

SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS – CANADA

(SOCEPP-CAN)

የኢትዮጵያ የፖለቲካ እስረኞች አስተባባሪ ኮሚቴ-ብካናዳ
P. O. BOX 413 STATION E, TORONTO, ON. M6H 4E3 CANADA.
Email: socepp.can@sympatico.ca

**Release immediately all Political Prisoners in Ethiopia including
the refouled refugees from the Sudan!**

November 3, 2007

On September 27, 2007, the Sudanese authorities forcibly repatriated 15 recognized refugees to Ethiopia and were handed over to the security forces at the Ethiopia-Sudan border and are being held incommunicado. Among the repatriates was the elderly - Atanaw Wasie, who has lived in exile for over 30 years.

Reliable sources including a recent communiqué by Amnesty International report that these repatriates are now at a higher risk of being tortured eventually facing unfair trials leading to long sentences and/or worse. It has also been argued that they may even be “disappeared” like many others before them.

We are deeply concerned for the well-being of each and every one of these repatriates. The concern regarding risk of torture and “disappearance” is well justified given past experiences involving similar situations.

The ruling party in Ethiopia is well known for subjecting any one suspected of affiliation with the opposition groups to torture, disappearance and other forms of inhumane and degrading treatment. The leaders and supporters of the opposition party - EPRP including Tsegaye Gebremedhin, Yitsehak Debretsion, Amha Belete, Tamrat Gizachew and many others remain unaccounted for. Many more associated with other opposition groups such as the OLF, ONLF and CUD remain in detention to this day.

We urge the government of Canada and the international community to use their good offices to press upon the ruling group in Ethiopia to:

- Explain the legal grounds for continued detention of the repatriates; ensure that they are not subjected to torture and/or ill-treatment and are given immediate access to lawyers and relatives and all necessary medical treatment – particularly for Atanaw Wasie who is an elderly.
 - Release these repatriates who were forcibly returned to Ethiopia on 27 September 2007 in violation of international law and ensure their safe passage to a third country of settlement, and
 - Disclose the whereabouts of other political leaders of the opposition including that of EPRP, OLF and others ensuring their release without any conditions.
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