

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 25/13/94
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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 ups (AFR 25/09/94, 25 February and AFR 25/10/94, 14 April) - Legal Concern

ETHIOPIA Arrests of journalists

More releases: Kefale Mammo (Chairman, Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association), Kassa Keraga (editor of a religious journal), Tenker Tereda, Belayneh Asegu, Feleke Alemu, Daniel Tadesse, Girmay Gebre-Tsadik (note some corrected names)

Still detained: Tefera Asmare (appealing against a two-year prison sentence)
Detained without charge: Meleskachew Amha, Berehane Mewa, Daniel Kifle, Wolde-Ghiorgis Wolde-Michael

new name: Eyob Demeke

"Disappearance": Mesfin Shifferaw

new name: Nayk Kassaye

Kefale Mammo, chairman of the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association and editor-in-chief of *Ruh* magazine was freed on 26 April after 19 days in detention. He was not charged but the authorities said he was arrested because he was a former Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) member (in the mid-1980s) and had contravened a ban on political activity by attending a Peace and Reconciliation Conference in December 1993 when returning exiles were arrested (see EXTRA 107/93, AFR 25/15/93, 17 December 1993 and updates). He was not in fact arrested at the time and had only attended as an observer. The real reason for his arrest was evidently his campaigning for the release of imprisoned journalists and for contacting international media organizations.

Another journalist is missing - **Nayk Kassaye**, editor of *Beza* magazine, who had earlier been arrested but released on bail. He "disappeared" after leaving his parents' home on 9 May 1994. As with the case of **Mesfin Shifferaw** - about whom there is no news and deepening concern - the police deny holding him but it is feared that like several other suspected government opponents he may be held secretly for interrogation by the security service.

The Minister of Justice recently stated that 43 cases of journalists are pending for probable prosecution. Many more independent journalists have also been questioned and released without charge or on a guarantee bond, including those named above with Kefale Mammo.

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

- welcoming the release of Kefale Mammo and other journalists;
- expressing concern about continuing arrests and detentions of journalists, including the sentencing of Tefera Asmare to a prison term, on account of articles they published which did not advocate violence;

- requesting a full investigation by the authorities into the "disappearances" of Mesfin Shifferaw and Nayk Kassaye;
- 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 or 511244 (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 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: 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 29 June 1994.