdrawal of all charges relating to their professional journalism;
- expressing concern at the report of ill-treatment of Wolde-Ghiorgis Wolde-Michael and calling for him to be given immediate, regular and private access to his doctor, relatives and lawyers.

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 or 511244 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Mr Mahteme Solomon (note correct spelling)

Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, PO Box 1370, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Faxes: + 251 1 514300 or 511244 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Mr Kinfu Gebre-Medhin

Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs (head of security)

Ministry of Internal Affairs, P O Box 5721, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telegrams: Vice Minister of 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 TO:

Dr Negasso Gidada, Minister of Information, Ministry of Information

P O Box 1364, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. **Faxes: + 251 1 514300**

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

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

Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFJA), P O Box 4067, 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 31 August 1994.