



January 5, 2012

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Mr. Mario Guido Friggieri,  
Refugee Commissioner of Malta  
Ministry For Justice and Home Affairs-  
Fort St. Elmo, Valletta - VLT 2000.

**Dear Mr. Friggieri**

We in the Solidarity **Movement for a New Ethiopia (SMNE)**, are writing this letter in regards to the Ethiopians who have been detained in Malta for nearly a year. **We have been in contact with these people and are highly concerned about the length of their detentions. We are also concerned regarding the extremely difficult conditions they face while in detention, including a lack of adequate medical and/or psychological attention for some who need it services related to epilepsy, women's health, depression and mental health. Additionally, some are disabled and some are underage.**

We strongly urge you to re-examine their requests for asylum as well as the need for further critical services. We are also copying this letter to the UN Secretary-General, to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to Amnesty International, to International Organization for Migration, to European Commission for Immigration, to Human Rights Watch and other organizations who care about the well being of the refugee.

For your information, the SMNE<sup>1</sup> is a social justice movement of diverse Ethiopians whose mission is to protect the human rights and well being of the Ethiopian people; particularly related to the Ethiopian regime's egregious and widespread violations of the human and civil rights of its own citizens. The SMNE has branches in the United States, Canada, Norway, Kenya, United Arab Emirates, Sweden, Belgium, South Africa, Ireland, Germany, Ghana, Netherland, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Japan, Uganda, New Zealand, Australia and chapters in various cities and countries throughout the world, including within Ethiopia. You can find us through our website at: [www.solidaritymovement.org](http://www.solidaritymovement.org)

You may not be fully aware of the Ethiopian regime's commission of multiple acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and human rights atrocities as well as its control of all institutions; including the justice system. Its brutal repression of every right has caused many Ethiopian to seek refuge in other countries while those who remain within Ethiopia have been silenced by fear of punitive measures should they speak out or resist its control. The TPLF/EPRDF is a regime that does not care about its citizens when they are in harm's way.

**When the uprisings erupted in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia, there were over a hundred thousand migrant workers caught in the conflicts; among them many Ethiopians. Some of these Ethiopians managed to make it to Malta where they have been detained by Malta authorities. From what we know, others among them, from such countries as Eritrea and Somalia, have been approved for asylum months ago based on the UN standards acknowledging the well known political instability of their respective countries; however, Ethiopians remain in detention despite facing persecution should they return to Ethiopia. This is persecution related to ethnicity, political opinion and lack of membership in the ruling party.**

Any asylum-seekers who are not regime party members or who are of different ethnicity or political view than the apartheid Ethiopian regime of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front/Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (TPLF/EPRDF) have a legitimate reason to fear being targeted for persecution. Their fear is based on well-established evidence that the present regime favors its own and persecutes at whim those who are not.

In places like Oromia and the Ogaden where low-level resistance movements are going on, simply being an ethnic Oromo or Ogadeni has been reason enough for this regime to target the person for extra-judicial killing, imprisonment or beating. This is also the case in other regions of the country. Those who have been working outside the country are also more suspect.

**Ethiopians are suffering all over the world because their own country has become so hostile to any who do not agree with the regime's tactics and corrupt practices. In the recent 2010 Legatum Prosperity Index rating the well being of people in 110 nations in the world, Ethiopia was dead last in regards to freedom (<http://www.prosperity.com/>), yet, the widespread persecution of countless Ethiopians fails to be acknowledged. Why is this?**

Also, why is it that when Ethiopians are seeking freedom from persecution in other countries, authorities discount their oppression and Ethiopians as a group, end up being unjustly mistreated? We are shocked at the lack of compliance with international law in regards to Ethiopians in many countries. This is something we are determined to confront so that countries are not biased in complying with their international obligations.

