



KIL-011-06
November 12, 2006.

Open Letter

To: His Excellency, Dr. Jose Manuel Durao Barroso,
President of the European Commission.
Rue de la loi 200
B- 1049 Brussels,

His Excellency Commissioner Louis Michel,
European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian aid.
Berlaymont 10/165
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CC: His Excellency Josep Borrell Fontelles
President of the European Parliament
Rue Wiertz, 60
B- 1047 Brussels

Her Excellency Halonen, Tarja Kaarina
President of Council of the European Union
Rue de la Loi 175
B- 1048 Brussels

His Excellency Dr. Javier Solana
Secretary – General of the Council and High
Representative for the Common Foreign and
Security Policy Council of the European Union
Rue de la Loi 175
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His Excellency Mr. Elmar Brok,
Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs
EU Parliament

Her Excellency, Mrs. Helene Flautre
Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Human Rights
EU Parliament

Her Excellency, Mrs Luisa Morgantini
Chairwomen of the Committee on Development
EU Parliament

Her Excellency, Mrs. Ana Gomes,
MEP and Chief of the Election Observation Mission in Ethiopia
Honourable Parliamentarian Members of the EU Election Observation Mission in Ethiopia
Brussels – Belgium

Invitation of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia to EU-Africa Week

“The universality and indivisibility of human rights and the responsibility for their protection and promotion, together with the promotion of pluralistic democracy and effective guarantees for the rule of law, constitute essential objectives for the European Union as a union of shared values and serve as a fundamental basis for our action. The human being is at the centre of our policies. Ensuring the human dignity of every individual remains our common goal.” Declaration of the European Union on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights - VIENNA, 10 DECEMBER, 1998.

Does this apply for Ethiopia?

Your Excellencies,

Ethiopians around the world struggling for democracy and freedom are utterly shocked and appalled to learn that Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (PM Meles) of Ethiopia, who is in charge of the Security Forces and has for all intents sanctioned the massacre of **193¹** (three times the official death toll) unarmed civilian protesting against stolen votes following Election May 2005, has been invited to the **EU-Africa week** to be held between November 15 - 17, 2006.

We are obliged to lodge this letter of abomination and protest to the Commission over this ill advised and misguided decision to invite a tyrant whose blatant human rights violations have drawn widespread international condemnations to lecture on “Challenges of Governance” is untenable and a glaring hypocrisy on the part of the commission towards democracy and human rights.

While it is widely accepted notion that poverty reduction and economic growth are intertwined with democratic governance, the bizarre decision to invite a killing dictator who has no regard for human life runs contrary to the Commission’s Declaration on Human Rights, hampers the work for democracy and freedom in Ethiopia, and only helps to prop up tyranny in Ethiopia which are not in the interest of the millions of European tax payers.

The European Commission, as the partner for improved governance and development in Ethiopia and a mediator between the opposition and the government in the negotiations following the election, has a moral duty and responsibility to urge and pressure the Ethiopian Government to respect the will of the people, human rights, and release all political prisoners. It was expected to play the role of an impartial broker serving the interest of Ethiopians, not that of tyranny. However, as if the invitation of PM Meles Zenawi to Glen Eagles in December 2005 before the blood of murdered innocent civilians has even disappeared from the street of Addis was not callous and scandalous enough, another invitation after the tyrant has continued his severe violations of human rights, is considered as an affront to Ethiopians as a whole. The minority ethnic regime of Meles Zenawi is repressive and is known to have poor records on respecting human rights. The upsurge on its violation of human rights and intensification of its attacks on the genuine opposition after losing the May 15, 2005 elections have led even the donor community to express their concerns.

The overt brutality and the blatant violations of human rights the regime controlled by PM Meles Zenawi, has been committing unabated since May 2005 are disturbing and shocking. The post election period has become the darkest time which is witnessing daily disappearances and murders of political opponents and others suspected of involvement in the opposition. The rules of the regime in power are marred by excessive repression, state sponsored terror, and state incited ethnic conflicts that have claimed the lives of countless Ethiopians. The brute and

repressive policies of the regime are creating an explosive and volatile political development, under the watchful eyes of the international community, risk dragging the country into wider internal strife and civil unrest.

As the illegitimate regime is increasingly rejected by the people and has resorted to rule by dictate, Ethiopia is steadily descending into the fold of a policed state where the only alternative left to any decent citizen is to die in silence or **flee**² the country in precarious circumstances. This shows the unparalleled barbarism and savagery of PM Meles Zenawi, who is bent on committing any possible crime against humanity to retain his absolute power on the country.

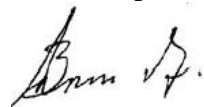
Despite the above harsh political circumstances endured by the people of Ethiopia, the decision to invite PM Meles Zenawi to The Plenary Session of 17 November 2006, is at best tantamount to turning a blind eye to the state of tyranny reigning over Ethiopia and at worst to renege on the promise of the European Union to stand with the Ethiopian people in their struggle for democracy and freedom.

It is regrettable that this inconsiderate decision causes a lot of anger and outrage in Ethiopia greatly undermining the credibility of the European Union as an institution seeking to promote democracy and freedom in Ethiopia, alienate the Ethiopian people and make them increasingly prefer the armed resistance over peaceful movement for change. We regret to say that on this occasion the EU has not only let down the Ethiopian people badly, but has also lost its will and credentials to uphold the principles of human rights and good governance.

The futile attempt of the Commission stabilize the brute regime of Meles Zenawi and thereby prolong the misery and suffering of millions of Ethiopians will regrettably continue to be remembered as the darkest spot in the relationships between the European Commission and Ethiopia. The misguided policy favoring the close association of the Commission with one of the few tyrants of the World is responsible for this profoundly tarnished image of the European Union among millions of Ethiopians bearing the heavy yoke of repression and tyranny.

Therefore, we call on and strongly urge the Commission to withdraw the invitation rendered to the despot Meles Zenawi and instead use its power and the political leverage to exert the at most pressure on the ethno-centric regime in Ethiopia to respect human rights, the rule of law, unconditional release of political prisoners, and facilitate an all inclusive national dialogue.

Yours respectfully,



Berhane Mewa
Secretary General for Kinijit International Leadership (KIL).

1 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/18/AR2006101800242.html>

2 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6121854.stm>