

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 23/06/92

Distr: UA/SC

UA 399/92

Hunger strike / Health concern / Prisoner of Conscience

17 December 1992

DJIBOUTI:

Ali Aref, 58, former head of government (1976)
Mohamed Daoud Chehem, former director of finance
Mohamed Aden Aboubaker, insurance assessor
Mohamed Hassanleh Abakari, army officer
Abdoulkader Mohamed Abass, army officer
Mohamed Bouha Ali, port employee
Orbisso Mohamed Ali, soldier
Mohamed Ali Moumin, police officer
Ahmed Dini Moyale, police officer
Mohamed Ahmed Adrouh, police officer
Bahloul Abdallah Issa, businessman
Abdalla Ali Mohamed, former US embassy employee

Amnesty International is concerned about the 12 above named prisoners of conscience who have been on hunger strike in Gabode prison in the capital, Djibouti, since 8 December 1992, some of whom are seriously ill. Amnesty International is calling for them to be given urgent medical treatment.

The prisoners are demanding that the authorities establish a judicial inquiry into an incident which occurred in the prison on the 8 December 1992. A prison guard fired a shot at these and other prisoners after they had been ordered to go out of their cells into a courtyard without explanation. Noone was injured in the shooting, which reportedly took place after an argument between a prisoner and a prison guard.

Ali Aref is seriously ill in prison as a result of his hunger-strike. Three other hunger-strikers were taken to hospital for treatment after falling ill but were returned to prison.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The incident took place five days after Amnesty International published a report on Djibouti calling for the release of Ali Aref and 11 other prisoners of conscience. They had been arrested in January 1991 with hundreds of other members of the Afar ethnic group, which is noted for its opposition to President Hassan Gouled Aptidon's government, and accused of conspiring to overthrow the government by violent means. They were jailed for prison terms of 10 and five years after a trial by a special security tribunal in July 1992. In its report, Amnesty International, which sent an observer to the trial, said the trial was grossly unfair and that they were prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their non-violent opposition to the government.

Djibouti's first multi-party parliamentary elections for 11 years are due to take place on 18 December 1992.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams and airmail letters either in French, English or your own language:

- expressing concern that the above named prisoners began a hunger strike on 8 December 1992 in protest at the shooting incident which occurred in Gabode prison;

Page 2 of UA 399/92

- seeking information on their present condition and requesting the authorities to provide them with all necessary medical care, including hospital treatment if needed;

- calling for an independent inquiry into the shooting incident in Gabode prison on 8 December 1992, and a guarantee of the safety of these prisoners;

- reiterating appeals for the immediate release of these prisoners of conscience.

APPEALS TO:

1) Son Excellence Hassan Gouled Aptidon
Président de la République
La Présidence
BP 6

DJIBOUTI

République de Djibouti

Telegrams: Président Aptidon, Djibouti, Djibouti

Telexes: 5871 DJ

Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République

2) Monsieur Ougoureh Hassan Ibrahim
Ministre de la Justice et des Affaires Penitentiaires
Ministère de la Justice
BP 12

DJIBOUTI

République de Djibouti

Telegrams: Ministère de la Justice Ibrahim, Djibouti, Djibouti

Telexes: 5871 DJ

Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

3) Monsieur Mohamed Ali Afkada
Procureur Général
BP 12

DJIBOUTI

République de Djibouti

Telegrams: Procureur Général Afkada, Djibouti, Djibouti

Telexes: 5871 DJ

Faxes: + 253 355049 / + 253 350174

Salutation: Monsieur le Procureur Général

and to diplomatic representatives of Djibouti accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 28 January 1992.