



**An Open Letter to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton,
Concerning Peace and Stability in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa**

June 7, 2010

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
US Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

VIA FACSIMILE

Dear Secretary Clinton,

We, the Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia, (SMNE),¹ a social justice movement of diverse Ethiopians, working to bring freedom, justice, democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human and civil rights in Ethiopia, seek to learn how the recent Ethiopian National election, which you and others have acknowledged as not meeting international standards, will affect future US foreign policies with this illegitimately-elected government? Will you now choose to side with the democratic movement of the people or will you continue with the status quo, supporting a dictator who has stolen the votes of the people?

The results from this election are clear to all willing to see. Tyranny has won and democracy has lost; suffering such a great blow that any small progress made over the last nearly two decades of the Meles Zenawi-run government, has now been thoroughly reversed. After the last election in 2005, when the opposition nearly took the election, this increasingly authoritarian government of Meles and his TPLF/EPRDF party, made sure there was no room for anyone but themselves to win. Their absurd claims—of a 99.63% victory—only go to show how well they tipped the playing field to their home advantage!

Abundant evidence exists that this election was fundamentally flawed from the onset. Sources including election observers from the European Union, pre-election investigators from Human Rights Watch, the US State Department as part of their 2009 Human Rights Report and countless other international investigative journalists and human rights organizations, all point to the widespread repression of most every political right

The EPRDF used a full assortment of tactics to suppress contenders, the independent media, civic organizations, peaceful activists and the voting public through draconian laws, a perversion of justice, imprisonment of opposition leaders such as Birtukan Mideksa and the launching of a deeply- entrenched

¹ The Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia, (SMNE), are part of a grassroots social justice movement of diverse Ethiopians who seek to bring truth, justice, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, equality and the respect for human rights to Ethiopia. Our driving principles are “putting humanity before ethnicity or any other distinctions” because, in any healthy, well-functioning society, we must care about the rights of all our members for “no one will be free until all are free!” For more information, see: www.solidaritymovement.org.

system of EPRDF spies and enforcers, down to the neighborhood level, who used threats, bribes, crimes and corruption to exert control over the outcome.

No one can any longer pretend that this is an emerging democracy. This is a full-blown dictatorship. The thin veneer of democracy has cracked open for all to see its brutal nature. It now requires that those supporting it reassess such support! The freedom-loving people of Ethiopia are asking—whose side will you choose—the side of the people or of an un-elected usurper of the will of the people?

If Omar al-Bashir, Robert Mugabe, Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro are not invited to share your table at the G-20 Toronto Summit at the end of June, the G-8 and at the Climate Change Summit last year, why are you inviting Meles Zenawi, a strongman of equal standing, who terrorizes the people while commanding a mafia-style *kleptocracy*²? Meles Zenawi and his government should not be recognized as legitimate by such as you—the western democratic countries who are founded on democratic ideals!

Besides that, since 1995, financial assistance from the US, the UK and the World Bank to Ethiopia has risen from 1.9 billion to 3.3 billion in 2008, funding that is largely used to prolong this authoritarian government, known to divert significant portions of such aid for its own political purposes. Additionally, the partnership Meles has in the War on Terror has justified and funded his own “war of terror” against innocent Ethiopians and Africans.

Here is an up-to-date example. Just this week in Gambella, Ethiopia, the EPRDF military has been targeting the local people; especially those of Anuak ethnicity. After disarming the local people, the town is full of soldiers with guns who are alleged to be committing daily human rights violations.

Many of us have been trying to tell policymakers in the US, the UK and the EU to stop siding with such an abusive dictator; even sending a letter to President Obama, [read...](#) Secretary Gates, [read...](#) John Kerry, [read...](#) former Prime Minister Gordon Brown [read...](#) and others; but the response has been silence as the funding continues unabated. We had hoped US policies towards this regime would change with the Obama administration, but have not seen any difference between the two.

Your position may be because of some national or strategic interests, but how about the interests of the Ethiopian people; including their very survival? If you have long-term interest in this country, be aware that what is done now, can positively or negatively affect the future relationships between our nations.

The people of Ethiopia are ready to choose the kind of government they want, but through brute strength and unconstitutional manipulations, the illegitimate and unelected minority party of Meles Zenawi has overthrown the democratic process and seized power once again. We cannot sit by idly while this government hold Ethiopians hostage in their own country.

The SMNE urges all democratic allies of Ethiopia to end their support to this regime before it taints or radicalizes the future relationship with the people of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Ethiopians are looking for concrete action that will help advance meaningful democratic reforms. We ask you to work with us in cutting support to this dictatorship.

We do not expect the western or donor countries to free us, but ask you to not be a roadblock to our freedom as we carry out the hard work to bring about a post-Meles Ethiopia. The question is: will the US, the UK, Canada and the EU, along with other democratic donor countries, continue with “business as usual” or take a moral stand on this?

The Ethiopian people are looking for more than a mild public condemnation of the election and behind closed-doors diplomacy that fails to bring any substantial change in donor support to this repressive regime.

² Kleptocracy is a term African author, George Ayittey, has created to describe repressive African dictators who use brutal repression to rob the people of their political rights and national assets.

If you want to work on the side of the Ethiopian people towards peace, stability and prosperity in Ethiopia and in the Horn of Africa, now is the time to show such readiness. We are extending our hand to work with you, but leave the decision up to you. Will you be on the side of freedom or tyranny? The Ethiopian people are waiting for your answer.

In anticipation,

Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia

For more information, please contact
Mr. Obang Metho,
Executive Director of the SMNE
P. O. Box 50561
Arlington, VA 22205
Phone 202 725-1616
Email: obang@solidaritymovement.org
Website: www.solidaritymovement.org

This Letter has been CC to:

President Barack Obama
Vice President, Mr. Joseph Biden
Secretary Robert M. Gates, Department of Defense
General James L. Jones, National Security Advisor
Senator John F. Kerry, Chairman of the Senate. Foreign Relations
Senator Richard G. Lugar, Ranking Member of Committee on Foreign Relations
Senator Russell D. Feingold, Chairman of Subcommittee on African Affairs
Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman of Subcommittee on Foreign Operations
Senator Robert Menendez, Chairman of Subcommittee on Foreign Relations
House of Representatives, Mr. Donald M. Payne, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa
House of Representatives, Mr. Chris Smith, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Africa

United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron

This letter has also been CC to G-20 members.

Other Organizations

- * World Bank
- * International Monetary Fund
- * Financial Stability Board
- * Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs,

UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs,

German Minister of Foreign Affairs,

French Ministry of Foreign affairs,

Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs,

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

European Union Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Ethiopian Embassies around the world and Donor Countries embassies in Addis Ababa

Major news media outlets such as BBC, the Guardian, New York Times, Washington Post etc,