

January 6, 2006

Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian
Political Prisoners-Canada
P.O. Box 413 Station E
Toronto, ON
M6H 4E3

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners. I appreciate hearing your concerns on this important issue, and am pleased to offer this letter in response.

Canada and Ethiopia have long maintained close relations. Our Embassy in Addis Ababa was opened in 1966. Canada encouraged Ethiopia to accept the Boundary Commission's decision. In 2001, Canada sent 450 peacekeepers as part of the UN's high readiness brigade, whose mission was to prepare for the arrival of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE).

Human and Democratic Situation in Ethiopia: Canada is concerned about the political violence in Ethiopia. On November 2, 2005 Canada issued a statement calling on all parties to engage in an open and peaceful dialogue in a spirit of political reconciliation to promote a multiparty parliamentary democracy. Through the Ambassador donor group in Addis we have called for independent investigation into the killings and for the immediate release of all political detainees and due process of others detained and we have conveyed our views to the Ethiopian ambassador to Canada.

Although we did not send election observers to Ethiopia, Canada was the fourth largest contributor to the election in Ethiopia, with a total contribution of \$1.0 million through a harmonized, donor pooled fund, managed by the UN Development Program. In keeping with Aid Effectiveness Principles, Canada advocated a harmonized approach, to maximize efficiency and minimize risks of multiple, potentially contradictory observer statements. To achieve this, it was decided that other donors, led by the EU and the Carter Centre, would provide effective election coverage.

Development and Democracy: Ethiopia is currently the country in sub-Saharan Africa to which Canada grants the most international assistance, which it coordinates with the Ethiopian government, international institutions, and the other donor countries. Canada is funding projects in the regions of Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz that are specifically aimed at ensuring food security and carrying out Ethiopia's constitutional plan.

CIDA's current bilateral program focuses on food security and democracy and governance, in close alignment with Ethiopia's national development plan and

poverty reduction strategy. The food security program aims both to prevent famine for the most vulnerable people and to help Ethiopia improve prospects for national food security. This involves improving water collection and conservation, strengthening Ethiopian famine early warning and disaster prevention systems, and increasing agricultural production in communities at risk.

Canada's official development assistance to Ethiopia comprises bilateral assistance and support to the work of Canada's partners including international organizations like the World Food Program, and Canada's many non-governmental development organizations. From 1995 to 2000, Canada's official development assistance to Ethiopia totaled \$160 million, of which \$57 million was in emergency food aid. CIDA supports farmers in famine, prevention by increasing agricultural production in communities at risk.

Challenges: In this new context of vigorous country leadership and a strong commitment to poverty reduction, Ethiopia has become a country of focus for CIDA. However, many challenges remain. Ethiopia is one of the world's poorest countries, and lack of food security continues to be the greatest barrier to its long-term development.

Canada remains committed to helping Ethiopia in its efforts to reduce poverty and make a successful transition to democracy. We will continue to monitor developments and, in cooperation with other donor countries, will work to encourage the strengthening of democratic governance in Ethiopia.

Once again, thank you for writing with your concerns. I hope that you will find this response to be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Eggen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "E" at the end.

President, Liberal Party of Canada

Please continue to read below the Conservative Party of Canada's responses

From: "Jamie Ellerton" <jamieellerton@conservative.ca>
To: <socepp.can@sympatico.ca>
Subject: SOCEPP-CAN Questionnaire
Date: Fri, 13 Jan 2006 21:49:00 -0500
Conservative Party of Canada response to the Solidarity Committee for
Ethiopian Political Prisoners - Canada (SOCEPP-CAN) Questionnaire.

January 13, 2006

QUESTION - What is your party's assessment of the Human and Democratic situation in Ethiopia today?

ANSWER - The Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) has paid very close attention to the political events in Ethiopia prior to and following the May 15th, 2005 election there. The Conservative Party recognizes that there are concerns related to democratic issues that have existed within Ethiopia's borders since the election. The Conservative Party is deeply concerned for the safety and security of all citizens of Ethiopia, and wishes to aid, in the most productive third-party manner possible, the democratic renewal within their borders.

QUESTION - Following the May 2005 election, the ruling party in Ethiopia, the EPRDF, has unleashed massive repression including killings of unarmed demonstrators, massive imprisonment, torture and detention of opposition leaders and supporters, journalists and leaders of the civic society. How would you evaluate Canada's position in relation to this tragedy? What do you say Canada should do now to help stop this unabated repression?

