



<http://www.hr2003.org>

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URGENT! For Immediate Release

November 13, 2007

**URGENT ACTION ALERT In Support of**

**Ethiopian-Americans and Friends of Ethiopia in Oklahoma for H.R. 2003**

**Tuesday November 13- to Friday November 16, 2007**

**Immediately Call and Fax**

**Senator James Inhofe –(Minority Deputy Whip -  
Republican)**

**The third-highest ranking Senate Republican  
leader**

Ask him To Lift the “Hold” he placed on H.R.2003, a human rights bill that promotes democracy and human rights in Ethiopia. Ask him to stand with the people of Ethiopia to protect the long-term national interest of the United States and not with a distant dictator that terrorizes his own people.

**Make sure to fax and email the letter delivered to Senator Inhofe’s office by Ethiopian-American and Friends of Ethiopia in Oklahoma for H.R. 2003 on November 13, 2007.**

**Senator Trent Lott – (Minority Whip-Republican)**

**The Second highest-ranking Senate Republican leader**

**Request that he urge Senator Inhofe to lift the hold he put on Human Rights bill**

**Make sure to fax the letter delivered to Senator Inhofe's office by Ethiopian-American and Friends of Ethiopia in Oklahoma for H.R. 2003 on November 13, 2007.**

### **Senator Mitch McConnell (Minority Leader)**

**The highest ranking Senate Republican leader**

**Request that he urge Senator Inhofe to lift the hold he put on Human Rights bill, H.R. 2003.**

**Make sure to fax the letter delivered to Senator Inhofe's office by Ethiopian-American and Friends of Ethiopia in Oklahoma for H.R. 2003 on November 13, 2007.**

### **Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee**

**Request that he urge Senator Inhofe to lift the hold he put on Human Rights bill, H.R. 2003.**

**Supporters of H.R. 2003, who reside in the Washington, DC metropolitan area are urged to visit the office and urge the Committee to ask Senator James Inhof to release H.R. 2003.**

**Copy and paste, and modify the letter below to fit your special situation.**

**Documents can be FAXED during the day or at night. They will be read whenever they are sent.**

**Extended contact information for each Senator and the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee provided right after the letter submitted to Senator Inhofe at his Oklahoma city office on November 13, 2007.**

November 13, 2007

Dear Senator James Inhofe  
1900 NW Expressway, Suite 1210  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Dear Senator Inhofe,

As constituents in the State of Oklahoma, we are saddened by the statement you made in the great halls of the Senate on October 17, 2007. On that day, you announced your opposition to H.R.2003, the "*Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007*", a human rights bill that sailed through the House with full bi-partisan support. H.R.2003, a Bill that is co-authored by Republican Congressman Chris Smith and Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Tom Lantos has over 85 co-sponsors. We therefore, are perplexed why you would oppose this human rights bill that has garnered massive support in the House.

Senator Inhofe: the issues you raised on your October 17, 2007 statement among others has to do with the so called positive democratization process that has been going on in Ethiopia. The democratization process that you have stated are contradictory to the most recent United States State Department report that came out on April 5, 2007. The report states the following:

**The [Ethiopian] government's human rights record remained poor in many areas. Human rights abuses reported during the year included the following: unlawful killings; beating, abuse, and mistreatment of detainees and opposition supporters by security forces; poor prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention, particularly of those suspected of sympathizing with or being members of the opposition; detention of thousands without charge and lengthy pretrial detention; infringement on citizens' privacy rights; restrictions on freedom of the press; arrest, detention, and harassment of journalists for publishing articles critical of the government; restrictions on freedom of assembly and of association; violence and societal discrimination against women and abuse of children; female genital mutilation; exploitation of children for economic and sexual purposes; trafficking in persons; societal discrimination against persons with disabilities and against religious and ethnic minorities; and government interference in union activities.**

**On torture, infliction of cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment/punishment:**

**Although the [Ethiopian] constitution and law prohibit the use of torture and mistreatment, there were numerous credible reports that security officials often beat or mistreated detainees.**

**On arbitrary arrest and detention:**

**Although the [Ethiopian] constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, the government frequently did not observe these provisions in practice....**

**Authorities regularly detained persons without warrants and denied access to a counsel and family members, particularly in outlying regions... The independent commission of inquiry... found that security officials held over 30,000 civilians incommunicado for up to three months in detention centers located in remote areas... Other estimates placed the number of such detainees at over 50,000.**

### **On the denial of fair trial:**

**While the law provides for an independent judiciary, the judiciary remained weak and overburdened. The judiciary was perceived to be subject to significant political intervention.**

