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## **SOCEPP CANADA WELCOMES THE RELEASE OF MISS BERTUKAN MEDEKSA**

OCTOBER 6, 2010

SOCEPP Canada welcomes the release of Miss Bertukan Medeksa, the leader of the opposition - Unity for Democracy and Justice Party (UDJ). It is indeed a relief for her family and her supporters and we, therefore, congratulate her mother W/O Almaz and her only daughter – Hale, who have suffered immensely due to her imprisonment.

It is to be understood that Bertukan Mideksa has been in jail since December 2008 for exercising her freedom of speech and for stating that her previous release from prison two years earlier was negotiated, not granted. Despite all the denials on the part of her jailors, the international community and most importantly the people of Ethiopia have always known that Bretukan was imprisoned due to her strong opposition to the policies and practices of the ruling EPRDF.

Since her imprisonment, SOCEPP Canada and many human rights groups, governments, civic society groups, political organizations and individuals have repeatedly called for Bertiukan Mideksa's immediate and unconditional release. However, for far too long, the ruling EPRDF has been unwilling to heed this call. As a result, she has been subjected to both physical and psychological abuse.

While we maintain that the release of Bertukan Mideksa is welcome news, we like to state in strong terms that there are today too many Bertukans who continue to languish in prisons throughout Ethiopia. Many more have been “disappeared” and are unaccounted for. Some of these include Tsegaye Gebremedhin , Aberash berta, Yitshak Debretsiion, Lemma Haile and others leaders who are suspected members of the opposition EPRP.

We call upon the ruling EPRDF to open the jails and let all political prisoners free immediately. We urge the ruling group to respect the basic Human and democratic rights of the people and engage the opposition in good faith negotiation for a lasting peace and national reconciliation.

We thank all those who vigorously fought and advocated for the release of Bertukan Medeksa. We also urge you to redouble your efforts and advocate for the release of the remaining political prisoners in the country and for the respect of the basic rights of the Ethiopian people.

SOCEPP-CANADA