

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

February 10, 2010

Honorable Minister:

I am writing in support of urgent plea made to you by Mr. Woldeghebriel A. Hagos, President of the Board of the Eritrean Canadian Community Center of Metropolitan Toronto. In his letter of January 29, 2010, Mr. Woldeghebriel Hagos requests Canada's intervention on behalf of Eritrean refugees who are stranded in Libya and living under conditions of harsh detention. Moreover, many of them face the threat of deportation back to Eritrea, from which they escaped seeking refuge from persecution and forcible and indefinite labor.

I have also been appealing to the Libyan leaders and to various UN agencies to intervene on behalf of the refugees. And in the spirit of Mr. Woldeghebriel Hagos's letter, I urge you to take appropriate action, including the following:

1. Take all necessary steps to cause the Libyan government to cease and desist from deporting Eritrean refugees who are in Libya;
2. Call upon the UNHCR to insist on visiting all camps where the refugees are detained and to register them without delay, and provide them with the protection required under UN conventions on refugees and other rule of international law on the treatment of detained persons.
3. Take appropriate action with a view to ensuring that Canada accept the refugees stranded in Libya and see to it that the UNHCR process their timely resettlement in Canada.

In pursuit of these requests, I am sure the Eritrean Community Center in Toronto would be happy to provide you all relevant information, as would I, including information on the condition of the refugee in Libya.

Most respectfully,

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