

OPINION No. 22/2001 (ETHIOPIA)

Communication addressed to the Government on 27 August 2001

Concerning: Bernahu Nega and Mesfin Woldemariam

The State is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

1. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention was established by resolution 1991/42 of the Commission on Human Rights and its mandate was clarified and extended by Commission resolution 1997/50 and reaffirmed by resolution 2000/36. Acting in accordance with its methods of work, the Working Group forwarded to the Government the above-mentioned communication.
2. The Working Group conveys its appreciation to the Government for having forwarded the requisite information in good time.
3. On 8 May 2001, Professor Mesfin Woldemariam and Dr. Bernahu Nega, two human rights militants in Ethiopia, were arrested by police in Addis Ababa in connection with a criminal investigation, and detained at Makalawi State Prison. Brought before the Federal Court on 9 May 2001, they were held in detention at the request of the police. On 5 June 2001, they were released on bail and the date of their trial is set for 4 December 2001.
4. The Working Group notes with satisfaction the information provided by the source attesting to the fact that Professor Mesfin Woldemariam and Dr. Bernahu Nega are no longer being deprived of their liberty. The Working Group believes that it is in a position to render an opinion on the case.
5. Having examined all the information submitted to it, and without determining whether the detention was arbitrary or not, the Working Group decides, pursuant to paragraph 17 (a) of its methods of work, to file the cases of Professor Mesfin Woldemariam and Dr. Bernahu Nega.

Adopted on 29 November 2001