Since February 2011, the SMNE has been in touch with detention authorities in Malta and although we are certainly pleased that some of these refugees have been approved for asylum and released to immigrate to a third country, we are wondering why the status on the majority of cases remains unchanged? **Equally concerning is the fact that as they await decisions, the health and well being of some detainees is significantly deteriorating.**

Please see below for more details, which include the individual names of over 50 Ethiopian detainees, their ID numbers, the barracks where each is being housed and some specific information on individual health conditions where we know it to be of concern. We are aware that in a number of cases, detention authorities have not followed medical recommendations for detainees who have received medical services. This is a violation of international law.

An example is the case of an Ethiopian young woman Ms, Samira Abdu Ahmed [ID number 11c 090] who is epileptic. She has received medical care on a number of occasions but the doctor's orders are not being followed, leading to a hospitalization on December 29, 2011, in Mater Dei Hospital and Neuro medical Yellow Ward, second floor.

As of January 4, 2012, the doctor recommended that Ms, Samira Abdu Ahmed be placed in the open center rather than going back to the detention center to conditions there that continue to trigger her epilepsy; however, it appears that detention authorities will once again ignore this medical advice and return her to detention. This woman was a healthy, productive, responsible and hardworking person in Libya prior to the civil unrest when she fled that country. Her husband is in Lyster Detention Center and he was not allowed to see her since she had the seizure on December 29/2011 at around 9.00 pm central European time. Her husband wants to care for her should he be released; however, if she were sent to the open center, some Ethiopians in the area would provide that needed extra care.

In 2011, three people died in this detention center and we do not want her to be number four. Ms, Samira Abdu Ahmed life has deteriorated since she has arrived and if she dies, we will call for an independent investigation where any found responsible for negligence could be held accountable. This is only one of numerous cases where the health needs of Ethiopians are not being adequately addressed.

The ongoing plight of Ethiopians in Malta is something that matters greatly to us and we will try to work with you in any way that would help expedite these cases. If need be, the SMNE may send a delegation of Ethiopians to Malta to personally check on the condition of these people and to work out details for their release with authorities. Over fifty Ethiopians are now being held in detention for over nine months. Again, this is a violation of international law.

We strongly urge Malta detention authorities to immediately release all of these detainees to the open center or for third country asylum. These people are not criminals and are not dangerous to Malta society. Their only crime is entering into Malta without proper documents in hope of gaining asylum in another country. Despite it all, their greatest fear is not the detention center but is returning to Ethiopia, a country where the brutal treatment of its citizens is a constant threat to any who do not support a one-party, one-ethnic group kleptocratic dictatorship.

We are ready to assist as we are able in any way that will expedite their release. We look forward to your quick response regarding this urgent matter.

Respectfully yours,



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**Cc: Designated Recipients**  
Lt. Col. Brian Gatt

Malta Detention Services Commander  
Mr. Alexander Tortell  
Director General of Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS)

Mr. John Hoisaer  
Representative UNHCR Office in Malta

Father PHILIP  
Director of Immigrant Commission

Ms Janet Zuefle  
UNHCR official Geneva

Mr. Antonio Guterres,  
UNHCR Commissioner

Mr. Ban Ki-moon,  
UN Secretary-General

Miss. Navanethem Pillay,  
UN OHCHR

Mr. Mikael Ribbenvik,  
Director General of European Commission for Immigration

International Organization for Migration  
International Refugee Rights Initiative  
Amnesty International Malta  
Human Rights Watch

**Cc: Media**

Maltatoday newspapers  
Joseph Warungu - BBC editor-in-chief.  
Alan Murray - Executive Editor - Wall Street Journal  
Editor in chief of the New York Times  
Washington Post - Foreign Bureau  
Guardian UK- News Desk and Editor  
Al-Jazeera English - Editor-in-Chief  
Martin Hassan - Guardian UK  
Tristan Davies - Editor, The Independent  
Martin Fletcher - The Times  
Larry Kilman, Deputy CEO of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers

