

Washington Update – January 14, 2009  
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The human rights situation in Ethiopia has continued to deteriorate. The suppression of the All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP) has intensified. The shutdown of the newspaper Andenet and its Web edition has not been reversed. Wzro Mesobework is on bail but still facing phony charges concocted by the regime.

We in the AEUP continue to request of the International Community to intervene with the regime and demand immediate release of all political prisoners, including all those from the AEUP, Birtkun Mideska, and singer Teddy Afro.

The regime has recently issued orders to frustrate International Non-governmental organizations in their work in Ethiopia. This new diktat is designed to further silence Ethiopians by restricting their contact with non-regime organizations. This is a transparent attempt to eliminate contact with the outside world even at the cost of limiting access to food in the time of famine. I met with United States Agency for International Development officials just this week, and they expressed concern over this draconian ruling. USAID depends on these organizations for much assistance in the work of delivering food and medicine to the needy in Ethiopia. People will be risking their lives if this stands.

We have some good news! The AEUP now has a radio program that started broadcasting as of Sunday, January 11 at 11:30 a.m. Eastern standard time on WZHS 1390 A.M. Washington, DC. It is called: "Voice of Kinijit/AEUP Radio".

Ato Abayehne Berhnu, Doctor Taye Woldsemat, Mesfin Mekonen, Ato Tefere Chernut, and Melaku did the introductions on the occasion of the first broadcast. It will continue in this slot indefinitely. It will cover news and current affairs from Ethiopia. It will broadcast interviews – some like direct from Ethiopia! By the way, this week, January 18<sup>th</sup>, the guest will be the President of the AEUP, Hailu Shawel.

The hearings by the United States Senate Foreign relations Committee on the nomination of Hilary Clinton as the new Secretary of State were marked by her clear statement of independence from any influences. There will be more news on the Committees and assignments next week. In the meantime it is essential that Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ) and Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ) be contacted to encourage them to reintroduce the Ethiopia human rights legislation. This is critical as political rivalries allowed only one bill out of 120 to pass the Senate in the last year. This is an example of why we should move forward.