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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 91/93

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: External - Ethiopia. Plus Good News story from USA

## NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

### INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Saudi Arabia - 14 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 89

Sudan - 29 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 89

### TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Laos - 9 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 87 & 88

Georgia - 10 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 83 Due to press office oversight (sorry!) this was sent out in News Service 90 without an embargo. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS ITEM IS EMBARGOED FOR 10 AUGUST.

Sierra Leone - 12 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 90

Angola - 20 August - PLEASE NOTE DATE. SEE ALSO NEWS SERVICE 90

North Korea - 1 October - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 88

### FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Myanmar - 7 October (International). PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE

EJEs and "Disappearances" - 20 October (International)

Venezuela - 10 November (International, linked to EJEs & Disappearances)

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**ETHIOPIA: ARRESTS OF TWO GOVERNMENT OPPONENTS AND COURT WITNESSES**

Amnesty International is concerned about the detention in Addis Ababa of two officials of the All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPO), an openly functioning opposition party. They are Professor Asrat Woldeyes, its president, and Sileshi Mulatu, its administrative officer. Seven supposed court witnesses against them are also detained.

The two AAPO leaders were detained on 19 July 1993 by a district court investigating police accusations against them, which they have denied. The police allege that they had planned to disturb the peace by promoting conflict between peoples at a meeting in the AAPO headquarters in late 1992. Seven farmers from Gojjam region arrested six weeks earlier, who were taken to the court as witnesses but who reportedly failed to identify the two defendants, are also detained with them in the police Central Investigation Prison known as 'Maikelawi'. They are all allowed visits from relatives and appear to be treated well. Sileshi Mulatu was already in detention: he had been arrested on 8 July and held by a court order for 14 days for investigation, with no reason given. Professor Asrat Woldeyes had been detained overnight the week before. Their current detention appear to be continuing indefinitely, though they have made bail applications.

Their detention follow previous harassment and short-term arrests of AAPO officials. In January 1993 several AAPO officials were detained or summoned to court. All were released on bond, Sileshi Mulatu after being detained for two days and Professor Asrat Woldeyes when he presented himself to the court after several days in hiding in fear of his life. Professor Asrat was accused of inciting inter-communal violence in a rally speech in the town of Debre Berhan but he denied this and no charge was brought against him.

Professor Asrat Woldeyes, 65, had been Professor of Surgery at Addis Ababa University until January 1993 when he and 40 other professors and lecturers were summarily dismissed by the government. This followed an incident on 4 January 1993 during which the security forces opened fire on university students. He graduated from Edinburgh University in Scotland and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (FRCS) of Scotland and also of England, and a member of the British Medical Association, the International College of Surgeons (USA) and the East African Surgical Association.

Sileshi Mulatu, aged about 60 years, is a retired civil servant and former educationalist, with two masters' degrees, one from a British university.

The AAPO, formed in 1992 to promote Amhara interests and the "unity of Ethiopia" (i.e. opposing the independence of Eritrea), has campaigned against detention and alleged killings by government troops or pro-government militia in northern Showa and Arsi regions of members of the Amhara ethnic group or "nationality", which was previously the dominant group in Ethiopia.

Amnesty International is concerned that Professor Asrat Woldeyes and Sileshi Mulatu appear to have been detained for the peaceful expression of opinions critical of the government. It has called for them to be immediately and unconditionally released if there is no evidence that they have committed a recognizably criminal offence. It has urged the authorities also to release immediately the seven farmers detained supposedly as witnesses against them.

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**USA: LETTER FROM MISSOURI CAPITAL PUNISHMENT RESOURCE CENTER**

The following letter was sent to Amnesty International by the Missouri Capital Punishment Resource Center on June 4 1993. It refers to the case of Bobby Lewis Shaw, who had been sentenced to death but whose sentence was eventually commuted to life imprisonment. Unfortunately, since this commutation Missouri has executed two more prisoners - one of them, Frederick Lashley, was the first juvenile offender to be executed in the state for over 60 years.

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I am writing to thank you and the membership of Amnesty International for all of your support for clemency for Bobby Lewis Shaw. Local Amnesty representatives attended the competency hearing on Bobby, and were able to very effectively expose the result-oriented "findings" of the state court judge who found Bobby competent. This was a key factor in our ability to win clemency for Bobby. The Governor's legal counsel showed me huge boxes overflowing with letters urging Governor Carnahan to spare Bobby's life. When I was in the Reception Room outside the Governor's office waiting to address him on Bobby's clemency application, the phone rang constantly with people calling from all over the world to support our clemency application.

Although Bobby himself is unable to appreciate the significance of the work that a tremendous number of people had to do to achieve this result, his family is very very grateful for all that you have done. Thank you for your support.