

**Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners
(SOCEPP – Canada)**

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**SOCEPP Canada welcomes the release of Abera Yemaneab & Calls for the release of All
Political Prisoners!**

SOCEPP Canada welcomes the release of Mr. **Abera Yemaneab**, the longtime prisoner of the TPLF/EPRDF regime, and extends its congratulations to the victim, his family and friends.

It is to be remembered that, **Mr.Yemaneab**, the then leadership member of the ***Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF)***, was arrested along with others on his arrival in 1993 to Ethiopia to participate in the National Peace and Reconciliation Conference and has since been in prison except for a brief period when he was released on the order of the courts. A few weeks later, however, he was arrested again extra-judicially, presumably on the order of PM **Meles Zenawi**, and was made to suffer the hardships of prison life until his release recently.

Mr. Abera and the other peace delegates of COEDF were maliciously accused of “inciting violence against the government”. In April 1994, however, the High Court in Ethiopia dismissed the charges against Abera Yemaneab and ordered him released. However, within few days, the authorities ordered his second arrest. The illegal incarceration of Abera Yemaneab and the suffering he endured epitomize the absence of the rule of law and basic human rights in Ethiopia.

While we maintain that Abera YemaneAbe’s release is welcome news, we must make abundantly clear that his detention, just like the detention of many others, was illegal and that he should not have been detained in the first place.

SOCEPP Canada unequivocally reiterates that the way forward in Ethiopia is through the full respect of the human and democratic rights of its citizens and through full compliance to the rule of law. The absence of such rights and continued repression cannot be sustained. As witnessed in North Africa and part of the Middle East, such repression will only result in a popular uprising which no power can stop.

As we have through the year past and continue, we call upon the ruling TPLF/EPRDF regime to open up its jails and underground torture chambers, and release the thousands of political prisoners in the country. Political figures such as **Tsegaye GebreMedhin** other leaders and members of the EPRP were detained in 1991 and remain unaccounted for. And most recently, **Andualem Aragie** of the UDJ, **Bekele Gerba**, the deputy chair of the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM), **Olana Lelisa** of the Oromo People’s Congress (OPC), journalists like: **Eskindir Nega**, **Reeyot Alemu**, **Wubeshet Alemu**, and former artist and activist - **Debebe**

Eshetu as well as thousands of others were, and continue to be, arrested on trumped-up charges of aiding and abetting “terrorism” and now languish in prison possibly tortured and under inhumane conditions.

It is high time that the suffering of Ethiopian under this most despised regime end now. We call upon the international community to press and/or impress upon the regime in Ethiopia to release of all political prisoners without any preconditions. We also call upon all peace loving community of states to work towards the full respect of the rights of citizens in Ethiopia.

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