

## **SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS- CANADA (SOCEPP -CAN)**

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### **SOCEPP Welcomes Canada's decision to suspend direct budgetary assistance to the ruling group in Ethiopia April 22, 2006**

We have learned that Canada in cooperation with other donor countries has suspended direct budgetary assistance to the ruling group in Ethiopia. At the same time, Canada continues to commit itself to assist the people of Ethiopia.

SOCEPP welcomes and supports the step taken by the government of Canada. We believe that such action is in line with Canadian values and sends a clear message that Canada does not reward any form of repression and violation of Human and Democratic Rights. It also sends a message of solidarity to the Ethiopian people as they struggle for the respect of their basic rights. Furthermore, it shows that Canada is in the business of assisting the needy but not those who abuse their own citizens.

We are pleased that the Conservative government has followed through with its pre election commitment of holding the repressive regime in Addis Ababa accountable. The voice of those who have persistently urged Canada to do the right thing has finally been heard. We thank all parliamentarians and human rights advocates who have been at the forefront in this regard.

The ruling group in Addis Ababa continues to lead the pack of repressive regimes in Africa. Currently, Ethiopia is the highest jailer of journalists in the entire Africa. The regime in Addis Ababa has jailed almost all opposition leaders, civic society leaders and anti poverty activists. It has also forced many others in to exile.

Despite repeated appeal by the Ethiopian people and the international community, the regime continues to show utter disregard for the respect of basic Human Rights. It continues to ignore the call for the release of all political prisoners and for dialogue with opposition political parties with the true spirit of reconciliation.

Thousands of supporters and sympathizers of opposition political parties continue to languish in detention without trial in unhygienic and degrading prisons conditions throughout the country. Detentions without trial, extra-judiciary killings, torture and disappearance have now become repeated occurrences throughout the country.

The regime in Addis Ababa has failed to carry independent inquiry in to the December 2003 massacre of members of the Anuak ethnic group and the killing of demonstrators in Addis Ababa in June and November 2005.

Ethiopia is at a cross road. We urge the government of Canada, Canadian parliamentarians and the international community to continue to press the ruling group in Ethiopia to release all political prisoners, respect human and democratic rights and allow a free and independent inquiry in to the massacre of the Anuak as well as the killing of unarmed protesters by its security forces in 2005.

Please write, call or fax to thank the following Canadian government and party officials and urge them to continue to push for the release of all political prisoners and for the full respect of human and democratic rights in Ethiopia.

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