

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 25/27/94
Distr: UA/SC

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 25 per Section.

20 October 1994

Further information on UA 35/94 (AFR 25/05/94, 2 February 1994 and follow-ups (AFR 25/09/94, 25 February, AFR 25/10/94, 14 April, AFR 25/13/94, 18 May, AFR 25/17/94, 20 July) - Legal Concern

ETHIOPIA Arrests of Journalists:

Tefera Asmare (serving a two-year prison term)
Meleskachew Amha (released)
Berehane Mewa (released)
Daniel Kifle (serving an 18-month prison term)
Wolde-Ghiorgis Wolde-Michael (released)
Habtamu Belete (serving a six-month prison term)
Girma Endrias (serving a six-month prison term)
Melaku Tadesse (serving a six-month prison term)
Tesfaye Tadesse (still in detention without charge)
Nayk Kassaye (still "disappeared")

New names: Keleme Bogala
Tewedros Kebede
Kumsa Burayu
Tolera Tessema
Melaku Tsegaye

Arrests of journalists from the independent press are continuing.

Keleme Bogala and Tewedros Kebede, journalists at "Zog", an independent Amharic language weekly newspaper, were arrested on 10 October 1994 and are being held at the Maikelawi Police Central Investigation Centre in Addis Ababa. They have neither been taken to court nor charged.

Kumsa Burayu and Tolera Tessema, editor and deputy editor of an Oromo-language magazine, "Madda Walaabu", were detained in Addis Ababa on 4 October. They are also being held at Maikelawi Police Central Investigation Centre in Addis Ababa. It is believed that they are being held for publishing an Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) military communique. They have neither been taken to court nor charged.

Melaku Tsegaye, a journalist for "Muday" magazine, was sentenced to one year in prison in August for non-payment of a 10,000 birr (c. US \$1,900 equivalent) fine for publishing an article which alleged that the president of the Southern region was ill and unable to fulfil his official duties, and for printing a letter from former President Mengistu Haile-Mariam.

Tefera Asmare, who is currently serving a two-year sentence, has an appeal against a second prison sentence of 18 months imprisonment on another charge pending before the Supreme Court.

Tesfaye Tadesse, a lawyer and legal advisor to "Lubar" magazine and also chair of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council's legal committee (not "publisher" as stated in UA 35/94, AFR 25/17/94 of 20 July 1994), is presently detained in Addis Ababa Central Prison. He has still not been charged. He was detained

without charge for several weeks in 1993, apparently on account of his human rights activities.

Meleskachew Amha and Berehane Mewa, who were detained in February 1994, were provisionally released in July on a bond of 20,000 *birr* (c. US \$3,800 equivalent), without having been charged.

In August 1994 Wolde-Ghiorghis Wolde-Michael was also provisionally released on bond after five months in custody without being charged.

Amnesty International is currently investigating whether Daniel Kifle is a prisoner of conscience.

Several other journalists from the independent press who have been provisionally released on bond could yet face trial and imprisonment or substantial fines if convicted under the Press Law.

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

- expressing concern at the arrests of Keleme Bogala, Tewedros Kebede, Kumsa Burayu and Tolera Tessema on account of published articles which did not advocate violence, and calling for their immediate and unconditional release as prisoners of conscience;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Tefera Asmare, Habtamu Belete, Girma Endrias, Melaku Tadesse, Tesfaye Tadesse and Melaku Tsegaye whom Amnesty International also considers to be prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their peaceful opinions;
- repeating calls for full investigations by the authorities into the "disappearance" of Nayk Kassaye.

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 or 514042 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Mr Mahteme Solomon (note correct spelling)
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, PO Box 1370, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: +251 1 550722
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: Vice Minister of Internal Affairs, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telexes: 21050 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: +251 1 552020 or 514300 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as above)
Salutation: Dear Vice-Minister

COPIES TO:

Dr Negasso Gidada, Minister of Information, Ministry of Information
P O Box 1364, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. **Faxes: c/o Ministry of Affairs as above.**

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 23 November 1994.