

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on EXTRA 107/93 (AFR 25/15/93, 17 December 1993) and follow-up (AFR 25/03/94, 6 January 1994) - Legal Concern

ETHIOPIA: Arrest of exiles returning for a Conference on Peace and Reconciliation

Ibsa Gutama, representative of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), former Minister of Education (1991-1992), former prisoner of conscience (1980-1990) - released

Abera Yemane-Ab, representative of the Coalition of Ethiopian Forces (COEDF) and the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (Me'isone) Democratic

Genenew Assefa, representative of COEDF (but not of the People's Revolutionary Party, EPRP, as previously - released Ethiopian stated)

Genet Girma (f), representative of COEDF and EPRP - released

Seyoum Zenebe, representative of the Ethiopian Medhin Party (EMDP) - released Democratic

Mesfin Teferra, representative of COEDF - released

Alemayehu Deressa, Swedish citizen, representative of Ethiopian Democratic Forum in Sweden - released

Lencho Latta, former deputy secretary general of OLF - released

and up to 40 demonstrators

Four of the five remaining prisoners listed above, who were arrested in Addis Ababa on 15/16 December 1993 and kept in custody, were released on 17 February 1994 by the Central High Court. The prosecution withdrew charges of incitement of armed rebellion and other offences against **Genenew Assefa, Genet Girma, Seyoum Zenebe** and **Mesfin Teferra**. Their release was apparently the consequence of a letter they wrote to the Minister of Justice affirming that their purpose in returning to Ethiopia was to work for peace and reconciliation, which the Minister accepted. They had appeared in court several times but the prosecution had not yet submitted any evidence to support the charges against them. The authorities thus seem to have acknowledged that they were prisoners of conscience.

Abera Yemane-Ab remains in custody, although he is appealing to the Supreme Court for release on bail. He is still being held on the same charges as the others who have been released. Contrary to some reports, he has not as yet been charged with involvement in human rights abuses under the previous government.

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

- welcoming the release of Genenew Assefa, Genet Girma, Seyoum Zenebe and Mesfin Teferra, who were evidently prisoners of conscience;
- urging that Abera Yemane-Ab also be released on the same grounds unless he is to be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence and guaranteed a fair and early trial.

APPEALS TO:

1) President:

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 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs (head of security):

Mr Kinfe Wolde-Mariam
Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs
Ministry of Internal Affairs
P O Box 5721 (note correction), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telegrams: Vice-Minister Internal Affairs Kinfe, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telexes/Faxes: as for the President
Salutation: Dear Vice-Minister

3) Minister of Justice:

Mr Meheteme Solomon
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
P O Box 1370, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telegrams: Minister of Justice Meheteme Solomon, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telegrams/Faxes: as for President
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Mr Hassan Shiffa, Coordinator of Police and Prisons Administration,
Ministry of Internal Affairs, PO Box 2556 (corrected) 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 22 March 1994.