

ETHIOPIAN FREE PRESS JOURNALISTS IN KENYA

We are with you Catherine !

Dear Catherine,

I wish to express on my own behalf and that of other exiled members of the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association [EFJA] our deepest sorrow and sympathy on the loss of our dearest brother, colleague, Anthony Mitchell.

We share your agony and your grief. It was with great shock and sadness that we received the news of the tragedy of the KQ 507 flight that took the life of our dearest colleague. Since then, we members of the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association [EFJA] are in mourning.

This is a very sad moment for you, for his parents, colleagues and for all of Ethiopian people whom Anthony served with true journalistic integrity for the last seven years. It has been so difficult for us to lose such a brave brother at the age of 39 while we were expecting more things from him.

Anthony courageously publicized the true story of Ethiopia from the ground, without fearing the brutal and merciless authorities. He stood by the truth and exposed his life to danger for the truth. One particular example of this is the fact that he covered the killings of 296 innocent civilians by armed troops in June and November 2005. This was a blow to the ruthless regime of our country.

As a result, the authorities ordered the expulsion of Anthony from Ethiopia within 24 hours. He left a country which he served during six years with passion and true journalistic integrity.

When our government decided to throw more than a dozen journalists in jail, as well as elected MPs and tenth of thousands citizens arrested with out trial; and when hundreds became victims of arbitrary killings, Anthony was there, reporting from the ground.

But the regime knew that Anthony would always denounce martial law.

Honestly speaking dear Catherine, Anthony was our unsung hero. He was there when we couldn't speak about the plight of our people and needed him to speak for us.

Anthony was born in the UK from a white family. One might think that skin color, religion or nationality could have separated us from him. But Anthony's personality and his work made us brothers.

He created a bond between us. We were like family, and not just colleagues. Anthony worked for justice, freedom of expression, peace and human rights.

Also, beyond our professional bond, what made Anthony a brother was his good heart, honesty, humanity, and absolute trustworthiness. Anthony was one of us, a journalist struggling in Ethiopia. That's why we mourn with you, with his children, parents and colleagues. Just like us, Anthony's colleagues at Associated Press are certainly feeling deeply the loss of such a valuable journalist and friend.

Dear Catherine,

Our heart is bleeding with a sense of loss: but we would like to tell you that you can be extremely proud of Anthony and the legacy that he left us. We will endeavor to follow his example, of being a truly independent journalist, without fear of oppressors.

We want to be journalists who are not afraid to say what they see, like Anthony.

You can be proud, dear Catherine of your husband's contribution to the world. We count on you to keep his memory strong. And I know that this memory will give you strength in your life.

We free people of Ethiopia are so grateful for every thing that Anthony has done. We Ethiopian journalists will endeavor to walk on the path that he laid down. We will keep on commemorating his legacy, and his role in the history of our struggle for freedom.

God Almighty, may you let our brave brother Anthony Mitchell rest in peace. Give Catherine, his children, parents, colleagues and friends the strength to overcome the loss.

Yours Faithfully

Wondwossen Teklu and his colleagues

Nairobi Kenya

May 10, 2007