

**SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS -  
CANADA (SOCEPP-CAN)**

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**We demand justice for Makhtal Beshir**

A number of media sources reported today, August 3, 2009, that a court in Addis Ababa , Ethiopia sentenced the Ethiopian born Canadian, Mr. Makhtal Beshir to life imprisonment for his alleged leadership role in the outlawed group Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF).

It is to be remembered that Mr Makhtal Beshir was unlawfully rendered from Kenya to Somalia, and then on to Ethiopia. Makhtal Beshir whose grand father was a founding member of ONLF has repeatedly denied that involvement with the ONLF. Since his illegal detention in 2006, a number of actions that clearly demonstrate miscarriage of justice in this case were witnessed. Among other issues, he had no access to legal counsel of his choice and had no full access to evidence presented against him.

Several reports also indicate that his family members have been rounded up and detained since his arrest. All evidences suggest that the current verdict and sentencing is a vendetta against Makhtal Beshir and his family. The government's attempt to cover up such politics of grudge and revenge with some form of legal façade is simply irresponsible.

Therefore, SOCEPP Canada condemns the illegal sentence against Makhtal Beshir. SOCEPP Canada believes that what Ethiopia needs at this point in its history is national reconciliation and forgiveness not an irresponsible and insensitive political act that will further exacerbate the existing discontent. The politics of revenge and the manipulation of the justice system for such ill conceived political action must stop.

We call upon the Canadian government and the international community to intervene on behalf of Makhtal Beshir without delay and demand his immediate release. Such injustice, whatever the excuse, should not be tolerated.

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