

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 151/05 (AFR 64/008/2005, 3 June 2005) - Prisoners of conscience/
Torture or ill-treatment/Detention without charge

ERITREA Binyam Gezay (m)
 Essey Stefanos (m), gospel singer
 Over 200 other members of the Meseret Christos evangelical church

Binyam Gezay and about 130 of the guests at his wedding have been released. However, some 70 others are still detained incommunicado without charge or trial, in Mai Serwa army camp.

A group of over 200 members of the minority Meseret Christos evangelical Christian church were arrested on 28 May at a church wedding party in the capital, Asmara. They were told they would not be released until they signed a document promising not to continue with their religious activities. Those still in custody have reportedly refused to sign.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Religious persecution continues to be a feature of life in Eritrea, despite government claims to the contrary. Since 2002, only the official Orthodox, Catholic and Lutheran Christian churches have been allowed to function, and evangelical churches have been banned. Several hundred members of evangelical churches, including 17 pastors, are currently detained.

Amnesty International will continue to campaign on behalf of those still in custody, through longer-term action forms. No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.