

SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL
PRISONERS (SOCEPP-CAN)

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October 10, 2007

TO:

- Mr. Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (Geneva), <http://www.unhcr.org>
- Amnesty International Secretariat, London (www.amnesty.org/) & AI Ottawa; (info@amnesty.ca)
- Human Rights Watch, New York (hrwnyc@hrw.org), Toronto, herltj@hrw.org
- The Ambassador, Government of the Republic of Sudan, Ottawa; sudanembassy-canada@rogers.com

<p>Intervene to save the lives of Ethiopian Refugees Involuntarily Repatriated from the Sudan</p>
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On July 20, 2007 we sent you a letter regarding the wave of mass arrests and possible refolement of Ethiopian refugees suspected of having affiliations with opposition political groups such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ethiopian Peoples Patriotic Front (EPPF) and others. In this letter, we indicated that close to 30 such individuals had already been rounded up in Khartoum by the Sudanese authorities and were being held in undisclosed location/s.

We also sent you a follow up appeal letter dated August 7, 2007 warning about the state of these 30 refugees being held incommunicado in a prison known as DEBEK just out side of Khartoum, and asking for your immediate intervention to have them released.

We have now received reliable information that on September 27, 2007 the Sudanese Government handed over the 15 Ethiopian political refugees suspected of being members/supporters of the said armed groups allegedly sponsored by Eritrea. Our sources have also confirmed that the deportees are being held in the notorious MAKELAWI (Central) Prison located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Among the deportees is the elderly - **Atanaw Wasse**, who was also highlighted in our August 7, 2007 letter to you.

SOCEPP Canada is gravely concerned about the welfare and security of the repatriates who may have already been subjected to inhumane treatment in this

notorious prison. We sincerely believe that this action of the Sudanese Authorities constitutes a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention on Refugees and the UN Declaration of Human Rights for which the Sudanese government must be held responsible.

We are also deeply concerned and disturbed by the fact that your good offices failed to intervene to save these refugees from this unfortunate incidence of involuntary repatriation without any guarantee of safety in place. We anticipated that our appeal would have alerted the international community to take proper steps as to provide the necessary protection to these refugees.

We are gravely concerned that, like many other involuntary repatriates before them, these refugees too could face torture and/or other forms of cruel and inhumane treatment including “disappearances”.

Therefore, we urge you to:

- Immediately intervene and secure their release, and/or
- Ensure that they receive humane treatment while in the hands of the EPRDF regime in Ethiopia including access to medical treatment, legal council and visitation by family and friends, the ICRC and representatives of Human Rights groups.

We urge the international community, Canadian parliamentarians, human rights groups, religious leaders and refugee groups to have their voices registered by advocating for the protection of these refouled refugees as well as those who are still in the Sudan.

We also call upon you pressing on the EPRDF government to account for the whereabouts of the many political dissidents detained at various times including the leaders and members of the banned Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party (EPRP) such as: Tsegaye G/Medhin, Yishak Debretsion, Amha Hunegnaw, Aberash Berta, Tamrat Gizachew, Lemma and others. Many of these have not been heard of since their detention as far back as 1991-92 and are presumed to have been “disappeared”.

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