



ANUAK JUSTICE COUNCIL

Justice, Peace and Freedom

Response to May Rally Excellent: Some Next Steps to Organizing Yours in Your Area

April 22, 2008

The response to the call for an Ethiopian rally for Freedom and Justice on May 15-18, 2008 has been overwhelming! I have heard from Ethiopians in thirteen countries and in over thirty cities within these countries, all voicing their desire to participate. Just to name a few we heard from Tel Aviv to Toronto, from London to Los Angeles, Addis Ababa to Amsterdam, from Stockholm to Johannesburg and from Zurich to Sydney.

The responses are not from only one political or ethnic group, but are representative of the diversity within the borders of Ethiopia. This shows me that Ethiopians are beginning to understand that a movement for freedom and justice must welcome all to join in creating a new Ethiopia.

This rally will provide an opportunity not only to demonstrate our solidarity with those in Ethiopia who are greatly suffering under the current Meles regime, but it will also be a **“Day of Remembrance”** for the thousands of Ethiopians who have died or suffered because of human rights abuses and injustice inflicted against us by the EPRDF. It will be a day to call for a halt to the war waged on civilians in the Ogaden and in Somalia. It will be a day to call for the release of political prisoners like Teddy Afro, a beloved Ethiopian musician whose courageous songs struck to the heart of our problems we are facing in our country.

By coming out to rally on May 15-18th, you, the reader, is saying to the EPRDF government and to the world, that our people did not die or suffer in vain and that you will not rest until justice comes to Ethiopia! By taking action, you demonstrate your protest of the betrayal of democracy in our country. We have seen it in the hijacking of the Ethiopian National election of May 2005, in the suppression of any opposition in the local Ethiopian elections of April 2008, in the manipulation of the Constitution, in the violation of human rights and in the total lack of adherence to the rule of law.

This is a rally where everyone hoping for a better Ethiopia is needed. No political affiliation is necessary, but every political affiliation is invited. All Ethiopians who are unhappy with the worsening crisis in Ethiopia, even those who have never before participated in a rally or attended a meeting, should come. Many of those who have participated before have become weary of politics, but this is not about politics. Neither is this rally about one’s ethnicity, one’s region, one’s religion or any other distinguishing characteristics found within the family of Ethiopians. It is a rally for all Ethiopians who want justice, harmony, freedom and peace for all.

This means that this rally is for the average Ethiopian as well as for those in one of the many organized groups like the Kinijit, the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) the Ethiopian National United Front (ENUF), the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), the Afar Liberation Front, Gambella Liberation Front, the Sidamo Liberation Front, the Gasha for Ethiopia, Solidarity Forum of Ethiopia, the Oromo-American Citizens' Council, the Ogaden Human Rights Committee, the Coalition for H.R. 2003, Ethiopian Canadian Citizens League (ECCL), the Beneshangul Human Rights Foundation, Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners (SOCEPP)... I have already been in touch with representatives from nearly all of these organizations and they are more than willing to march for freedom and justice, side by side with their fellow Ethiopians.

The task ahead now is for individuals and groups to help organize the efforts in your particular areas; however, I (and others) will be offering some general guidance and coordination of the effort in order to make the task easier and the results more powerful as we all come together to show our desire for a new Ethiopia.

First of all, some of us will be meeting this Friday on April 25, 2008 to set up a means for intercommunication with each other. If you want to be part of this meeting, please email: ethiopiansmarchforfreedom@yahoo.ca, for the teleconference number. We hope to plan for future press releases, teleconferences, radio coverage, Paltalk, email communications, YouTube and phone calls in order to share ideas and enhance the efforts of each group. However, keep in mind that every event will vary in some ways from others because they will reflect the creativity, drive, uniqueness and resourcefulness of those Ethiopians organizing it.

Secondly, we have included this same email address so that we can help coordinate volunteers by area, linking volunteers to organizers. Simply let us know if you are willing to help in some way and try to describe what you would like to do. If you are not sure, that is okay, just contact us and voice your willingness to help. The time is short and we must organize quickly.

We need people to help obtain necessary permits, to invite the press, to invite special guests, to create slogans, to design T-shirts (if so desired), to make signs, to recruit volunteers, to reach out to other groups and individuals in your area, to organize prayer, to decide on locations, to contribute financially, to organize child care for volunteers or to arrange transportation to the event. There is something for everyone to do.

Various side events or even alternative events may be explored, all of which could also raise awareness of the lack of justice and freedom in Ethiopia. Such events might include a 10K/5K run/walk, dinners, music events, special prayer services in churches, mosques or synagogues and other such events. Funds could be raised for the Movement for a New Ethiopia through selling T-shirts, refreshments or beverages or by holding various events like dinners, auctions, raffles or other such events.

This rally marks the start of the Movement for a New Ethiopia. This is only the beginning. After we march, get ready for more work ahead. It is time to combine our resources and efforts. No freedom will be sustainable until all Ethiopians are free. Say no to ethnic politics and to divisiveness that has been defeating us for years.

The Western donor countries cannot free us and will continue to work with Meles and the EPRDF until there is a second choice that is stronger and better. You, the reader, are that second choice if you and others do their part.

For you, the readers, who are women, do not leave it up to only the men. You are our mothers, the backbone of our society. It is you who are always trying to piece together the remnants of a society, torn apart by corruption, ethnic hatred, division and greed. Stand up for a different kind of Ethiopia. I believe you can help nurture this movement as you nurture your children. These children are our future.

Now, I also want to especially address the youth of Ethiopia. You must become engaged if we are to find a new and better Ethiopia where we can live together rather than fighting each other to survive. Whether that future is bleak or bright can be affected by what you do right now.

I repeat, I am calling on all men, women, young and old to join the family of Ethiopians wanting a new and better Ethiopia by calling or emailing now! Then convince your family and friends to do the same!

Together we are better than separate. Together, the garden of God's precious children of Ethiopia will then be filled with the dark, light, short, tall, thin and heavy varieties of humankind, the beauty and complexity of which, reflects the greatness of our Almighty Creator. May God guide and help us!

For more information please contact me by email at: Obang@anuakjustice.org
