



## **Ethiopia: Human Rights League of the Horn Of Africa/HRLHA Urgent Action and Appeal,**

**PUBLIC, 17 March 2011**

### **Mass Arrests and Imprisonments in Ethiopia: Fear of Torture**

In a continuous Mass arrests and imprisonments that has been taking place for weeks all over Oromia including Capital City Finfinnee/Addis Ababa, HRLHA reporters confirmed that in and around Negelle Town of Borana Zone in Southern Oromia, around Damb Dollo and Gimbi towns in Western Wallaga zone in western Oromia, around Ambo town and all over Showa zone Central Oromia , dozens of people have recently been taken to prison, most of them to Ma'ikalawi Central Investigation Office in the Capital City. Targeted in this most recent wave of political harassments and intimidations, which has been going on for the last two weeks, were, among others, public servants, high school teachers as well as students, businessmen, private company workers, peasants, and others.

From the many (over one hundreds) victims of this most recent political wave, the HRLHA has managed, through its local correspondents, to obtain the names of the following together with some details of their situations:

Mr. Sorsa Dabala, Mr. Getachew Gobana, and four other Oromo nationals whose whereabouts are not known after they were extra-judicially picked up on from different locations at different times by members of security forces of the federal government.

According to information so far obtained by HRLHA in this regard, Mr. Sorsa Dabala, an employee of a private company called F-FARM, was taken from his home in the Burayu locality of the Capital Addis Ababa/Finfinne on March 14, 2011 by federal governments, along with four other Oromo nationals (who could not be identified by names at this moment) at the same time from the same neighbourhood in Burayu area.

Mr. Getachew Gobana was kidnapped by the federal government security agents on February 25, 2011 around the area known as Wallaga Tara in the heart of the Capital.

Although there are unconfirmed reports that Mr. Sorsa Dabala and other Oromo nationals arrested with him were being held at the Ma'ikalawi Central Investigation Office, family members and close friends of Mr. Getacho Gobana have not been able to know anything about him including his whereabouts.

HRLHA is highly concerned about the safety of the local residents in general and of those who have already been taken into custody. It believes that this government action of the Ethiopian Government

is in violation of fundamental political and cultural rights which are enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution. It also believes that such extrajudicial harassments and intimidations would worsen the humanitarian crisis that has continued to hit the country

The citizens of Ethiopia have all kinds of legal and constitutional rights to safety and protection, even when they are under/in the hands of the justice system as a suspect of alleged criminal activities. Accordingly, Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa (HRLHA) calls up on the Ethiopian Government to abide by the laws of the land as well as the international and regional covenants, treaties and agreements that the country has ratified, and ensure the safety of those individuals thereby disclose their whereabouts to their respective families.

HRLHA also calls upon the regional and international humanitarian and diplomatic communities and agencies based in Addis Ababa/Finfinne to pressurize the Ethiopian Government to disclose the whereabouts and the current situations of those arrested individuals especially to their respective next-of-kins, allow them access to legal services, bring them before a court of justice, and also to refrain from harassing and intimidating its own citizens in such extra-judicial manners.

### **Background Information**

The Ethiopian government has a well-documented record of gross and flagrant violations of legal and constitutional rights of its own citizens, mainly of those who are suspected of being members or sympathizing with opposition political organizations. The government of Ethiopia routinely imprisons such persons and in some cases sentences them to long terms in prison. Some face the harshest punishment including death penalty. There have been credible reports of physical and psychological abuses committed against individuals in Ethiopian official prisons and other secret places of detention.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Please send appeals to the Ethiopian Government and its concerned officials as swiftly as possible, in English, Amharic, or your own language expressing:

- concern at the apprehension and fear of Torture of the citizens who are being held in Ma'ikelawi Central Investigation Office and other detention centers since in February, 2011 at different times and calling for their immediate and unconditional release;
- urging the authorities of Ethiopia to ensure that these detainees are treated in accordance with regional and international standards on the treatment of prisoners, and
- to diplomatic representatives of Ethiopia accredited to your country.

- His Excellency: Mr. Meles Zenawi – Prime Minister of Ethiopia

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Telephone - +251 155 20 44; +251 111 32 41

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- His Excellency Birhan Hailu –Min. of Justice

PO Box 1370,  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Fax: +251 11 5517775; +251 11 5520874  
Email: ministry-justice@telecom.net.et

- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

United Nations Office at Geneva  
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland  
**Fax:** + 41 22 917 9022  
(particularly for urgent matters)  
E-mail: [tb-petitions@ohchr.org](mailto:tb-petitions@ohchr.org) This e-mail address is being protected from  
spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

- UNHCR main office Geneva, Switzerland.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Case Postale 2500  
CH-1211 Genève 2 Dépôt  
Suisse. **telephone number:** +41 22 739 8111

- **African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)**

48 Kairaba Avenue, P.O.Box 673, Banjul,  
The Gambia.

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