

Minister
of Foreign Affairs



Ministre
des Affaires étrangères

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

MAR 2 2010

Mr. Haile Kiflai
Vice Chair
Qalna Eritrean Human Rights Group
1115 - 1901 Weston Road
Toronto ON M9N 3P1

Dear Mr. Kiflai:

Thank you for your letter of January 28, 2010, regarding the situation of Eritrean refugees in Libya.

The Government of Canada is concerned by the situation of Eritrean refugees in Libya and continues to monitor reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the conditions of their detention. The Ambassador of Canada to Libya is in contact with Mr. Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNHCR's Resident Representative in Tripoli, who recently confirmed that his organization regularly visits the four prisons mentioned in your correspondence. Canada supports the efforts of the UNHCR to find durable solutions for Eritrean refugees. The Government of Canada recognizes that Eritreans forcibly returned to the country may face arrest without charge, detention, ill-treatment, torture, and even death at the hands of the authorities.

Canada is preoccupied by Eritrea's human rights situation, particularly with regard to democracy and the rule of law, the imprisonment or ill-treatment of political opposition members and journalists, and the protection of civil liberties.

Canada encourages other countries to respect their obligations under international law and to protect the rights of refugees.

Thank you for taking the time to write and share your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lawrence Cannon".

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, P.C., M.P.

Canada