



Eritrean Canadian Community Centre of Metropolitan Toronto; 579 St. Clair Ave. West, Toronto, Ontario, M6C 1A3  
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January 29, 2010

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

The Honorable Lawrence Cannon:

We are a network of Eritrea-Canadian agencies and individuals, who are concerned with the plight of Eritrean detainees facing deportation in Libya.

According to, *Human Rights Concern Eritrea*, an independent human rights organization based in the United Kingdom, several hundred Eritrean detainees held in the prisons in Gruble-2Prison, Surinam, Zawya and Zelten are facing deportation. They are being coerced into filling out forms provided by the Eritrean Embassy in Tripoli that will lead to certain identifications and deportation. Anyone who refuses to fill out the form faces torture including electric shock. The Libyan and Eritrean governments are in collusion to deny the detainees their basic human rights to have a safe stay in a country of refuge.

According to international human rights groups and observers, over the past decade Eritreans have been fleeing the country to escape the horrific oppression and endless conscription in their home country. 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 several hundred of them are facing impending deportation to Eritrea. If they are deported, they will in all probability be jailed, in horrifying places not at all like our jails in Canada. In jail, many will be tortured and die as the former Eritrean deportees of 2007.

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.

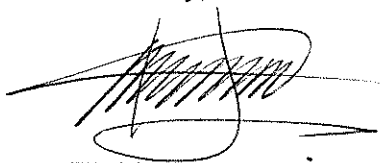
Canada is one of the leading countries in advocating for the respect of basic human rights of refugees and has an international reputation for offering resettlement to those whose lives have been endangered and put at risk of deportation. We urge you to continue this Canadian tradition of compassion and act to prohibit the deportation of Eritrean detainees from Libya.

As Eritrean Canadians, we humbly ask you to take all necessary actions at your disposal including:

- to stop the process of deportation from Libya immediately;
- to provide international protection to these refugees including resettlement into Canada on an urgent basis,
- to ask the Libyan authorities to allow UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) an immediate access to the detainees and monitor their well being;
- to ensure that Libya abides by the United Nation Convention on the rights of refugees and detainees to end the ill treatment, and
- to provide UNHCR with the necessary assistance and guidance to find a durable solution for these refugees.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Woldeghebriel A. Hagos', with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

Woldeghebriel A. Hagos,  
Board President

The following are the Eritrean Canadian agencies submitting their request.

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