

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST ARRESTED UNDER STATE OF EMERGENCY

On November 13, 2023, Belay Manaye, co-founder and presenter of Ethio News, a YouTube based news channel, was arrested in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, by a group of police officers and other security personnel dressed in civilian clothing. To date, he has not been questioned or informed of the reason for his arrest and detention, although it is believed to be in connection with his reporting on the conflict in Amhara. Under the state of emergency, the Ethiopian government has arbitrarily arrested seven other journalists in response to the conflict in the Amhara region and released few. The Ethiopian authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Belay Manaye and the two other journalists who have been detained in connection to their work under the state of emergency.

TAKE ACTION:

- 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.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 20.24**. 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 of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Abiy Ahmed Ali

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**Ethiopian Embassy in the United States
His Excellency Ambassador Seleshi Bekele
Awulachew**

3506 International Drive, NW,
Washington DC 20008

Email: ethiopia@ethiopianembassy.org

Salutation: Dear Ambassador Seleshi Bekele Awulachew

Dear Prime Minister, or Dear Ambassador,

I am concerned by the ongoing arbitrary detention of journalists in Ethiopia since the state of emergency declaration. Amongst them is **Belay Manaye**, co-founder and presenter of Ethio News, a YouTube based news channel, who was arrested on November 13, 2023, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, by a group of police officers and other security personnel dressed in civilian clothing. He has since been arbitrarily detained and has not received any information regarding the grounds for his detention. Nor has he been granted access to a lawyer or afforded the opportunity to appear in court for formal proceedings. While no official explanation has been given or charges pressed, it is believed that Belay Manaye has been targeted by the authorities in connection with his work as a journalist who has covered the conflict in the Amhara region.

I call on you to immediately and unconditionally release Belay Manaye and the other arbitrarily detained journalists. In the meantime, Belay Manaye must be detained in conditions that adhere to international standards, not subjected to torture or ill-treatment, and have immediate and regular access to his family, lawyers, and all necessary health care.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Belay Manaye is the co- founder of Ethio News, a YouTube based news channel, serving as both its chief editor and presenter. He was previously arrested in 2020 on allegations of inciting violence. He was released 46 days later without being formally charged.

His family has reported that they are only able to contact him via phone, sometimes weeks apart and with the prison authorities present on the call. His family has also expressed concern for his health, following injuries he sustained when strong winds demolished the detention cells in the military camp where he is held. To date, he has still not received any medical attention for these injuries.

The Ethiopian authorities have used the state of emergency – in place since August 2023- to silence the press and peaceful dissent. The widespread detention of journalists constitutes a clear infringement upon their entitlement to freedom of expression and press freedom, as safeguarded by both regional and international human rights conventions, of which Ethiopia is a signatory. It is imperative for the Ethiopian authorities to abide by both national and international human rights obligations, respecting the right to freedom of expression, including media freedom.

On February 2, 2024, Ethiopia's House of People's Representatives endorsed an extension of the state of emergency, which came into force on August 4, 2023, amid escalating violence in Amhara region between government forces and the Fano militia. Since then, the nationwide state of emergency has given authorities sweeping powers to arrest suspects without a court warrant, impose curfews, restrict the right to freedom of movement, and ban public assemblies or associations. In Ethiopia, consecutive authorities used the state of emergency law to silence peaceful dissent by arbitrarily detaining prominent politicians critical of the government and journalists. The current administration also frequently resorted to this old tactic as at least five high profile politicians and three journalists have been arrested and remain detained without charge under the state of emergency, according to their family members.

Awash Arba military camp where Belay Manaye is currently being held has been used by previous and current Ethiopian governments to detain journalists, opposition politicians, and others en masse. The camp is infamous for its detention conditions, including lack of food, clean water, poor sanitation, and reports of torture.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, French, Amharic, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: May 9, 2024

NAME AND PRONOUN: Belay Manaye (he/him)