

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

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End all hostilities and release all political prisoners Now!

In the last few months, the repression of rights in Ethiopia has intensified. As variously reported by different media outlets, the Ethiopian authorities have arrested two prominent political leaders namely: Bekele Gerba, the deputy chair of the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM), and Olana Lelisa of the Oromo People's Congress (OPC) on August 27, 2011 and remain in detention. Subsequently, the authorities expelled from Ethiopia international delegates of the Amnesty International.

This latest flagrant violation of international norms comes with the increasing flurry of arrests of other political figures, journalists, activists, and so on. This violation has intensified in particular since the advent of the anti-dictatorial uprisings in Northern Africa and the Middle East.

It is to be remembered that two prominent journalists: Wubshet Taye, Deputy Editor in Chief of the Amharic weekly "Awramba Times" and Reyot Alemu, an English teacher and columnist for the weekly "Fetih" Newspaper remain in detention since June, 2011 on a trumped-up charge of terrorism. Both have told the court that they have been subjected to torture and inhumane treatment in the hands of the ruling group's security forces.

Additionally, seven individuals including Zerihun Gebre-Egziabher and Dejene Tefera, Chairman of the opposition - Ethiopian National Democratic Party, continue to be detained since June 2011. The daughter of the former has also spoken about the torture and sufferings that her father has been subjected to in the hands of the security forces since his detention.

Just like in the past, the ruling group accuses the detainees mentioned here above with "terrorism" related offences. Clearly, for any one who has closely followed the Ethiopian situation, this is one of the tactics the ruling group has and continues to use to silence dissent and criticism of its policies. It is, hence, due to this and related matters that:

- SOCEPP Canada unequivocally condemns the illegal arrest and the inhumane treatment of the detainees.
- We condemn in the strongest possible terms the expulsion of the delegation of Amnesty International from Ethiopia. We also share the concerns of Amnesty International "for the safety of everyone Amnesty's delegates spoke to while they were in the country".
- We urge the ruling group to implement the immediate cessation of all hostilities, release all political prisoners without any preconditions and allow human rights groups back to Ethiopia.

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