

Washington Update April 2, 2009

Today is the second of April and much productive work on the pending legislation in congress needs to be seen to. The successful passage of H.R. 2003 in the last session of Congress needs to be duplicated for this 111th Congress. We need to stay on top of our elected officials; particularly Donald Payne (D-NJ) the chairman of the House African Affairs Subcommittee and Chris Smith (R-NJ) the ranking member of the House African Affairs Subcommittee. Both have expressed continuing support for democracy in Ethiopia. Hopefully, we should see results before the Summer recess.

We need to focus on the legislation as our main task the for us here in the United States. The human rights situation is the worst it has been in decades. The points=2 0that the All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP) made in its declaration last year have all been violated by the regime. And now we have people starving to death, as we write, in Ethiopia . The severity of the Ethiopian crisis demands our full attention.

Recently a former United State ambassador to Ethiopia , David Shinn, made some supportive statements for the Meles regime. Mr. Shinn is a decade removed from first hand contact with Ethiopia and now is semi-retired and doing some academic work. He does not have any position with the government of the United States and his opinions are solely his own. It appears that events have passed him by.

More importantly is the open letter by Genocide Watch's President Dr Gregory

Stanton regarding Darfur and Omar Bashir. In it he also denounced the Meles regime and wrote: “He and those within his government may be keenly aware of their own vulnerability to similar actions by the ICC in the future that could upend a deeply entrenched system of government-supported impunity that has protected perpetrators from any accountability.”

This is a critical turning point for such an important NGO as Genocide Watch and should help increase attention on the Ethiopian regime’s crimes. We will continue to monitor all such news and bring up to date periodically.

Today the G 20 nations are meeting in London . As economic issues take more and more prominence we need to refocus on our main issues. We must concentrate on the American legislation and put all petty disputes aside. Of course the main work is for Ethiopians themselves but the assistance of the United States is vital in achieving a fair hearing for political groups opposed to the Meles regime. Let’s stick to this!

Last week the Sunday radio show The Voice of Kinijit/AEUP Radio on WZHF-am 1390 in Washington , DC at 11:30 am EST in Washington , DC featured a conversation recorded by the Voice of America with the President of the AEUP, Engineer Hailu Shawel discussing the flag of Ethiopia . We also discussed the opinions of different ethnic and regions of Ethiopia . Please tune in next week when we will again feature a speaker direct from Ethiopia .

The Kinijit AEUP has a new website: www.kaeup.com <<http://www.kaeup.com/>>. The website has fresh news and accurate information straight from Ethiopia. The website also offers readers an opportunity to make financial contributions to the AEUP and to contribute to the peaceful transition to a democracy, prosperous Ethiopia.

Last, but not least, we had a meeting in Crystal City, VA (near to Washington, DC) with new and old chapters to better organize AEUP supporters. Our featured speaker was Ato Abayneh Berhanu, Vice-President of AEUP. And Dr. Taye Woldesmiat via on telephone direct from Chicago. We continue to pick up strength and this meeting was a good one as we work to support the goals of the AEUP.

DLA Piper, an international lobbying firm representing the Meles regime has responded to the efforts of Ethiopian-Americans to draw attention to the fact that DLA Piper is representing a bloody dictator. DLA Piper recently provided a written statement to Ethiopian-Americans who are protesting its representation of the Meles regime. The statement notes, "...there are elements of the Ethiopian diaspora, particularly in the Washington, DC area, who are bitter opponents of the current administration and go to great lengths to try to embarrass or demean those who are associated with it." DLA Piper receives at least \$50,000.00 per month every month to lobby Congress and the administration on behalf of Meles and his government.

The statement fails to note that despite=2 0extensive, intensive, and expensive lobbying, observers in the U.S media, NGO's, and even the U.S. State Department are well aware of the Meles regime and its terrible human rights record, and its suppression of democracy. 20Parade magazine, a U.S. weekly read by 10,000,000 people each week, recently placed Meles in its list of the world's worst dictators. Amnesty International has reported many time on the crimes of the Meles regime. This year's State Department Human Rights Report again notes massive human rights violations and suppression of

democracy in Ethiopia.

Yesterday the Executive Committee of the AEUP met and after deliberation and discussion decided not to affiliate with the Medrek group. You will always find the direct information from the AEUP here on Washington Update.

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