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HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SPECIAL PROCEDURES OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

**Mandates of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel,
inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

REFERENCE: UA G/SO 218/2 G/SO 214 (53-24)
ETH 1/2012

16 March 2012

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251 and to Human Rights Council resolutions 15/18 and 16/23.

In this connection, we would like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to information we have received regarding the situation of Mr. **Andualem Aragie**, an opposition leader from the Unity for Democracy and Justice Party (UDJ), Ethiopia, who is currently detained in an Ethiopian prison on alleged charges of terrorism. Mr. Aragie is allegedly accused of being involved with Ginbon 7, reportedly an outlawed party.

According to the information received:

On 14 September 2011, in unknown circumstances, Mr. Aragie was arrested on charges of terrorism under a recently enacted anti-terrorism law and was subsequently transferred to an unidentified prison in Ethiopia. It is reported that Mr. Aragie was severely beaten by prison inmates, allegedly, at the instigation of prison authorities. It is further reported that Mr. Aragie suffered serious head injuries.

Serious concern is expressed about the physical and mental integrity of Mr. Aragie, in view of the allegations that he continues to be at serious risk of being the target of further violence by his prison inmates. Even greater concern is that such violence may be the result of encouragement by prison authorities.

Without expressing at this stage an opinion on the facts of the case and on whether the detention of Mr. Aragie is arbitrary or not, we would like to appeal to your Excellency's Government to take all necessary measures to guarantee his right not to be deprived arbitrarily of his liberty and to fair proceedings before an independent and impartial tribunal, in accordance with articles 9 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights and articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Furthermore, we should like to appeal to your Excellency's Government to seek clarification of the circumstances regarding the case of the person named above. We would like to stress that each Government has the obligation to protect the right to physical and mental integrity of all persons. This right is set forth *inter alia* in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

We would also like to refer to the recommendation made by the previous Special Rapporteur on torture which states "countries should take effective measures to prevent prisoner-on-prisoner violence by investigating reports of such violence, prosecuting and punishing those responsible, and offering protective custody to vulnerable individuals, without marginalizing them from the prison population more than is required by the need for protection and without putting them at further risk of ill-treatment. Training programmes should be considered to sensitize prison officials to the importance of taking effective steps to prevent and remedy prisoner-on-prisoner abuse and to provide them with the means to do so. In accordance with the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, prisoners should be segregated according to gender, age and seriousness of the crime, alleged/committed; first-time prisoners should be segregated from repeat offenders and pre-trial detainees from convicted prisoners" (E/CN.4/2003/68, para. 26 (j)).

We would further like to draw your Excellency's Government's attention to article 12 of the Convention Against Torture, which requires the competent authorities to undertake a prompt and impartial investigation wherever there are reasonable grounds to believe that torture has been committed, and article 7 of the Convention Against Torture, which requires State parties to prosecute suspected perpetrators of torture. We would also like to draw your Government's attention to paragraph 6b of Human Rights Council Resolution 8/8, which urges States "To take persistent, determined and effective measures to have all allegations of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment promptly and impartially examined by the competent national authority, to hold those who encourage, order, tolerate or perpetrate acts of torture responsible, to have them brought to justice and severely punished, including the officials in charge of the place of detention where the prohibited act is found to have been committed, and to take note in this respect of the Principles on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Istanbul Principles) as a useful tool in efforts to combat torture."

We urge your Excellency's Government to take all necessary measures to guarantee that the rights and freedoms of Mr. Anduaem Aragie are respected and, in the event that your investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, the accountability of any person responsible of the alleged violations should be ensured. We also request that your Excellency's Government adopt effective measures to prevent the recurrence of these acts.

In view of the urgency of the matter, we would appreciate a response on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of Mr. Anduaem Aragie in compliance with the above international instruments.

Moreover, it is our responsibility under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention. Since we are expected to report on these cases to the Human Rights Council, we would be grateful for your cooperation and your observations on the following matters, when relevant to the case under consideration:

1. Are the facts alleged in the summary of the case accurate?
2. Has a complaint been lodged by or on behalf of the alleged victim?
3. Please provide information concerning the legal grounds for the arrest and detention of Mr. Aragie and how these measures are compatible with international norms and standards as stated, inter alia, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
4. Please provide the details, and where available the results, of any investigation, medical examinations, and judicial or other inquiries carried out in relation to this case. If no inquiries have taken place, or if they have been inconclusive, please explain why.
5. Please indicate whether compensation has been provided to the victim or the family of the victim.
6. Please provide information about the measures taken to ensure the well-being of Mr. Aragie.

We undertake to ensure that your Excellency's Government's response to each of these questions is accurately reflected in the report we will submit to the Human Rights Council for its consideration.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

El Hadji Malick Sow
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

Juan E. Méndez
Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment