

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 25/25/98

7 October 1998

Further information on UA 225/98 (AFR 25/24/98, 19 August 1998) - Cruel, Inhuman and degrading treatment/ Possible prisoner of conscience / Reported death threats

ETHIOPIA Dr Taye Woldesemayat

Dr Taye Woldesemayat appeared in court on 18 September 1998. He was no longer being held in hand-chains. Dr Taye had originally been ordered to be permanently held in hand-chains by the judge overseeing his trial on 28 July because of his complaints, and while the removal of the chains does not appear to have been as a result of a new court order, Amnesty International welcomes this development.

Dr Taye continues to be held in a special so-called "darkness cell" in the Central Prison, which lacks natural daylight but has constant electric light. This cell is used as a form of punishment, or as a means of isolating special prisoners.

Dr Taye is still denied confidential access to his lawyer. Confidential access by a prisoner to his/her lawyer is a basic condition of international standards of fair trial.

In recent hearings of Dr Taye's trial, confessions of some of Dr Taye's co-defendants have been retracted on the grounds that they were extracted under torture. These torture allegations have not been investigated by the court.

No further action is required from the UA network. Thank you to all those who sent appeals. Amnesty International continues to follow closely Dr Taye's trial and treatment in prison.