

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 25/07/97

Please limit appeals to 30 per Section.

2 April 1997

Further information on EXTRA 40/97 (AFR 25/05/97, 24 March 1997) - Ill-treatment / Prisoners of conscience

ETHIOPIA200 university students

new name: Ishetu Alene, a blind law student

Many of the students detained at a peaceful demonstration in Addis Ababa on 21 March 1997 have been released after being held without charge for five days in a police barracks. They were freed when they signed a statement, as demanded by the authorities, in which they requested pardon, admitted they should not have participated in an illegal demonstration, and acknowledged that if they repeated this offence they would be taken to court.

While in the police barracks the students were made to perform harsh physical exercises, beaten if they failed, and given very little food. They were refused medical treatment and visits. They were interrogated by police and statements were taken, but the students were not taken to court within the stipulated 48-hour period. Some of the detainees reportedly suffered severe injuries, but only obtained medical treatment after release.

Forty-one students remain in custody -- the alleged ringleaders and others who refused to sign the statement. They have not yet been taken to court.

Among those still detained is Ishetu Alene, a blind student who was badly beaten because he could not keep up with the physical exercises and apparently also because he made a speech to the students before the demonstration.

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

- welcoming the releases;
- renewing appeals for the immediate and unconditional release of some 41 students remaining in detention, including Ishetu Alene, as they are prisoners of conscience;
- appealing for them to be given immediate access to relatives and lawyers, and to medical treatment;
- calling for an independent and impartial inquiry into the reports of ill-treatment in the police barracks.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Meles Zenawi
Prime Minister
Prime Minister's Office
P O Box 1031, Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Telegrams: Prime Minister Meles, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: +2511 552030

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Mahteme Solomon
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
P O Box 1370, Addis Ababa

Ethiopia

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Faxes: +2511 550722

Salutation: Dear Minister

Colonel Legesse Tegegne

Commissioner of Police

Ministry of Justice

P O Box 1370

Addis Ababa

Telegrams: Police Commissioner, Justice Ministry, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: +2511 550722

Salutation: Dear Colonel

COPIES TO:

- Mr Kemal Bedri, Chief Justice, Supreme Court, P O Box 6166, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, **Fax: +2511 550278**
- Mr Seyoum Mesfin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P O Box 393, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, **Fax: +2511 514300**
- Dr Mogesse Ashenafi, President, Addis Ababa University, P O Box 1176, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, **Fax: +2511 550911**
- Mr Ali Abdo, President of Addis Ababa Administrative Council, P O Box 2445, 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 10 May 1997.