

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGENT ACTION

PUBLIC

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UA 22/06 Detention without charge/ fear of torture or ill-treatment

ETHIOPIA **Shumi Dandana (m)**]
 Dawit Urga (m)]
 Ahmed Musa (m)]
 Adam Uma (m)] **students from the Oromia Region**
 Sada Ibrahim (f)]
 Ulufa Bilo (m)]
 Adem Jildo (m)]
 Gemechu Bona (m)]
 Musa Buta (m)]

 Berhanu Gemechu (m)]
 Matewos Teferra (m)] **Addis Ababa University students**

And thousands of other Oromo students

The 11 students named above are among several thousand school and college students from the Oromo ethnic group who have been detained in a series of anti-government demonstrations in different parts of the Oromia Region, in the capital, Addis Ababa, and in other towns. All those named above are detained incommunicado at a number of different locations, and are at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

The arrests have taken place during a wave of student demonstrations which began on 9 November 2005. The demonstrations are still taking place in some areas. Most of those taking part were secondary school students, some of them children under 18 years old, but teachers, farmers, businesspeople and others have also been detained in connection with the demonstrations. Most demonstrations reportedly began peacefully but some police and demonstrators were injured, property was damaged and explosions were reported in some places.

The demonstrations are said to have taken place after a call by the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), an armed opposition group, for demonstrations against the government. Demonstrators called, among other political demands, for the release of Oromo political prisoners, including officials of the Mecha Tulema Association, a long-established Oromo welfare association (see UA 180/04, AFR 25/006/2004, 21 May 2004, and follow-ups). Several demonstrators were reportedly shot dead and others wounded by the security forces. Many protesters were beaten by police.

Those detained have reportedly been accused of links with the OLF, although none of them has yet been charged. Some detainees have been released, but others are being held in locations where torture has frequently been reported, such as Ambo Palace prison and Senkele police training centre, near the town of Ambo. The whereabouts of many of the detainees, some taken to remote rural prisons, are not known.

In an incident which may have been related to the demonstrations, two Oromo detainees arrested in 2004, Alemayehu Garba (an Addis Ababa University student who is disabled and one of the subjects of UA 180/04) and Morkota Edosa, were reportedly shot dead by police or prison officers in Kaliti prison in Addis Ababa on 9 December.

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

- expressing concern at the detention of the 11 students named above, along with thousands of other members of the Oromo ethnic group, following demonstrations in the Oromia region and other areas;
- calling for them to be brought to court, charged and given prompt and fair trials in accordance with recognized international standards, or otherwise released;

- calling for an urgent independent investigation into reports of killings of several demonstrators, and torture or ill-treatment of detainees, particularly in Ambo Palace prison and Senkele police training centre near Ambo;
- calling also for an independent inquiry into the reported killing in Kaliti prison in Addis Ababa on 9 December of Addis Ababa University students Alemayehu Garba and Morkota Edosa, who had been detained since April 2004.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister

His Excellency Meles Zenawi, Office of the Prime Minister, PO Box 1031, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: + 251 11 552020

+ 251 11 552030

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Mr Assefa Kesito, Ministry of Justice, PO Box 1370, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: + 251 11 517775

+ 251 11 520874

Email: ministry-justice@telecom.net.et

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

President of Oromia Region

Mr Minassie Woldegiorgis (new name)

Oromia Region State Council

P O Box 101769

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Salutation : Dear President of Oromia

President of the Supreme Court

Mr Kemal Bedri

Federal Supreme Court

P O Box 6166

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Salutation: Dear President of the Supreme Court

Fax: + 251 1 550278

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 10 March 2006.

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