

**SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL
PRISONERS – CANADA (SOCEPP-CAN)**

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July 20, 2007

TO:

Mr. Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (Geneva)

- Amnesty International, London & Ottawa ; info@amnesty.ca
- Human Rights Watch, New York, Toronto, hrwnyc@hrw.org; herltj@hrw.org
- The Ambassador, Government of the Republic of Sudan, Ottawa;
sudanembassy-canada@rogers.com

Subject: Ethiopian Refugees facing an involuntary repatriation from Sudan, your urgent action needed

Reports reaching SOCEPP Canada indicate a new wave of mass arrests and possible refolement of Ethiopian refugees suspected of having affiliations with opposition political groups such as Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ethiopian People Patriotic Front (EPPF) and others.

It is reported that since this current round up which begun on or around June 20, 2007, up to 30 such individuals have already been imprisoned in Khartoum by the Sudanese authorities and are being held in undisclosed location/s. There is concern that some may have already been forcibly repatriated to Ethiopia and handed over to the EPRDF security forces. Further more, it is reported that the Sudanese authorities are also planning to arrest and possibly repatriate many more legally recognized Ethiopian political refugees who had been in the Sudan for a number of years.

Torture, ill-treatment and detention without trial are common occurrences in Ethiopia. The involuntary repatriation of members or sympathizers of any political group to Ethiopia, at this point in time, could result in a likely torture or similar cruel and inhumane punishment and/or imprisonment of repatriates. This is clearly against the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Geneva Protocol and the 1969 African Declaration all meant to protect refugees hence binding second countries of refuge not to re-foul anyone who has crossed an international boundary and sought their protection.

Hence, in view of this international law, we believe that the Sudanese government has an international obligation to observe and the international community has a duty to see to it that states' obligations are met and that refugees are well protected. If Sudan finds it difficult to continue hosting Ethiopian refugees, then all reasonable steps must first be taken in consultation with the UNHCR to secure the admission of the refugees concerned to a third country.

We urge the Sudanese authorities to respect the international Conventions and:

- release all the detained refugees without any condition
- provide the names of those already repatriated to Human Rights organizations and
- Immediately halt the rounding up of and/or the involuntary repatriation of refugees.

We urge the UNHCR to immediately intervene in this matter and secure the release of the detained refugees and put in place a mechanism to ensure the continued protection of Ethiopian refugees in the Sudan

We also urge Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to intervene on behalf of those who may have already been repatriated and secure their release from prison and/or ensure that they get a humane treatment while in the hands of the EPRDF regime in Ethiopia.

We urge the international community, Canadian Parliamentarians, human rights groups, religious leaders and refugee groups to intervene and advocate for the right of Ethiopian refugees in the Sudan.

SOCEPP Canada

Cc:

- Canadian Council of Churches; admin@ccc-cce.ca
- Canadian Council on Refugees : ccr@web.ca

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