

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 25/005/2003

21 February 2003

Further Information on UA 12/03 (AFR 25/001/2003, 10 January 2003) and follow-up (AFR 25/002/2003, 14 January 2003) - "Disappearance"/ excessive use of force/impunity/detention without charge/ possible prisoners of conscience New concern: Fear of torture

ETHIOPIA

Scores of detained members of the Lideta church

Members of the Lideta church, Addis Ababa, detained by the Federal Special Police on 27 December, are still believed to be in detention, and may be prisoners of conscience. Some of the detainees are alleged to have been tortured or ill treated and Amnesty International remains concerned for their safety.

On 17 February scores of young worshippers at the Lideta church were beaten by police and taken into custody. Some of them were reportedly tortured and subjected to cruel and degrading treatment. While many of the detainees were released the following day, an unknown number remain in custody and have not been charged with any offence. They are at risk of torture.

The youths were members of the Lideta Church Youth Sabbath Association who had assembled in one of the district auditoriums they had rented out for the occasion to commemorate the sixth year of their organization. During the commemoration the police reportedly arrived and violently dispersed the worshippers.

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

- expressing concern for the members of the Lideta church who were detained on 27 December;
- expressing concern for the safety of members of the Lideta Church Youth Sabbath Association, who were detained on 17 February;
- calling on the authorities to abide by its commitments under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and either charge all those still detained with a recognizable criminal offence and give them a prompt and fair trial in accordance with international standards or set them free immediately;
- calling on the authorities to investigate allegations of torture and ill treatment of the detainees;
- calling on the authorities to allow the detainees immediate access to their families and legal representatives, any medical treatment they may need and access to an appropriate international humanitarian organization such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC);
- expressing concern over the continuing use of excessive force by the security forces.

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

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 4 April 2003.