



22nd July 2009

The Honorable
Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President,

We the undersigned, represent the collaborative effort of rights based civil society organizations and individuals of Ethiopian origin, living in North America, Africa, and Europe under an umbrella group called, Ethiopian National Priorities Consultative Process (ENPCP.) This fledgling effort, launched two years ago, has been initiated by a burning desire to promote a fresh grass-root democratic movement that can help ensure the protection of Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law in Ethiopia. The first inaugural public activity of the ENPCP took place successfully on 2nd July 2009 in Chicago with a daylong Symposium as a preparatory effort for holding a National Convention by early 2010. Please visit our web site www.enpcp.org for additional information.

Mr. President,

What motivated ENPCP members to write this humble letter is the historic speech you delivered in The Ghanaian Parliament in Accra, on 11th July 2009. No American President has ever accurately encapsulated, as you did, the stark reality prevailing in present day governance by leaders in Africa. You have spoken poignantly exposing to the world at large and to African leaders in particular, that no amount of governmental scheme will bring about meaningful change to their respective African nations without strong institutions that function to protect the welfare of the whole population they lead. You have also articulated on how democratic governance does not mean having elections only. You said,

“This is about more than just holding elections. It’s also about what happens between elections. Repression can take many forms, and too many nations, even those that have elections, are plagued by problems that condemn their people to poverty. No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves.”

It is the strong belief of the ENPCP members that, it is only under the aegis of the Rule of Law and respect of Human Rights that peace and security could be achieved in every African nation and its surrounding regions. As an example, a nation such as Ethiopia, where a six percent ethnic polity imposes its harsh undemocratic governance with its numerous repressive laws, on the remaining seventy four million people cannot withstand potential internal conflicts or eliminate effectively international terrorism, which is festering in the Horn of Africa, while the majority of its own population is actively poised against the regime itself. In addition, the age old mutual strategic interest, cultural and economic development that has been nurtured by Ethiopian American friendly relations that began since 1902 can be seriously hampered causing an anti-American sentiment identifying the U.S. with the regime.

All the ENPCP members greatly appreciate your Administration's readiness to help those African leaders who are committed, and struggle on their own to bring about genuine democratic governance and respect of Human Rights to their people. We also hope, in order to protect the respective national interest between nations, your global leadership will persuade all donor governments to revise their often double standard applications of the rule of democracy, which affects the assistance they provide.

With regard to Ethiopia, specifically, we implore your administration to take all measures to ensure that the May, 2010 Ethiopian national election will be free and fair. This will bring a new era of peace and development to the Ethiopian people who have, for long, been afflicted by oppression, instability, and a grinding poverty including the thousands who are still languishing either as political or as prisoners of conscience.

Further details on relevant points in the context of our country of origin, Ethiopia, our understanding of the challenges ahead and potential solutions will be communicated to your Chief of Staff and Secretary of State. We pray that your Administration achieves great success in all its endeavors.

With Our Highest Respect

Imru Zelleke

Imru Zelleke, Retired Ambassador
ENPCP Co-Chairman

Kidane Alemayhu

Kidane Alemayhu, Retired UN Expert
ENPCP Co-Chairman

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ENPCP Member Civil Society Organizations

Constituants for Democracy (Dejen Le Democracy)
Ethiopian Forum for Peace, Democracy and Development (EFPDD)
Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFPJA)
Ethiopian National Congress (ENC)
International Ethiopian Womens' Organization (IEWO)
Network of Ethiopian Scholars - Scandinavian Chapter (NES)
Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners - Canada (SCEPP-C)
Solidarity Movement for New Ethiopia (SMNE)

C.C.

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Vice president of the U.S. and President of the U.S. Senate
The Honorable Harry Reid, U.S. Senate, Majority Leader
The Honorable Robert C. Byrd, U.S. Senate, President Pro Tempore
The Honorable Richard Durbin, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, U.S. Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, U.S. House of Representatives of the 111th Congress, Speaker
The Honorable Howard Berman, U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Chairman
The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Ranking Member
The Honorable Donald Payne, U.S. House Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, Chairman
The Honorable Chris Smith, U.S. House Subcommittee on African and Global Health, Ranking Member
The Honorable Bill Delahunt, U.S. House Committee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight, Chairman
The Honorable Dana Rohrabacher, U.S. House Committee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight, Ranking Member
The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Department of State, Secretary
The Honorable Johnnie Carson, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs, Asst. Secretary
The Honorable Karen B. Stewart, U.S. Department of State, Principal Deputy Asst. Secretary
The Honorable Robert M. Gates, U.S. Department of Defence, Secretary
The Honorable Gen. Jim Jones, U. S. President National Security Advisor
The Honorable Ram Emanuel, Whitehouse Chiff of Staff
The Honorable Jim Messina, Deputy Chiefs of Staff
The Honorable Mona Sutphen, Deputy Chiefs of Staff
The Honorable David Axelrod, Senior Advisors to the U.S. President
The Honorable Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisors to the U.S. President
The Honorable Pete Rouse, Senior Advisors to the U.S. President