

October 1, 2007

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
United States House of Representatives
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0508

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Re: H.R. 2003 (Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007)

Dear Madam Speaker:

As the Speaker of the House of a great nation, you have enormous responsibility to ensure that brutal and illegitimate regimes do not oppress their people while projecting a false image of democracy to the outside world. That is why I am writing to seek your support for H.R.2003.

H.R. 2003 aims to institute accountability and democratic reforms in Ethiopia; aid in the restoration of the democratic rights of the people; strengthen human rights and civil society organizations; assure the independence of the judiciary; assist in bringing to justice human rights abuses; ensure fraud free elections and the removal of press censorship, among many others. Simply stated, it is a bill that aims to institutionalize the rule of law.

Allow me to present here below why H.R. 2003 deserves your support.

- Ethiopia under Meles Zenawi is “*a country that is abusing its own people and has no respect for democracy,*” according to Representative Donald Payne, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa.
- “*What the Ethiopian security forces are doing may amount to crimes against humanity,*” Georgette Gagne of Human of Human Rights Watch told the New York Times in a recent interview.
- The Honorable Ana Gomes, the EU observer of the May 2005 elections, affirmed, “...the current regime in Ethiopia is repressing the people because it lacks democratic legitimacy.”
- In an editorial of July 18, 2007, *The Wall Street Journal* declared, “...Zenawi’s democracy is on paper only.” In a recent statement, U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy stated, “...the 2005 election was not the turning point many had hoped for.” On July 23, U.S. Congressman Christopher Smith called Zenawi “a vicious dictator.”
- Various international bodies -- including the inquiry commission appointed by Zenawi’s own government -- have extensively documented the crimes committed by the Prime Minister and his lieutenants.
- According to the government’s own commission, 193 Ethiopians protesting the stealing of elections were massacred and 763 seriously wounded by Zenawi’s troops. Many of these people were shot in the head.
- The same commission also reported the unprecedented arrest of upwards of 30,000 people.
- In Gambella area, 424 Anuaks were massacred on December 13, 2003. In Oromia region, people have been targeted for constant harassment, killings, and torture for

refusing to submit to Zenawi's ethnic policy of divide and rule. In the Ogaden region, he has continued to commit war crimes.

The TPLF/EPRDF came to power using brute force. It had no qualms about killing those who got in its way, both before and after coming to power. Imprisonments on false charges, torture and murder have been its stock-in-trade.

Under the cover of fighting terrorism, the despotic regime of Meles Zenawi, has created elaborate, corrupt and brutal machinery that has manufactured phantom terrorists and bought its way to the corridors of power in Washington using donors' money to hire expensive lobbyists.

Zenawi never intended to have democracy, but always sought the foreign money that comes with the talk of democracy. He has cunningly hoodwinked Western leaders into believing he was a "new breed" of African leaders. There is a cause and effect relationship between democracy and development. Ethiopia and Africa will remain basket cases as long as governments are corrupt and are not held accountable for their misbehavior either by their own people or by the international community.

- The West has generously funded this brutal regime for the last 16 years. In the name of helping Ethiopia's poor, Western donors have transferred over \$25 billion to the regime's coffers during this period.
- Much of this money goes to keep the ruling minority tribalist group in power. The foreign money is supplemented by a systematic, extensive looting of the nation's resources. The government, by extension, the ruling party owns all land and major enterprises, creating extreme wealth for a tiny minority while the majority remains deeply impoverished. Life under Zenawi is nastier and brutish.

I welcome the recent release of 38 leaders of the opposition party, Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD)-Kinijit, though they did not deserve to be there in the first place, but there are still over 30,000 political prisoners in Zenawi's jails.

Madame Speaker, for these legitimate reasons, I appeal to you to join the respected leaders Donald Payne, Christopher Smith, Mike Honda, Tom Lantos and the 85 co-sponsors of H.R. 2003 to champion our just cause by ensuring the passage of H.R.2003. Thank you in advance for standing on the side of 80 million Ethiopians who are struggling to bring about democracy, justice, and the rule of law in Ethiopia. I thank you for your understanding. God bless America!

Respectfully yours,

Your Signature
Your Name
Your Address
Your Phone Number