**LIST OF DETAINEES WITH ID NUMBER and BARRACK**

- 1 Becky Kuma Faji, ID #: **11c220**
- 2 Amina Sherif Habib, ID#: **11c269**
- 3 Tsehay Olana Dhaba, ID#: **11c264**
- 4 Kidist Lemessa Kuma, ID#: **11c275**
- 5 Aster Yimam Tesema, ID#: **11c262**
- 6 Jemila Usman Nur, ID#: **11c278**
- 7 Lidy Biya Shifa, ID#: **11f024**
- 8 Tadelech Abate Chumbale, ID#: **11c279**
- 9 Roman Mohammed Abasimel, ID# **11c272**
- 10 Birtukan Abdella Ahmed, ID# **11c282**
- 11 Semira Mohammed Ahmed, ID# **11a308**
- 12 Feven Befkadu, ID#**11c273**
- 13 Hiwot Amede Tesmama, ID#**11c235**
- 14 Wegene Ketema Legesse, ID#: **11c234**
- 15 Chernet Tasew, ID#: **11c267**
- 16 Workinesh Gonfa, ID#: **11c268**
- 17 Kedija Durra, ID#: **11a289**
- 18 Mickias Getachew, ID#: **11c089**
- 19 Semira Abdu, ID#: **11c090**
- 20 Habib Zemachu, ID#: **11c199**
- 21 Tesfaye Yirgu, ID#: **11d012**

22. Wezam Hailemariam, ID#: 11d013

**SAFI BARRACKS  
WAREHOUSE 1**

- 23. Merkrb Hailu Diana, ID#: 11c186
- 24. Yared Dessalegn Teklemariam, ID#: 11c171
- 25. Yitagesu Legesse Teklemariam, ID#: 11c187
- 26. Bisrat Gemechu Abdechissa, ID#: 11c 107
- 27. Misbah Nur Mohammed, ID#: 11c138
- 28. Mohammed Nur Ahmed, ID#: 11c 173
- 29. Gebeyehu Tiruneh Gebrehiwot, ID#: 11b 134
- 30. Gashaw Dulla Abera, ID#: 11c188
- 31. Yonas Tekola Abebe, ID#: 11c185
- 32. Tilahun Yimam Mohammed, ID#: 11c238
- 33. Amlakbelew Beyene Abate, ID#: 11a322
- 34. Haymanot, ID#: 11a233

**SAFI BARRACKS  
BLOCK B**

- 35. Girma Abera Nega, ID#: 11c164
- 36. Tsehaye Gebrehawariat Gebrehananiya, ID#: 11c168
- 37. Fasil Samson Hailemariam, ID#: 11c108
- 38. Biniam Tesfaye Habtegiorgis, ID#: 11c189
- 39. Abdu Sabir Juhar, ID#: 11c140
- 40. Ismael Siraj Ibrahim, ID#: 11c156
- 41. Biniam Abebe Chekol, ID#: 11c035
- 42. Mukemil Nuri Awel, ID#: 11c059
- 43. Jamal Hussien Mohammed, ID#: 11c155
- 44. Yonas Tekle Haile, ID#: 11c170
- 45. Temesgen Kifle Hailemariam, ID#: 11c100
- 46. Daniel Lidete Qanqure, ID#: 11e064
- 47. Biratu Mizena, ID#: 11c146
- 48. Asfaw Mugeta Lesse, ID#: 11c 157
- 49. Nuru Mohame Abkadir, ID#: 06cc007
- 50. Tofik Berta Sherif, ID#: 11b140

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<sup>i</sup> **Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia (SMNE)**, a social justice organization of diverse Ethiopians, is committed to bringing truth, justice, freedom, the rule of law, equality, civility, accountability and respect for human rights to the people of Ethiopia and beyond. We uphold that the future well being of the people of Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa, Africa and our global society rests in the hands of those who can put "**humanity before ethnicity**," or any other distinctions that divide, devalue and dehumanize other human beings; while still appreciating the beauty of our diversity. This is a guiding principle of the **SMNE** as we attempt to bring about greater unity in Ethiopia through affirming the God-given value and dignity of each human being and the belief that no one group in Ethiopia can find sustainable freedom as long as some among us are excluded, injured or aggrieved for "**no one will be free until all are free.**"