### **On the lack of freedom of speech and press:**

**While the [Ethiopian] constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and press, the government restricted these rights in practice. The government continued to harass and prosecute journalists, publishers, and editors for publishing allegedly fabricated information and for other violations of the press law. The government continued to control all broadcast media. Private and government journalists routinely practiced self censorship.**

### **On condition of Political Prisoners**

**The 200 political prisoners on trial in the Addis Ababa federal system were held in two separate prisons, Kaliti and Kerchele, often under harsh conditions. In March CUD Secretary General Muluheh Eyoel was placed in solitary confinement at Kerchele prison. In August fellow CUD member Andualem Arage, along with journalists Sisay Agena and Eskinder Nega, were placed in solitary confinement.**

### **On Freedom of Assembly**

**The constitution and law provide for freedom of assembly. Prior to the May 2005 national elections, there were numerous opposition rallies, including one that occurred in Addis Ababa that was attended by nearly one million persons the weekend prior to the elections. However, immediately following the elections and throughout the year, the government restricted this right in practice. From May 2005 to year's end, the government granted only one permit allowing a public demonstration to take place.**

### **On Freedom of Association**

**Although the law provides for freedom of association and the right to engage in unrestricted peaceful political activity, the government in practice limited this right. The government continued to deny registration to the Human Rights League.**

**Senator Inhofe: In your October 17 statement you also stated H.R. 2003 undermines and threatens U.S. counter-terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa.**

**You stated: “Our country's strong support of Ethiopia during this significant time is imperative... These punitive actions [in H.R. 2003] could damage the bilateral relationship between the United States and the Government of Ethiopia,..”**

We would like to point out that Section. 5 of H.R. 2003 clearly clarify the issue you have raised. The bill makes major exception on counter-terrorism efforts in the Horn. Please see the following excerpt from H.R.2003.

**SEC. 5. ENSURING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ETHIOPIA.**

**(B) EXCEPTION- Subparagraph (A) shall not apply with respect to peacekeeping assistance, counter-terrorism assistance, or international military education and training for civilian personnel under section 541 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (commonly referred to as `Expanded IMET'). (Emphasis added.)**

**Senator Inhofe: You also stated H.R. 2003 is “misguided and takes the wrong approach by placing demands on a friend and ally that has made obvious advancements in democracy and human rights.”**

The “demands” that H.R. 2003 “places” on a “friend and an ally” involve compliance with the following provisions under Sec. 5 (3) of H.R. 2003, which shall remain inoperative unless:

**(A) all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia have been released, their civil and political rights restored, and their property returned;**

**(B) prisoners held without charge or kept in detention without fair trial in violation of the Constitution of Ethiopia are released or receive a fair and speedy trial, and prisoners whose charges have been dismissed or acquitted and are still being held are released without delay;**

**(C) the Ethiopian judiciary is able to function independently and allowed to uphold the Ethiopian Constitution and international human rights standards;**

**(D) security personnel involved in the unlawful killings of demonstrators and others, including Etenesh Yemam, and Kaliti prisoners are held accountable;**

- (E) family members, friends, legal counsel, medical personnel, human rights advocates, and others have access, consistent with international law, to visit detainees in Ethiopian prisons;**
- (F) print and broadcast media in Ethiopia are able to operate free from undue interference and laws restricting media freedom, including sections of the Ethiopian Federal Criminal Code, are revised;**
- (G) licensing of independent radio and television in Ethiopia is open and transparent;**
- (H) Internet access is not restricted by the government and the ability of citizens to freely send and receive electronic mail and otherwise obtain information is guaranteed;**
- (I) the National Election Board (NEB) includes representatives of political parties with seats in the Ethiopian Parliament and the NEB functions independently in its decision-making;**
- (J) representatives of international human rights organizations engaged in human rights monitoring work, humanitarian aid work, or investigations into human rights abuses in Ethiopia are admitted to Ethiopia and allowed to undertake their work in all regions of the country without undue restriction; and**
- (K) Ethiopian human rights organizations are able to operate in an environment free of harassment, intimidation, and persecution.**

HR 2003 further provides \$40 million to strengthen democratic institutions and promote respect for human rights.

Senator Inhofe: In light of the above clarifications in regards to H.R.2003, the *“Ethiopia, Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007”*, we ask that you reconsider your position on H.R.2003, and as your constituents we ask that you stand in solidarity with all those that are promoting democracy and human rights in Ethiopia and to distance yourself from a distant dictator that is terrorizing its own people. The long-term national interest of the United States in its war against terrorism in the Horn of Africa and around the world will bear positive results if, and only if, the United States government stands with the people and not with dictators.

In anticipation of your positive response,

Respectfully submitted,

Your Oklahomian Constituents

## OKLOHAMA

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### DISTRICT OFFICES:

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