

# URGENT ACTION

## ZONE 9 BLOGGER HELD FOR CRITICISING GOVERNMENT

**Zone 9 blogger Befeqadu Hailu was arbitrarily arrested and is being detained due to his open criticism of the Ethiopian government during a media interview. He should be immediately and unconditionally released.**

Security officers arrested prominent Zone 9 blogger **Befeqadu Hailu** from his home on 11 November at 6:30 am local time. The police told Befeqadu Hailu during interrogation that he is being detained for criticizing the state of emergency the Ethiopian Government declared on 9 October during an interview with Voice of America (VOA) Amharic service on 30 October. He is being detained at a Police Station near CMC in Addis Ababa. According to the state of emergency currently in place in Ethiopia, Befeqadu Hailu will not be able to challenge the legality of his detention. His Twitter and Facebook accounts were deactivated after his arrest.

In the past, Befeqadu Hailu and others have suffered torture and other ill treatment while in pre-trial detention at Maekelawi Prison. Amnesty International believes that Befeqadu Hailu is at risk of torture and other ill treatment while in detention.

Amnesty International considers Befeqadu Hailu a prisoner of conscience arrested and detained solely for exercising his freedom of expression. He must be immediately and unconditionally released.

### **Please write immediately in Amharic, English, or your own language:**

- Calling on the Ethiopian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Befeqadu Hailu;
- Calling on them to ensure that pending Befeqadu Hailu's release, he is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment;
- Urging them to ensure that he is given access to his lawyer.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 DECEMBER 2016 TO:**

#### Prime Minister

Hailemariam Dessalegn

FDRE Prime Minister

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: +251 11 122 6292

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Minister

Getachew Ambaye

FDRE Ministry of Justice

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fax: +251 11 551 7775

Email: justabr@ethionet.et

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### **And copies to:**

#### Commissioner

Addisu Gebre-egziabher (Ph.D)

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission

Email: ehrccc@gmail.com

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR BERHANU KEBEDE, Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 17 Princes Gate SW7 1PZ, 020 7589 7212, Fax 020 7584 7054, info@ethioembassy.org.uk, www.ethioembassy.org.uk, Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A state of emergency was declared in Ethiopia on 9 October after week-long protests took place in several locations in the Oromia and Amhara regions. The protests ensued after at least 55 people were killed in a stampede at the Irrecha ceremony in Bishoftu in Oromia region, which protesters believe was caused by security forces. Prior to the state of emergency, a 'week of rage' was declared against the security forces. Protesters burnt businesses, vehicles and properties across Oromia region.

Befeqadu Hailu together with the other Zone 9 bloggers Abel Wabella, Natnail Feleke, Atnaf Birhane and Soliyana Shimelis (who is being tried in absentia) will appear at the Federal Supreme Court on Tuesday, 15 November for the fifth time. The Federal High Court acquitted from the five Zone 9 blogger of terrorism related charges in October 2015. However, the prosecutor has filed an appeal against their acquittal.

UA: 255/16 Index: AFR 25/5126/2016 Issue Date: 15 November 2016