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23 June 2005

Further Information on UA 154/05 (AFR 25/001/2005, 07 June 2005) Fear of torture / Prisoners of conscience

ETHIOPIA	Student demonstrators at Addis Ababa University (AAU) and elsewhere and many opposition party officials and supporters, including: Andargachew Tsege (m), writer, former deputy Mayor of Addis Ababa	
	Gebrechristos Haileselassie (m) Azeb Amare (f)	Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) office staff in Addis Ababa
	Endale Hailu (m)	]
	Haileyesus Ijiga (in Bahar Dar region)	1
	Bisrat Abbi (in Dessie region)	Î.
	Getachew Mogesse (in Arsi region)	CUD regional branch leaders
	Kemirte Kamma (in Arba Minch region)	ĺ.
	Gizaw Gebremedhin (in Jimma region)	1
	Shemsu Sesekicho (in Gurage zone)	1

On 18 June, the Federal Commissioner of Police announced that 690 detainees arrested between 6 and 10 June in post-election demonstrations against alleged election fraud have been released without charge. Thousands of others, including those named above, are reported to remain in incommunicado detention. They are at risk of torture or ill-treatment, and enforced "disappearance".

The Police Commissioner stated that 3,130 detainees are held at Ziwai military camp, 225km south of Addis Ababa. He said that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Ethiopian Red Cross and family members would be immediately allowed access to these detainees. Conditions at Ziwai army camp, which is not an officially-designated place of custody, are known to be harsh, with overcrowding, poor hygiene, a high risk of malaria and very poor medical facilities. Police have said the Ziwai detainees are being "screened" (interrogated), and those found to have been involved in violence would be prosecuted. On 22 June foreign diplomats were allowed to visit Ziwai army camp and expressed concern over the lack of transparency in "screening" prisoners.

Writer Andargachew Tsege, who was detained on 8 June, is among those held at Ziwai army camp. He may have been detained in connection with his recent book which criticised the government. He is a former member of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) party and deputy mayor of Addis Ababa from 1991 to 1994, when he resigned on account of differences with the government. He is now based in the UK, but travelled to Ethiopia shortly before the elections to support the opposition party Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD).

Arrests of members and supporters of the CUD and another opposition coalition party, the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF), are continuing in different places. Altogether several thousand people are reportedly detained, mostly in undesignated prisons. All the detainees have been held incommunicado without charge or access to legal counsel, without being presented before a court within 48 hours as Ethiopian law demands, and without their relatives being told where they are. They are at risk of being tortured or ill-treated in the "screening" process, or of enforced "disappearance". Many of the 2,000 Addis Ababa University students who were arrested on 6-7 June and taken to Sendafa police training college, 40km north of Addis Ababa, are reportedly still detained. They were allegedly stripped, forced to do harsh exercises and beaten if they failed, and pressured to identify the demonstration leaders.

Six human rights defenders have also been detained - three investigators and three regional managers of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) (see UA 165/05, AFR 25/003/2005, 15 June 2005.)

The Minister of Information and the police have publicly accused the CUD of inciting violence and organizing the demonstrations. The CUD has denied both accusations. Some 40 CUD officials (including those named above) are currently detained, from Addis Ababa and certain regional offices where CUD alleges election fraud. They were allegedly detained to prevent them giving evidence to an investigation committee. Two MPs-elect – CUD chair Hailu Shawul and public relations officer Lidetu Ayalew – have been released from house arrest.

36 people were shot and killed by police during the protests in Addis Ababa on 8 June, and over 100 were wounded. On 12 June, an elected opposition Oromo National Congress (ONC – part of the UEDF coalition) parliamentary candidate, Tesfaye Adana Jara, a 24-year old health worker, was shot dead by police in Arsi town, 180km south of Addis Ababa. Police have detained six police officers in the murder investigation.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- welcoming the news that 690 detainees arrested in post-election demonstrations since 6 June have been released without charge, as well as the announcement that detainees at the Ziwai military camp will now have access to their families and to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC);
- appealing for the thousands of people reportedly still detained to be transferred immediately to designated places of custody, to be granted immediate access to their families, legal counsel and medical care, and to be brought without further delay before a court to be charged and given a fair and early trial, or else released;
- calling for guarantees that none of the detainees shall be subjected to torture or ill-treatment or enforced "disappearance":
- appealing for the immediate and unconditional release of those detainees who are prisoners of conscience, held solely for exercising their right to peacefully express their opinions;
- urging the government to establish an independent and impartial inquiry into the police killings of 36 people and excessive use of force during the protests.

## **APPEALS TO:**

Prime Minister

His Excellency Meles Zenawi
Office of the Prime Minister
PO Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: + 251 1 552020 / 552030 (please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Mr Harka Haroye Ministry of Justice

PO Box 1370, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **Fax:** + **251 1 51 77 75 / 520874** 

Email: ministry-justice@telecom.net.et

Salutation: Dear Minister

Federal Commissioner of Police

Mr Workneh Gebeyehu Ministry of Federal Affairs,

PO Box 5068, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Salutation: Dear Commissioner

## **COPIES TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr Seyoum Mesfin, Ministry of Foreign Affairs PO Box 393, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: + 251 1 514300

Email: mfa.addis@telecom.net.et

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 2 August 2005.