

ASSOCIATION OF ETHIOPIAN-AMERICAN EVANGELICALS

California Branch

EthioEvangelicals@ureach.com

“Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” Psalms 68:31

December 23, 2007

An Open Letter to:

Those dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world

Amnesty International

Human Rights Watch

Committee to Protect Journalists

Doctors without Borders

Physicians for Human Rights

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Democracy Now

Program for Torture Victims

Americans for Informed Democracy

All Africa

Coalition against Trafficking in Women

International Peace Bureau

Freedom House

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

Human Rights First

Witness

Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers

International League of Human Rights

KPFK/NPR/KJLH

RE: One of the Most Important Bills of the Decade - A Bill with Global Ramification

Dear Friends:

We are writing this letter to inform you about what may well be the most important Human Rights bill of the decade – a single bill, specific to one country but with global implications. Once enacted in to law, this bill will have sweeping and global ramification in the exercise of United States Foreign Policy.

The bill in question, H.R. 2003 - Ethiopia Democracy & Accountability Act Of 2007, was passed by the House of Representatives on October 2, 2007. The vote was unanimous! Now, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations must approve it.

Unfortunately, Senator Inhofe of Oklahoma voiced his staunch opposition to the bill even before the bill was discussed at the committee level. The senator cited bogus facts and his close relationship to Prime Minister Meles (who was identified for two consecutive years as one of the world’s worst dictators by Parade magazine) as his reason to oppose the bill. He also stated that Ethiopia is “...our partner against terror.” However, as Congressman Chris Smith accurately put it, “No regime that terrorizes its own citizens can be a reliable ally in the war on terror.”

For reasons unknown to us, the senator has refused to support the bill and has threatened to put a hold on the bill in spite of being presented with numerous facts, eyewitness

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testimony, video, photos and other evidence acquired by local and international human rights organizations that prove numerous atrocities committed by the government of Mr. Meles, including the cold-blooded murder of 198 students who conducted a peaceful protest against the rigged national election of 2005.

The following is a short summary of the bill which is intended to promote human rights in Ethiopia:

- Seeks release and/or speedy trial of all political prisoners in the country.
- Urges prosecution of persons who have committed gross human rights violations.
- Provides financial support to strengthen human rights and civil society groups.
- Promotes and bolsters the independence of the Ethiopian judiciary by various means.
- Supports independent media operation without government censorship.
- Facilitates access to the Ogaden region by humanitarian organizations.
- Provides assistance to strengthen local, regional, and national parliaments.
- Promotes dialogue and negotiated settlement of political disputes.
- Provides training for civil society groups in election participation and monitoring.
- Provides support to improve the performance of the Ethiopian National Election Board and political parties in the country.

The passage of H.R.2003 will send a clear and stern warning to the over 70 dictators around the world that their days are numbered because Americans demand just foreign policy from their government! That Americans are no longer going to allow their tax dollars to support brutal dictators. We, as Americans, demand that our country's foreign policy reflect the very founding principles of our nation - "justice and Freedom for ALL." Our government's policy MUST not cause or prolong the suffering of human beings any where in the world!

Dear Friend, we would like to once again emphasize the fact that H.R.2003 is more than a bill for a specific country or interest group. Once enacted, it will set precedence for those dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world to demand identical policy towards other offending nations or regimes.

The passage of H.R.2003 will put our nation on the right path. A foreign policy that exemplifies justice will no longer be an abstract concept interpreted and exercised by the State Department and/or the administration in office to exercise at its whim but it will be the Law of the Land!

As an organization committed to protecting the human rights of people, we urge you to use the resources at your disposal, your experience in the arena of grassroots mobilization, lobbying, etc. to compel senators in every state to support and vote for the bill. You will find detailed information about the bill including an "Advocacy Action Package" at the following site:

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**[http://www.abbaymedia.com/H.R. 2003 ETHIOPIA DEMOCRACY AND AC
COUNTABILITY ACT OF 2007.htm](http://www.abbaymedia.com/H.R._2003_ETHIOPIA_DEMOCRACY_AND_AC_COUNTABILITY_ACT_OF_2007.htm)**

The following is the contact information for Senator Inhofe of Oklahoma who has become a serious stumbling block, a cruel and callous individual who chooses to ally with the murderer of our people. Please ask your constituents to call his office and express their dismay and ask him to do the right thing, support this human rights bill.

James M. Inhofe-Senator
1900 N.W. Expressway, Ste. 1210
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
Phone (405) 608-4381
Fax (405) 608-4120

John Collison-State Director
john_collison@inhofe.senate.gov

At the risk of being overly redundant, we would once again like to remind you of the global implications of this bill, of the precedence it will set for similar measures to be taken against other rouge leaders who are terrorizing their own people. Please mobilize your constituents to initiate a grassroots advocacy campaign as the bill is about ready for consideration by the Senate.

We have setup an online mechanism for requesting senators to support and vote for the bill. Please ask your constituents, nation wide, to use the link below to show support to their senators:

http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/1439/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=17114

We appreciate your solidarity and we thank you for all you do to alleviate the pain and suffering of the poor and voiceless. We earnestly request that you forward this letter to other civic, social, religious, cultural, etc. organization that stand for human rights.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

God bless,

Dagnea Teshome

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