



**Joint Press Release by: East African Human Rights Coalition
& Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia**
**Call on US and Canadian Authorities to Deny Visit by
Ogaden Genocide Perpetrator**

For immediate release

October 2, 2009

Da'ud Mohamed Ali, governor of the Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia, is heading up a delegation that is expected to tour North America, which includes a planned visit to Minnesota this weekend and on to Canada next week. Why Minnesota? Minnesota is now home to more Somali Ogadens than anywhere else outside of Ethiopia.

We believe that if the US and the Canadian public knew more about this man and his central complicity in committing massive atrocities against his own people, they would not only be outraged; they would never allow him entrance into either of these free countries. In March of 2009, Dr. Gregory Stanton, president of Genocide Watch, has called Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles's regime "serial killers" and has referred the case on to the International Criminal Court to consider doing an in-depth investigation, particularly citing the case of the Ogaden region. Based on Da'ud's perpetration of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in the Ogaden region (Somali Regional State), we are hoping—that the US and Canadian Governments will deny him a visa.

Da'ud has been connected to massive crimes against humanity, war crimes and the destruction of livelihood, as documented by human rights organizations and humanitarian groups working in the area. Food, medical aid and other humanitarian assistance have been blocked and thousands were displaced by Da'ud's orders. Recently 42 international organizations have been kicked out of the country, allegedly for providing information on the human rights situation, later used in the US State Department's disparaging human rights report on Ethiopia.

The genocide and dictatorship by a corrupt and brutal government under the leadership of Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, known for using tactics to suppress the people while pretending to be a partner in the War on Terror. Zenawi uses ethnic "puppets," like Da'ud, to carry out schemes usually attached to the exploitation of natural resources; in this case, the large gas and oil reserves in the region. Americans and Canadians should shun any support of such genocide perpetrators and not give them a voice or a platform to intimidate and silence those among us.

This coalition of concerned American and Canadian are asking that the both governments exercise their established laws against human rights violators in respect to Da'ud and his delegation, excluding them from entry. Indeed it will give voice to the silenced victims in Ethiopia—something that would indeed be an encouraging source of hope to some who have been discouraged by US and Canadian quietness of this terrorist regime.

Ethiopians have been divided by ethnicity, region, political view, religion and other differences, but those in this new coalition hope that by coming together in solidarity around principles of putting **“humanity before ethnicity”** or any other difference; that they can better create society that is free, democratic, just, reconciled and prosperous. we are working together to bring about the transformation based on the principle that **“no one will be free until all are free.”** This is the only way to break the cycle of dictatorship, injustice, ethnic conflict, poverty, exploitation and corruption that is now rampant on the continent.

The face of the Ogaden Genocide



Some of the crimes that Da'ud is directly linked to include:

- Forcible mobilization of civil servants to pick up arms and fight the ONLF. Da'ud Mohamed, as a party deputy leader, was in charge of the campaign to mobilize untrained civil servants to face highly trained armed groups. In an article in the New York Times, see <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/15/world/africa/15ethiopia.html> , it was written “Anybody who works for the government — teachers, doctors, clerks, administrators — has to join a militia,” In the same reported that “Several Western officials say they are alarmed about this new strategy, especially when the first signs maybe emerging of a humanitarian crisis that aid officials predicted over the summer.”
- In May 2007, Da'ud Mohamed called for and chaired all civil servant staff meeting which was held at Abdulmajid Hussein Teacher Training Collegall, and in that meeting, ordered all the present civil servants to be transported to the frontline to fight armed groups. Some of them have been killed, others have fled to neighboring countries and those who refused to fight were jailed.
- In October 2008, Mr Daud, accompanied by the head of the regional security Abdi Omar, (also known Abdi Iley), toured Fiq, Korah and Degahbour zones, to implement similar operations. In Degahbour, he ordered the salaries of Gunagado district to be

frozen until they captured or killed the leader of ONLF, whom he believed was in the area at that time.

- In December 2008, the army and the militia, with the approval of the Regional Security Council Chair Mr. Daud Mohamed, massacred 37 unarmed civilians and politicians including Qanyare, a member of Gursum district parliament, Ali Heydar- head of Biyo Ade Kebele administration and Omer Aw Ibrahim- a known elder in the village. Mr Mohamed as the head the Security Council that leads and oversees the military and militia operations in the region approved all these operations.
- In January 2009, hundreds of civil servants were dismissed for not taking up arms against rebel groups by the order of the regional president.

In its 130 page report supplemented with satellite images of the burnt villages, the Human Rights Watch said “During the peak of the army’s counterinsurgency campaign from June to September 2007, witnesses described how Ethiopian troops forcibly displaced entire rural communities and destroyed dozens of rural villages; executed at least 150 civilians, sometimes in demonstration killings to terrorize those communities suspected of supporting the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF); and arbitrarily detained hundreds of civilians in military barracks where they experienced beatings, torture, and widespread rape and other forms of sexual violence.”
<http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2008/06/12/collectivepunishment>



Buildings in Labigah town, in the Ogaden, are seen before their destruction in this handout satellite image taken February 2008. Satellite images confirm reports that the TPLF/EPRDF military have burned towns and villages in the remote Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia, the American Association for the Advancement of Science reported on eight sites in the rocky, arid region, which borders Somalia, have clear signs of burning and other destruction, the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program said. REUTERS/American Association for the Advancement of Science/Digital Globe/Handout.



The destruction, and damage, to Labigah town's structures is seen in this handout satellite image taken February 2008. Satellite images confirm reports that the Ethiopian military has burned towns and villages in the remote Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia, the American Association for the Advancement of Science reported on eight sites in the rocky, arid region, which borders Somalia, have clear signs of burning and other destruction, the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program said. REUTERS/American Association for the Advancement of Science/Digital Globe/Handout (Ethiopia).

Amnesty International, Ogaden Human Rights Committee, the US state department and other international institutions have also documented the severe human rights violations in Ogaden (See <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/119001.htm>, http://www.amnesty.ca/resource_centre/news/view.php?load=arcview&article=4046&c=Resource+Centre+News, http://www.ogadenrights.org/THE_DIRE.htm,).

In October 2008 Douglas Alexander, the international development secretary, visited Ogaden and experienced human rights violations in Ogaden first hand after malnourished children and mothers were forcefully removed from the Hospital he visited in Kabridehar region (<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article4965305.ece>)

For more information please contact

Mr. Yassin Kassim;
Executive Director
East African Human Rights Coalition
Email, Yassin@solidaritymovement.org

Or
Mr. Obang Metho
Executive Director
Solidarity Movement for new Ethiopia
Email: Obang@solidaritymovement.org