



## Call for Urgent Action to Address Human Rights and Justice Crisis in Ethiopia

February 5, 2007.

In a recent meeting with an United States government elected representative, I was advised to call for urgent action from those in positions of influence to bring attention to the impending trial of the imprisoned leaders of the main opposition party—The Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP), scholars, independent journalists, and human rights advocates who will soon be facing the fabricated charges of treason and attempting to incite genocide. A conviction of such charges (a likely sentencing on February 19), carries the death penalty in Ethiopian penal system.

In the last year, the press, government decision makers and others in the international community have given little attention to the crisis unfolding in Ethiopia, exemplified by widespread human rights abuses and the overall corruption of justice, freedom and democracy in the country. At times, political agendas between non-Ethiopians in free countries and Ethiopians have collided and conflicted; yet, with more information and your assistance at this critical time, some or even many—may decide it is time to do much more! No one can exert more influence on those around you than **YOU!** With millions of Ethiopians living outside of Ethiopia, in many different countries and regions, together, we could have a huge sphere of influence where we could exert tremendous positive pressure for reform!

Many Ethiopians have discovered how to better use the political process of our countries and are better connected to many outside the Ethiopian community than ever before. We are now calling on you to make good use of this knowledge and of your connections in the next days and weeks. We need everyone's help.

For instance, we heard about one taxi cab driver in Washington D.C. who gave a ride to a newly elected congressional representative from one of the states in the US. We have been told that the congressional representative is now giving credit to that cabdriver for becoming an advocate for the people of Ethiopia and their fight for democracy. Apparently, that cabdriver well utilized that opportunity to educate this government decision maker about the lack of freedom and justice in Ethiopia! We ask you to do the same wherever you can.

However, to help you, we are making available for your use, in part or in whole, an appeal Press Release that the Anuak Justice Council has sent to those we know or with whom we have worked in the media, to elected and appointed officials within the government of the United States, Canada and the European Union, Austral, South Africa and to leaders of other non-governmental organizations. In it we are asking individuals, organizations and the media to speak out on behalf of justice as the date of the trial of the CUD leaders, journalists and human rights activists draws closer.

On that date, February 19, 2007, and following, we are calling for those who value real freedom, democracy and justice, to publicly stand up for these prisoners of the current tyrannical regime in Ethiopia as well as speaking out for other prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia and against the widespread human rights abuses.

We ask you to pass on this call to those you know who could contribute to the effort. This could include your federal and state senators and representatives to Congress, your city and county officials, schools—from elementary level to university level, churches—from the local church or mosque to the headquarters of that church or mosque, community groups, the media—including TV news anchors, local newspaper editors, radio announcers, journalists, webmasters, human rights leaders and leaders within businesses and corporations in your area. Even your family, friends and acquaintances should be made more aware of this crisis of justice so they can get the word out and become engaged. It is now up to you to get the story out!

If you use the attached document, you could copy it on two sheets of paper, using both sides, and give it out to people, who show an interest or you could mail it wherever you think it might educate others, leading them to take action. If you are contacting some elected official, it may help to send it by mail, with or without an attached letter from you, but with your address on it so it is known that you are a constituent because of your go fast code. You also might decide to make a phone call to someone or to arrange a meeting with those you think could help.

None of us knows how many letters, documents, meetings or phone calls it will take to make an impact. No one knows which contact might make the connection that brings it all together. It might be yours that tips the balance towards freedom and democracy so please join the effort! As we come together in unity of purpose for freedom and democracy, may God help us succeed!

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