

Qeerroo Bilisummaa Dromoo (QBD)



Amnesty Condemns Crackdown on Health Workers Amid Ongoing Nationwide Strike

Source: Addis Standard | May 14, 2025

Amnesty International has issued a **strong condemnation** of the Ethiopian government's escalating repression against healthcare professionals engaged in a **nationwide partial strike**, now entering its **third day**.

In a statement to *Addis Standard*, Amnesty described the crackdown as a “**systematic campaign of arbitrary detentions**,” highlighting the **May 4 arrest of Yonatan Dagnaw**, president of the Ethiopian Healthcare Professionals’ Association, as a particularly alarming example. The organization called on Ethiopian authorities to “**immediately release all detained healthcare workers**” and respect their **constitutional and international right to peaceful protest**.

Reports from across the country reveal growing **intimidation, disappearances, and forced detentions**. In **Leku, Sidama Region**, security forces reportedly **abducted Dr. Dereje**, the **only obstetrician-gynecologist** at Leku General Hospital, from his residence on **May 14**—just hours after completing surgery. Family members said he was scheduled for another procedure that night. Authorities offered no justification other than that his arrest was “**an order from above**.”

This development comes amid a broader crisis in Ethiopia’s public healthcare system, where **unpaid salaries, poor working conditions, and government neglect** have sparked growing resistance by medical professionals. The regime's response—**threats, surveillance, abductions, and arrests**—marks a dangerous descent into authoritarian control over a critical sector.

Amnesty’s call reflects mounting concern that the Ethiopian government is **criminalizing professional advocacy and humanitarian service**, in clear violation of:

- **Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution (Article 30)** – Right to Peaceful Assembly and Protest
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Article 21 & 22)** – Freedom of Assembly and Association

Observers warn that the continued repression of health workers will **exacerbate Ethiopia’s humanitarian and public health emergencies**, especially in underserved rural and conflict-affected areas.