

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

ICFTU OnLine:

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Eritrea: Arrest of Trade Union Officials

(Correction)

Brussels 9 May 2005 (ICFTU OnLine): The ICFTU, together with the Global Union Federations IUF and ITGLWF, today condemned the arrest and continued detention of three Eritrean trade union leaders by security police. Two of the three, Tewelde Ghebremedhin and Minase Andezion, have been kept in detention since 30 March and the third, Habtom Weldemicael, since 9 April. They are being held incommunicado, with no access to lawyers, in violation of Eritrean law.

The international trade union bodies have brought the case to the International Labour Organisation <<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991221625&Language=EN>>, pointing to flagrant violations of ILO Conventions concerning Freedom of Association, which Eritrea has ratified. The government's actions against the three also clearly contravene international standards on legal process. The ICFTU believes that the detentions are designed to stop the union representatives fulfilling their legitimate functions as trade union officials.

The arrests come against a background of increasing international concern over repression inside Eritrea, with Amnesty International estimating that there are thousands of prisoners of conscience in the country.

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers in 233 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. The ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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