

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

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**SOCEPP-Canada is deeply concerned about the detention of 35 individuals in Addis  
Abeba under the pretext of coup plot**

**April 27, 2009**

On Saturday April 25, 2009, the ruling party security announced on state Television that they have arrested 35 individuals who were allegedly “plotting to carry a coup” in Addis Ababa Ethiopia.

The ruling party alleges that these individuals are members of the opposition Ginbot 7 and were apprehended while preparing to carryout an armed coup plot. Gionbot 7 on the other hand has issued a statement dismissing the allegation.

The regime says the people arrested in Friday’s raids fall into two groups: some were soldiers and others civil servants. It also claims that weapons had been found, including land mines, as well as military uniforms and copies of the group’s future plans.

Reports coming out of Ethiopia indicate that those arrested included an army general, Teferra Mamo and a civilian Melaku Tefera, an organizer for the opposition Unity for Democracy and Justice Party who was reportedly among the kinijit leaders who were arrested following the rigged 2005 election. Additionally, it is reported that the accused included relatives of the exiled leaders of Ginbot 7, Dr Berhanu Nega as well as the 80-year old father of Tsige Andargachew.

SOCEPP- Canada is disturbed by this news. We are concerned about the health and wellbeing of the detainees as well as by the prospect that they may not receive a free and fair trial.

It is to be remembered that the ruling party has a long history of accusing its opponents with fabricated charges and subjecting them to humility and cruel treatment in prison. One such example is Dr. Taye Woldesemayat , the former leader of the Ethiopian Teachers Association who in May 1996 was arrested with similar fabricated charges of “terrorism and conspiracy to assassinate government officials”. Dr Taye was shackled for several months while held in solitary confinement. He was released after seven years of imprisonment.

The late Professor Asrat Weldeyes too was also detained under similar baseless accusations and kept in prison until his health deteriorated to a point where he could not recover. He died a few months after his release from prison.

We are deeply concerned that the 35 detainees will face similar cruel and inhuman treatment including torture, solitary confinement and deprivation of basic necessities. A number of Human Rights groups have in the past documented that torture is wide spread in Ethiopian prisons.

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We urge the authorities in Addis Ababa to disclose the identity of each detainee respect the full rights of the detainees and provide them immediate access to necessities of life, legal counsel, medical services, visits from family, friends as well as Human Rights Groups. We also urge the authorities to refrain from any and all forms of cruel and inhuman treatment. It is important to remember that such treatment is a crime that could not be tolerated.

We urge the International Red Cross and other Human Rights groups to visit the detainees without delay and confirm that their rights are fully protected.

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