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Date

Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission
Brussels, Belgium

Subject: Is European Commission Once Again Chucking Its Principles of Good Governance and the Ethiopian People?

Dear Sir:

It is timely that the People of Ethiopia and the Opposition Parties in Ethiopia ask the question: Is EU once again chucking its principles of good governance and the Ethiopian People? The former is considered by the whole Western Governments and donors as the number one agenda for enhanced freedom and good international relations around the world.

When the European Commission sent to Ethiopia its preparatory Mission to make preliminary investigation on, among other things, how the Opposition Parties felt about EU participating in observing the 23 May 2010 Ethiopian National and Regional Elections, All Ethiopia Unity Party (AEUP) felt un-equivocally, that EU's observation of the elections is necessary and useful, in spite of EU Commission's previous failure to support in adequate concrete actions the findings of its own Observation Mission, led by the honourable Ms. Anna Gomes, member of European Council, in the 2005 similar Ethiopian Elections, although EU's Council strongly supported the Observation Mission's Report.

European Union observation of the Ethiopian elections is both necessary and useful because first, All Ethiopia Unity Party (AEUP) had confidence in the expertise and sincerity of its Observation Mission. We believed that the Mission would make a rational and objective assessment and report accurately on its findings as is and in good time for decision makers and the world community. Second, the EU will have learnt from its past oversight and shall have corrected it this time around. What we and the whole world witnessed, however, is to the contrary.



The EU Observation Mission did come and make its level best observation and promised to take account of the comments provided by AEUP to the Mission in writing to the Mission's Preliminary Report of 25 May 2010. To-date as of Thursday, 07 Octobre 2010 no report is issued to the public, although the Mission hoped its Report to be released by August 2010. In fact, on the basis of information from EU website, the Observation Mission Team Leader is unwilling to give interview to journalists as to why the Report had to be delayed. This is not acceptable by any standard, including freedom of information and, in particular from freedom loving peoples and governments of Europe that proclaimed the first true freedom to the world.

We all know that donors, both bilateral and multilateral, are waiting for EU Observation Mission's Report, because from past experience and based on its preliminary report, although there were flaws in it, everybody expects its Report to be rationally believable, and could be used for their future relation with the Ethiopian Government, which has now formed its government, albeit illegitimate government based on evidences illustrated to EU Observation Mission and others, and briefly indicated below and on the basis of multi-party democracy. This is obvious from the following brief evidence, which the EU and the world communities are well aware of.

In the process of the elections, opposition candidates were harassed, intimidated, imprisoned and even killed. Some were also bribed by the Ruling Party into abandoning their candidacy for the opposition parties. Voter registration was biased in favour of the Ruling Party. Voters were bribed in relief food grain and farm input hand-outs, and in financial assistance to vote for EPRDF. Public observers were not elected but appointed by the Ruling Party. Opposition party observers were harassed, intimidated, beaten and driven away or imprisoned so that they could not observe the polling day. All these wrong doings, in spite of complaints to legitimate authorities by opposition parties, fell on deaf ears. Despite these tactics by the EPRDF to minimize votes that the opposition received, the Ruling Party, nevertheless, also rigged the ballots in various ways, mainly through double and triple votes by its supporters and filling of the ballot box in the absence of Opposition Party Observers and True Public Observers.

EPRDF committed all these prohibitions, which are explicitly pronounced in the Code of Conduct for Political Parties Proclamation No. 662/2009, in cooperation with the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) and escaped answerability for the violations because of an un-waivered assistance by the police and militia forces, and the judiciary. These wrong-doings and lack of the rule of law were reported with sufficient evidence by AEUP and other opposition parties to the EU Observation Mission during the process of their observation of the elections.



Now, the question is not just when EU Mission Report would come out, although that may be important for other donors for their future relations with the illegitimate government of Ethiopia.

But what would EU, as the largest donor to this government, do now in its support for helping rectify Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law in Ethiopia, for which EPRDF is well on record by both bilateral governments and multilateral organizations for gross violations.

In concrete terms, is EU ready to ask the EPRDF Government to repeat the elections? Is EU ready to speak out in support of and demand for: (i) independence of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia? (ii) independence of the Police Force and the Militia? (iii) independence of the Armed Forces? (iv) independence of the Judiciary? (v) independence of the Media? and (vi) stopping harassment and intimidation of opposition party members and supporters in the process of their political activities around the country.

If so, how does EU Commission intend to get these major concessions from the brutal regime that is now discounting the West in favour of the emerging superpowers? Is EU prepared if EPRDF did not attend to these practical human needs to say 'you pay the price; at your cost; you suffer the consequences'. In other words, would EU stop politicking about affecting the people of Ethiopia, if EU and other donors stop giving development aid to the incumbent? We believe that by making such excuses, although we trust it is genuine, EU is inadvertently helping to elongate the Ethiopian people's sufferings both from lack of freedom and food. Is EU ready to give relief aid through NGOs so that these aids do not go to only the favoured Ruling Party supporters?

The European Commission and other Western governments and multilateral agencies have now been, rightly, advocating for good governance for almost two decades. It is abundantly clear that in the 21st century only a government that institutes and applies good governance can, as a matter of principle, respect individual and group freedom, and bring about genuine sustainable development for its people.

AEUP would, therefore, seek the European Commission's true support this time around by remaining true to its ideals and international commitments.

Sincerely Yours



Yaicob Likke
Head, AEUP Foreign Affairs

