

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 25/023/2006

10 August 2006

Further Information on UA 195/06 (AFR 25/020/2006, 14 July 2006) and follow-up (AFR 25/021/2006, 4 August 2006) - Medical Concern/ Prisoner of Conscience

ETHIOPIA Dr Berhanu Negga (m) aged 50, opposition party leader, professor of economics

Amnesty International has learnt that Dr Berhanu Negga has now been moved to a less crowded and better ventilated cell in Kaliti prison in Addis Ababa, in compliance with a High Court ruling on 19 July. He is now in a cell which holds about 35 prisoners, unlike his previous cell which held 270 prisoners. Detention conditions remain harsh but it is thought that this development will help to ensure that Dr Berhanu Negga's health remains stable.

Dr Berhanu Negga suffers from high blood pressure as well as cardiomyopathy, a heart disease which weakens the heart muscles. He was hospitalized on 9 June after experiencing severe shortness of breath. However, he was sent back to prison after 20 days, against the advice of doctors and without having been examined by a specialist as had been recommended. Doctors' recommendations that he should be transferred to a less crowded and cleaner cell with better ventilation had been disregarded by prison authorities.

Dr Berhanu Negga is one of 76 opposition leaders and supporters, journalists and human rights defenders currently being tried on a range of serious political charges, including treason. Amnesty International considers Dr Berhanu Negga to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely on account of his political beliefs.

Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is required from the UA Network at present. Amnesty international will continue to monitor Dr Berhanu Negga's situation and will take appropriate action as necessary.