



September 23, 2011

The Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State of the United States
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington DC 20520

Your Excellency:

Recent political developments in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen are a clear indication that the desire for a democratic system of government has become a universal popular demand. This popular quest for freedom and justice will inevitably reach other countries in Africa and the Middle East. The rule of violent totalitarian regimes is certainly ending. It is also evident that the United States and Donor institutions have missed to note the expanse and growth of these dramatic popular uprisings. At the moment, the final outcome of these dramatic changes are left to local political factions who seem to lack clearly defined policies to stabilize the situation bringing into focus the possibility of unpredictable conditions that may lead to chaotic and violent situations.

We are a group of Ethiopian civic organizations highly concerned with developments in our own country. In particular, we are apprehensive about the grave political and socio-economic crisis that is developing and unfolding in Ethiopia today.

Credible reports by official organs, international institutions and many reputable organizations have reported gross violations of human rights, denial of basic freedoms of expression, arbitrary arrests using a controversial and rejected terrorism law on its critics leading to persecution of journalists, legal members of the political opposition and outspoken citizens.

Reports of widespread capital evasion, lawlessness, unbridled corruption and repressive business regulations are rampant with incompetent and inefficient bureaucracy at all levels of governance. A mismanaged economy with over sixty percent unemployment and inflation rate galloping at forty percent exacerbates the stagnating shortage of foodstuff and exorbitant prices that have made intolerable living conditions for more than ninety percent of the population, while a glittering minority gives the illusion of a general wellbeing. We believe this situation is a recipe for a legitimate uprising in the country that needs immediate consultation to stave off a much disastrous outcome.

In spite of these obviously declining conditions and the most unstable political situation, including natural disasters prevailing in the area, the United States and donor countries have chosen the path to keep supporting the regime with billions of dollars in aid and varied assistance programs. On the other hand, we witness the regime trying to create a confrontational situation by playing allegiance with other powers and incurring heavy debts for unsustainable projects, and yet anchor its survival largely on foreign support from Donor countries. It is also evident that no amount of aid can bring about a sustainable development and stability without good governance, which have been denied to the Ethiopian for the past four decades

In view of the above and the eminent crisis that will ensue from these critical conditions, we suggest that the United States and Donor governments to revise their present short term policies, and undertake measures that will bring genuine democratic governance to the country. It is our earnest view that only the United States and Western Donors have the necessary clout to bring about constructive and genuine changes that will stabilize the country and the Horn of Africa. As to matters of security and anti-terrorism, we believe that a legitimate democratic government is better suited to guarantee peace and security to the area.

To this end, we would like to suggest that the US and donor countries establish an appropriate dialogue, not only with political parties, but also with pertinent Civic Organizations inside and outside the country. Civic Organizations represent a broad spectrum of the population engaged in all sorts of activities be it social, economic, cultural and are firmly entrenched at grass root level. From our information, there are over four thousand Civic Organizations registered in Ethiopia. Therefore their role in all aspects of the national life is of paramount importance. We believe it is time and most opportune to engage the average people in processes that are governing and determining their present and future existence. It is also a better and long term alternative than dealing with dictatorships.

We consider it our duty and responsibility to assist any endeavor undertaken to bring peace and freedom to the Ethiopian people. We remain at your disposal for any participation that will be required from our part to facilitate such initiative

With our Highest Respect,

Imru Zelleke

Imru Zelleke (Ambassador, Ret.)

Chairman, ENPCP

Ethiopian National Priorities Consultative Process (ENPCP) Constituent Member Civil Society Organizations:

Back to Ethiopia for Freedom (BETFF)

Citizens Charter (CC)

Constituents for Democracy (Dejen LeDemocracy)

ESKEMEACHE

Ethiopian Border Affairs Committee (EBAC)

Ethiopian Forum for Peace, Democracy and Development (EFPDD)

Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFPJA)

Ethiopian National Congress (ENC)

International Ethiopian Women's Organization (IEWO)

Network of Ethiopian Scholars-Scandinavian Chapter (NES-SC)

Solidarity Movement for New Ethiopia (SMNE)

Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners-Canada (SOCEPP-Can)

Workers Voice of Ethiopia