

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 25/002/2003

14 January 2003

Further Information on UA 12/03 (AFR 25/001/2003, 10 January 2003) "Disappearance" / excessive use of force / impunity / detention without charge new concern: Possible prisoners of conscience

ETHIOPIA

Detained members of the Lideta church

Released: Daniel Zerfu (m), church deacon

Daniel Zerfu is now believed to have been released from police custody, though it is not known whether he faces any charges. He was reportedly severely beaten following his arrest on 27 December 2002 and was treated at the police hospital in the capital Addis Ababa.

Some members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Lideta church detained by the Federal Police Special Force on 27 December, in connection with the dispute over the appointment of the new Lideta church leader, are still believed to be in detention and may be prisoners of conscience. Some of the protesters are alleged to have been tortured or ill-treated and Amnesty International remains concerned for their safety. Those arrested earlier in November have reportedly been provisionally released - no date has been set for their trial.

Please note that Lideta church is in Addis Ababa, **not** in Mekele, capital of Tigray region, as stated in the original UA.

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

- noting the release of Daniel Zerfu, but calling on the authorities to launch a full and impartial investigation into allegations of ill-treatment by members of the Federal Police Special Force;
- calling for those responsible for his ill-treatment to be immediately suspended and brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to either charge or immediately release members of the Lideta church who were detained on 27 December 2002 and may be prisoners of conscience;
- calling for any remaining detainees to have immediate access to a lawyer, their families and any medical assistance they may require;
- urging the authorities to send a clear message to members of the Federal Police Special Force that the excessive use of force against peaceful protesters will not be tolerated.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Meles Zenawi
Prime Minister

Prime Minister's Office
PO Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Telegrams: Prime Minister Meles Zenawi,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Fax: + 251 1 552 020 (this number may be difficult to get through to but please keep trying)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Harke Haroye

Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 1370
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: + 251 1 517775
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Workneh Gebeyehu (**note correction of name and address**)
Federal Commissioner of Police
Ministry of Federal Affairs
PO Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telegrams: Federal Commissioner of Police,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: + 251 1 552020 (it may be difficult to get through to this number, but please keep trying)
Salutation: Dear Commissioner

Mr Getachew Assefa
General Manager of Public Security
Prime Minister's Office
P O Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: + 251 1 552020 (it may be difficult to get through to this number, but please keep trying)
Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

His Holiness *Abune* Paulos
Ethiopian Orthodox
Church Headquarters
P O Box 1283
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Salutation: Your Holiness

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 25 February 2003.