



May 20, 2005

President Issayas Afewerki  
Office of the President  
P.O. Box 257  
Asmara, Eritrea

Fax: 011-2911-126-422

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the 1.3 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, I am writing to request the immediate release of three imprisoned trade union leaders in Eritrea.

We have been informed that Tewelde Ghebremedhin and Habtom Weldemicael of the food and beverage workers federation, and Minase Andezion, secretary of the textile and leather workers federation, have been held incommunicado since their arrests and have not been charged with any crime. According to the information I have received, each of the men was arrested solely because of his legal activities as a trade union leader.

My understanding is that under Eritrean law, these men should have been brought before a magistrate within 48 hours of their arrests. Instead, for more than a month, they have been denied access to their families, to attorneys and to the courts.

The arrests and continued detention of these men is a clear violation of international legal standards and a violation of Eritrea's responsibilities as a member of the International Labor Organization. They should be released immediately.

Please inform me of the action you will take to resolve this matter.

Sincerely,

Edward J. McElroy  
President

EJM : dh opeiu#2 afl-cio

American Federation  
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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AFT Teachers  
AFT PSRP  
AFT Higher Education  
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