

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Legal Concern/Arbitrary detention

24 June 1992

ETHIOPIA:

**Tadele Demeke (female)
and over 20 others, including:**

Shasha Negga (female)

Said Hassen

Said Daoud

Beyene Gura

On 1 June 1992 Tadele Demeke and over 20 other officially recognized Ethiopian refugees were arrested by the Sudanese authorities in Gedaref in eastern Sudan, and subsequently repatriated against their will to Ethiopia where they were detained in Azezo military airport in Gondar. Amnesty International is concerned at their *refoulement* and subsequent detention without charge.

Tadele Demeke had been studying for a Masters of Arts (MA) degree at the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom since 1990 with sponsorship from World University Service, Sudan Council of Churches and Christian Aid. A refugee in Sudan since 1980, she had returned there in May 1992 to collect data for her MA dissertation, with travel papers issued by the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Her work in a Sudan Council of Churches refugee project was featured in a recent film, "SIDET - Forced Exile". Tadele Demeke suffers from acute asthma and needs to take regular medication. The University of East Anglia has appealed for her immediate return to the United Kingdom.

The others who were returned to Ethiopia at the same time were refugees in Sudan. Shasha Negga's two small children were left in Khartoum.

On about 16 June 1992 most members of this group of prisoners, including Tadele Demeke, were reportedly moved from Gondar, but their current whereabouts in custody are unknown.

Amnesty International has urged the Ethiopian authorities to investigate these cases, the reasons and legal basis for their detention and the circumstances of their involuntary repatriation from Sudan. No reply has yet been received. The organization has also protested about their *refoulement* to the Sudanese government.

BACKGROUND

These Ethiopian refugees were allegedly handed over to the Ethiopian authorities because, although originally refugees from the former government headed by Mengistu Haile-Mariam (overthrown in May 1991), they opposed the present

government headed by President Meles Zenawi, leader of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The refugees were said to belong to the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), which has not reconciled with the EPRDF. The EPRP's previous military activity appears to have ended with the detention of its military wing in Ethiopia in mid-1991 but some EPRP political activists remain active in exile in several countries including Sudan. According to reports, however, Tadele Demeke was no longer politically active in the EPRP and has not advocated violence against the present government.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/express and airmail letters:

- protesting at the detention of Tadele Demeke and over 20 other refugees (including those named above) on their forcible return from Sudan and asking for the reasons for their detention;
- asking for information regarding their legal status and their whereabouts in custody and urging that they have access to their relatives;
- seeking assurances that they are being humanely treated and are receiving any necessary medical treatment - in particular that Tadele Demeke is receiving medication for her asthma;
- appealing for Tadele Demeke's immediate release to enable her to return to her studies in the United Kingdom and for the release of any others who are detained on account of the non-violent expression of their opinions.

APPEALS TO

1) His Excellency **Salutation: Your Excellency**
President Meles Zenawi
Office of the President
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Telegrams: President Zenawi, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2) Colonel Alemseged Gebre-Yohannes **Salutation: Dear Sir**
Commissioner of Police
Ministry of Internal Affairs
PO Box 2556
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Telegrams: Commissioner of Police Gebre-Yohannes, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

3) Commissioner Hassan Shiffa **Salutation: Dear Sir**
Commissioner of Prisons
Ministry of Internal Affairs
PO Box 2556
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Telegrams: Commissioner of Prisons Shiffa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Mr Seyoum Mesfin
Minister of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 393
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

2) The Acting Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 1370
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

and to diplomatic representatives of Ethiopia in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 August 1992.