

URGENT ACTION

POLITICIANS AND JOURNALISTS DETAINED

On 7 March, politicians Batir Filae, Gada Gabisa, Bilisuma Ararsa and Oromo News Network (ONN) journalists Desu Dula and Wago Nole were arrested near Burayu, central Ethiopia, immediately after visiting Abdi Regassa, former Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) leader. A police officer stopped their car as they were returning from their visit, alleging that they had taken photos when they visited Abdi Regassa. When the police stopped them, the driver stopped the car abruptly, causing another car to hit them. The police charged and detained all five for causing the accident. In a court hearing on 31 March, the charge was dropped. However, all five remain in detention. All except Gada Gabisa have been denied access to their lawyer.

TAKE ACTION:

1. Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
2. [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 51.20**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

PO Box 1031, Lorenzo Te'azaz Road
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: info@pmo.gov.net

Ambassador Fitsum Arega

Embassy of Ethiopia
3506 International Drive NW, Washington DC 20008
Phone: 202 364 1200 | Fax: 202 587 0195
Email: ethiopia@ethiopianembassy.org
Contact form: <https://bit.ly/37Dzsw0>
Twitter: [@fitsumaregae](https://twitter.com/fitsumaregae)
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

Dear Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed,

On 7 March, Batir Filae, Gada Gabisa Bilisuma Ararsa, members of OLF, and Desu Dula and Wago Nole, Oromo News Network journalists, were arrested near Burayu, Ethiopia, immediately after visiting Abdi Regassa, former OLF head, who was also arrested and arbitrarily detained three days earlier. A police officer stopped their car, accusing them of taking photos when they spoke to Abdi Regassa. Because the car was stopped abruptly, another car hit them from behind.

The police charged all five for the traffic accident and for taking photos in a police station. They were detained in police stations around Burayu town. During a court hearing on 31 March, the prosecutor told the court that they had dropped the charges against them. The court ruled that they should be released immediately, except for Bilisuma Ararsa, the driver, who should be released on bail. Despite the order, the police did not release them, and continued to detain them on the grounds that they are suspected of holding counterfeit forms of identification. With the exception of Gada Gabisa, they have all been denied access to their lawyer. Both the OLF and the ONN have grown increasingly critical of the government, and these individuals are all active members of their associations. Amnesty International believes that they have been targeted solely for their political affiliations and/or journalistic work.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Batir Filae, Gada Gabisa Bilisuma Ararsa, Desu Dula and Wago Nole, as they have been detained arbitrarily solely for peacefully exercising their human rights including their rights to freedom of expression and association; and ensure that until they are released, they have unhindered access to their families and lawyers and that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration has initiated an important reform agenda that has the potential to improve the Ethiopian human rights situation if effectively implemented. However, the political climate in Ethiopia has become a tense one, where government critics can face arrest and detention for dissent against the government. For further information on this, please see the following outputs:

- [Ethiopia: Release Detained Journalists and opposition politicians immediately](#)
- [Ethiopia: Police must account for missing Oromo opposition leader](#)
- [Ethiopia: Vendor killed, musician injured after police attack opposition supporters in Oromia](#)
- [Ethiopia: Authorities crack down on opposition supporters with mass arrests](#)

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Amharic, Afan Oromo
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [20 May 2020]
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Batir Filae, Desu Dula, Wago Nole, Gada Gabisa, Bilisuma Ararsa (he, his, him)