

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Appeals should be limited to 25 per section. Please involve journalists and media organizations in this appeal.

Further information on UA 35/94 (AFR 25/05/94, 2 February 1994 and follow up 25 February 1994, AFR 25/09/94) - Legal Concern

ETHIOPIA:Journalists:

RELEASED:

Asrat Damtew, Antensay Tafesse, Nayk Kassaye, Tesfaye Berehanu, Yohannes Abebe, Iskinder Negga, Kinfe Assefa, Mulugeta Jigo, Nesanet Tesfaye, Mesele Haddis, Kibret Mekonnen, Befekadu Moroda

STILL DETAINED:

Meleskachew Amha, Berehane Mewa, Daniel Kifle, Daniel Tadesse, Tefera Asmare, Girmay Gebre Tsadik

NEW ARRESTS:

Kefale Mammo (Chairman - Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association), Kassa Keraga (Editor of a religious journal), Tenker Tedla, Belanyeh Alegu, Feleke Alemu, Wolde-Ghiorgis Wolde-Michael

DISAPPEARANCE: Mesfin Shifferaw

Twelve publishers and journalists from new independent magazines, arrested in January/February 1994, have been provisionally released. Some of them were reportedly charged with offences against the Press Law (1992) and released on bail, while others were provisionally released without having been formally charged.

Six others still remain in prison:

Tefera Asmare (editor of *Ethiopia* magazine) was sentenced to two years' imprisonment on 25 March on account of two articles he published. He is due back in court soon to face a third charge. **Daniel Kifle, Daniel Tadesse and Girmay Gebre-Tsadik** are still in police custody but it is not clear if they have been formally charged. **Meleskachew Amha and Berehane Mewa** (who is also a prominent businessman and chairman of the Ethiopian Chemical Association) were provisionally released in early March. They were immediately re-arrested apparently in connection with an article they published in *Dewol* and *Alef* magazines containing a statement by a hitherto unknown group, the *Ethiopian Unity Brigade*, which claimed responsibility for an attack on a US diplomat in March.

Six more journalists have been recently arrested, bringing to 12 the total number of journalists currently in detention for political offences:

Kefale Mammo, chairman of the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association and editor-in-chief of *Ruh* magazine was arrested on 7 April and has not been formally charged: the real reason for his arrest may be his campaigning for the release of the journalists and for the freedom of the press in Ethiopia, and for contacting international media organizations.

Tenker Tedla, Belanyeh Alegu and Feleke Alemu of *Mekdela* magazine were arrested on 10 March and have not been formally charged. **Wolde-Ghiorgis Wolde-Michael** of *Muday* magazine was arrested on 17 March and has not been formally charged.

Kassa Keraga of *Ye Igziabeher Mengist* ("Kingdom of God") religious magazine was arrested in February, fined for insulting Islam, and is serving a two-year prison sentence on account of being unable to pay the fine. Six independent magazines, including *Ruh* and *Muday*, have been forced to close.

There is no new information about another journalist, **Mesfin Shifferaw**, editor of *Twaf* magazine, who has been missing since 11 February 1994. He is a diabetic and requires regular medication. The authorities have said that he was not arrested. Fears continue to be expressed that he may be detained in secret, although Amnesty International has not been given any evidence to confirm this and is continuing its investigations.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of Kefale Mammo, chairman of the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association, who had criticised repression of journalists in Ethiopia and had earlier been questioned about articles he had published criticising the government;
- expressing concern about continuing arrests and detentions of journalists, including the sentencing of Tefera Asmare and Kassa Keraga 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 Mesfin Shifferaw;
- appealing for the immediate release of these journalists as prisoners of conscience and withdrawal of all charges relating to their professional journalism.

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

2) Mr Meheteme Solomon
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
P O Box 1370, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 251 1 514300 (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: via 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 OF YOUR APPEALS 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 26 May 1994.