



QALNA ERITREAN HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP

February 12, 2010

The Honorable Lawrence Cannon
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON, Canada
K1A 0G2

Dear Mr. Cannon,

As Qalna, it is my duty to bring to your attention the plight of about 1000 Eritrean detainees facing deportation in Libya.

Over the past decade Eritrean youth have been fleeing the country to escape the horrific oppression and endless conscription. Thousands of them live in the refugee camps of Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Egypt and Kenya. What deeply concerns us now is the plight of Eritrean refugees currently detained in Libya. They have never been charged in court and about 1000 of them are facing impending deportation to Eritrea. If they are deported they will in all probability be jailed, these are horrifying places not at all like our jails in Canada. Many will be tortured and die as the former Eritrean deportees of 2007 experienced.

According to, *Human Rights Concern Eritrea*, based in the United Kingdom, Eritrean detainees held in the prison places like Gruble-2Prison, Surinam, Zawya and Zelten, are being coerced into filling out forms provided by the Eritrean Embassy in Tripoli that will lead to certain identification and deportation. When they refuse they face torture including electric shock. Due to the fact that the Libyan and Eritrean governments are in collusion, the detainees' rights have been revoked and they remain forsaken.

The Libyan government's obligations in relation to torture, ill treatment and deportation are clear. Under the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, the United Nations Convention Against Torture, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, torture and ill treatment are prohibited and no person can be deported to a country where he or she is at such risk. This applies to all persons without consideration of their status or alleged crimes, and irrespective of the nature of the transfer, including extradition, expulsion, deportation and rendition.

Canada is one of the leading countries in advocating for basic human rights. We must act to prohibit the deportation of Eritrean detainees from Libya.

As Eritrean Canadians, we ask you to raise this matter with the Libyan Foreign Minister and:

- Demand an urgent meeting concerning Eritrean detainees in Libya to stop the process of deportation immediately.
- Ensure that Libya abides by the United Nation Convention on the rights of refugees and detainees and end the ill treatment.
- Provide the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR with immediate access to the detainees, to monitor their well being.

Please let me know if you require any additional information. I anticipate your prompt reply to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,