ANSWER - In light of all the documented concerns since the 2005 election in Ethiopia, the Canadian government has been silent. Our government has not spoken out on Ethiopia's situation as it did during the time of turmoil in Ukraine. In fact, foreign aid has continued to pour directly into the hands of the Ethiopian government even after the first reported signs of violence. The Canadian government has failed to recognize the developing unrest in Ethiopia.

QUESTION - In the last 14 years, Canada has spent millions of dollars sponsoring Ethiopian government officials including members of the ruling political party's top officials, judges, etc for training and experience sharing tours. However, Canada's support to the opposition has been nonexistent. A number of people say that Canada's assistance is a one sided approach which only strengthens the repressive hand of the ruling party. Would you support extending similar support to the opposition parties and other independent organizations? Do you believe that Canada's assistance to Ethiopia (except humanitarian assistance) should be tied to measurable progress in respect of Human Rights, the rule of law and democratic governance?

ANSWER - The Conservative Party believes in creating measures of accountability with respect to Canadian Foreign Aid. We do not believe in giving assistance (outside of direct humanitarian aid through

Canadian NGOs) to nations whose regimes compromise or diminish democratic values and human rights. A Conservative government's giving of foreign aid would be focused on stabilizing Ethiopia and allowing the nation to move towards true democracy, the rule of law, and adherence to international human rights as defined by the United Nations.

QUESTION - The government of Canada is a major donor to Ethiopia; Part of Canada's financial support goes directly to subsidize the government's yearly budget. Increasing numbers of Canadian's of Ethiopian origin and members of the international community are asking for targeted sanction against the government and channeling funding through non government organizations unless substantial improvement is shown on Human and Democratic rights. What is your party's view regarding the above?

ANSWER - The Conservative Party believes foreign aid is at its most productive when it is provided by those trained to do so. Thus, our immediate goal would be to ensure that Canadian foreign aid is implemented through Non-Governmental Organizations with proven positive records in nations that have made the move towards democracy and the rule of law. No Canadian foreign aid would be given to an undemocratic government that fails to protect its own citizens.

QUESTION - In the last 14 years Canada has spent millions of dollars to "promote human rights and good governance "in Ethiopia. However, today, we see that the same government that has been supported by Canada is among the top abusers of rights in Africa. Did Canada miss something in its assessment of the situation in Ethiopia, was Canada ignoring or minimizing the reality on the ground or was Canada's investment misguided? Given the circumstances, do you think it is time to conduct a comprehensive review of the assistance provided to Ethiopia?

ANSWER - A Conservative government would review all questionable foreign aid agreements, ensuring that foreign aid giving is transparent, accountable, and results-based.

QUESTION - Canada sent about 500 observers to Ukraine during the disputed election. However, it did not send even a single observer to Ethiopia during the May 2005 election. As a result, a number of people say that the Canadian government did not apply similar standard when it comes to the issue of democracy and election in the two countries. What would you say?

ANSWER - A Conservative Government would demonstrate consistency with all nations in terms of the need of election monitors. Stockwell Day, the Conservative Party's Foreign Affairs Critic, was responsible for the creation of a motion in the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (that was voted against by the Liberals) that asked the Canadian government to send election monitors to Ethiopia. Essentially, the Conservative Party position is that Ethiopia's election should have been treated no differently than that of Ukraine's, nor should it have received any less attention. Mr. Day and the Conservative Party have consistently spoken out on behalf of those suffering in Ethiopia. Unfortunately, the Liberal Government ignored our documented calls for help in this situation.

QUESTION - There are a number of indications that the ruling group in

Ethiopia will intensify the repression of rights in the coming months?
What proactive steps would you suggest Canada should take to avert further tragedy?

ANSWER - First, a Conservative Government would immediately call in the Ethiopian Ambassador to share our concerns and to ask for the Ethiopian government's response to reports of increasing violence and repression of democratic freedoms. At the same time, we would ask our Ambassador in Ethiopia to convene similar meetings with Government and Opposition officials in Ethiopia, in order to share our concerns. Second, we would press for a concise step-by-step plan to ameliorate the situation. Third, failing a positive willingness on behalf of the Ethiopian Government to address the concerns, a Conservative government would pursue a resolution at the United Nations in order to work with Ethiopians and the international community to improve the situation in Ethiopia. Finally, a Conservative government would make it clear to all concerned that foreign aid giving is based on good governance in the area of human rights and individual freedoms.

QUESTION - What would your party do in the first four months after the commencement of the new parliament (whether elected or as opposition) to address the serious Human Rights violation in Ethiopia?

ANSWER - Please see previous response.