

March to Stop Genocide and Dictatorship in Ethiopia/Africa Gaining Momentum

March for Freedom Coalition Presses Releases

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The momentum is gathering in anticipation for the March to Stop Genocide and Dictatorship in Ethiopia/Africa, now only a few days away. A warm, sunny day is in the forecast so it should be perfect for the march! Banners are being prepared and publicity is going out. Sponsors are being added. Those organizations, which still have not joined as sponsors, can still do so in order for your name to be included on the March for Freedom Day.

It seems that more and more people do not want to miss being part of this historic event. We are seeing an increasing number of calls coming in from new people who are telling us they have changed their minds about staying home and are making last minute travel arrangements to come to Washington D.C. for the march. There are actually some good last minute fares still available. Some from overseas have already arrived from Switzerland, Norway, the UK, South Africa and we expect more to come. In the UK, some Ethiopians, unable to fly to the US, are trying to find another way to be included. They are trying to make arrangements to have the event televised in front of the House of Commons in London! The March for Freedom committee urges Ethiopians from every freedom and justice loving group to join together wherever you are throughout the world to rally on this day if you cannot be with us in person.

Key decision makers will be watching to see if Ethiopians are ready to come together for the good of the country. If we show them we are, September 13th may become the tipping point of our struggle, altering the weight from the authoritarian Meles regime to the side of the people who want self-determination and genuine multi-party democracy. So far, individual groups have tried many ways to tip the scale to the other side, but it has not worked for any of us. The closest we have come was when two million Ethiopians marched on the streets of Addis Ababa in 2005, thirsty for freedom, and it almost brought down the regime.

Now it is over four years since that day and since that time, we have never seen that kind of solidarity. This is certainly a major part of our problem. Will you add your weight to the weight of others and help tip the scale to the side of freedom, justice, respect for human rights, equality and the rule of law? Will you help free our political prisoners and our imprisoned country? Will you help end the horrific abuses going on in Afar, in the Ogaden, in Oromiya and throughout the country? You may be a child and only weigh fifty pounds, but it might be your fifty pounds that changes the balance. Are you willing?

If you are, you might still be able to find a way to come and together, we will create a high-impact event for Ethiopians and Africans who have had enough of dictators and the genocide, crimes against humanity and gross human rights crimes they ruthlessly commit against their own people!

A variety of speakers will be present; including such people as Gregory Stanton, Genocide Watch, George Ayittey, Author and President of Free Africa Foundation, Gerald LeMelle, Africa Action, Congressman Chris Smith (to be confirmed), Senator Patrick Leahy (to be confirmed) Donald Payne (to be confirmed) and many others. The program will be coming out soon.

Reception Sunday Night:

Because so many Ethiopians are coming from out of the area, including from different international locations, a reception is planned following the event. It will be an opportunity to meet, talk and socialize with others. Additionally, it will be a time to share ideas and insights that would be critical to a plan to move ahead from here. Once we get the attention of the public, we must be prepared to use it well. For those people who want to be part of this, please email or call one of the March for Freedom members.

Financial contributions and volunteers are coming in, but more of both are still needed!

It is not too late to contribute. Donations are starting to come in through the SMNE's Paypal account and we hope to see many more. Designate your donation for the March fund. We are greatly appreciative to those who have already contributed to the costs, as many of you have done, many even today. More funding is critically needed. It is the responsibility of all of us to do our best. There is not only much left to pay for; there is also much left to do. For your information, nothing is allowed to be sold. This is the law.

We need more volunteers to perform some of the following tasks:

- Set up, stage, etc
- Make additional banners and signs (we have suggestions for content)
- Distribute flyers
- Water (many should buy a case of water to add to a water distribution center)
- First Aid (by those who are medically trained, supplemented by other volunteers; some should bring first aid supplies)
- Press hospitality
- Clean up crew (many needed to make the job easy)
- Crowd control
- Information/Hospitality booth
- Petition signing for US Senators and Representatives

Many volunteers will make the job fun and easier for everyone involved. Please contact one of the March for Freedom committee members for more information or just show up with a willingness to give a hand. We are doing this for the people of Ethiopia and Africa. They are watching us with hope in their eyes and their hearts. Will you help?

Hope to see you there to join with other justice loving people from Africa, the Diaspora and the US, on September 13, 2009, from noon until 5:30 PM in front of the US Capitol building.

May God rain justice and freedom on Ethiopia!

For more information, visit **March For Freedom** website: <http://www.march4freedom.org>. You can also contact Mr. Obang Metho by e-mail: Obang@solidaritymovement.org