



FEBRUARY 11/2010

NORWAY--STOP MISTREATING ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES

SOCEPP has learnt that a number of Ethiopian asylum seekers are undergoing mistreatment and undue incarceration in isolated camps. This is worrying and totally unjust and SOCEPP once again calls on the authorities in Norway to redress the situation without any procrastination.

Here below is a copy of a letter received by SOCEPP which details the situation in the camps of Norway:

"Dear SOCEPP

We, Ethiopians living in Norway, need your urgent help in forwarding our problem to the concerned organizations and Medias as well as the concerned authorities in Norway.

The situation is as follows:

We are asylum seeker in Norway. Some of us have been frozen in this situation for three years and most of us have stayed here from six years to ten years. All of us are political refugees, but, our applications were rejected at different times on grounds we consider flimsy and unfounded. Now we are in waiting camps or deportation camps in two places, namely FAGERLI and LIRE, near to the Norwegian capital Oslo. It is the rule of Norwegian immigration authority that the maximum stay in these places be from two weeks to three months depending on the refugees' situation. But, some of us have been in the camps for more than two years.

The situation of the camps:

1. We are not allowed to meet or be visited by any humanitarian organization. The camps are controlled by the Norwegian police.
2. The camps are very isolated from the society and we are unable to have access to the telephone and other means of communications.
3. Not enough food, medication and clothing.
4. Five or six people are crammed in a single small room and as a result many refugees have fallen ill or have become depressed.
5. The situation has led to short tempers and frustration and consequently and often to fights. The police intervene and throw out the person or persons involved outside on the open ground.

Nobody seems responsible for these inhuman and degrading treatments of refugees in Norway. Many refugees have mental problems now and are permanently ill and have become useless even if they go back to their homeland. All the Ethiopians in these two camps are political refugees and they face deportation back to the repressive regime that has often disappeared or jailed refugees who have been deported. The mistreatment of refugees is an unjust act and the act of deportation is also against the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which protects the refugees from sending back to countries where they face a serious risk of persecution or torture. The Human Rights Committee has interpreted article 7 of the ICCPR to forbid a return of persons to places where they would be at risk of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

SOCEPP, please we need the urgent help of your office and that of all concerned international humanitarian organizations".

Norway, please end this injustice which stains your human rights record.

<p>INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE SOCEPP, POSTFACH 51213, BERLIN 13372, GERMANY SOCEPP, 30 RIGA COVE, WINNIPEG, MB R2P 2Z7, CANADA E MAIL: SOCEPP @AOL.COM WEB SITE: WWW.SOCEPP.DE</p>
--