

Tegbar

Ethiopian Democratic Action League
A worldwide Ethiopian civic association

December 27, 2005

Mr. Kofi A. Annan
Secretary General
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
USA

The Honorable Secretary General,

I would first like to note two calls made to the UN on behalf of Ethiopians who are suffering under an excess of a government that has lost any semblance of democratic credentials.

First, on December 15, 2005, the European Union Parliament Members (MEPs) unanimously condemned the violence, the use of disproportionate means of repression by the armed forces of the Ethiopian Government and the mass arrests underway in Ethiopia. The MEPs unanimously called for “an independent international commission of inquiry, optimally under UN responsibility, to investigate the human rights abuses and to identify and bring to justice those responsible.”

As Your Excellency is aware, the European Union closely monitored the period leading to the May 2005 election, observed the election and watched first-hand the aftermath of the election. Therefore, the MEPs are well positioned to understand the extent of atrocities being committed in Ethiopia and provide an independent assessment and the possible remedy to correct the wrongs.

Second, on December 21, 2005, Reporters Without Borders (RWB), called on the UN to send a legal observation mission to Ethiopia to assess the validity of the charges made, monitor the due process of the law at the coming mass trial and report back to the UN Security Council. With its network of reporters on the ground, RWB is credibly placed to realize the veracity of the situation.

It has now entered into historian records that immediately following the election, Mr. Zenawi suspended peaceful demonstrations and brought the police, the security and the armed forces under his personal control, once he recognized the vote counting was not going in his favor. He then unleashed his special forces on its own people and has committed horrifying atrocities since May 2005, which has continued till this date and does not show any sign of abating.

We are worried that while the international media rightly focuses on the shooting and killings of innocent demonstrators in June and November 2005, reports on the impressments of thousands of suspected supporters of the opposition parties, and write about the fabricated treason charges brought on the leaders of the main opposition party (CUDP), a silent but systematic annihilation of the supports of the opposition is underway. There is information filtering out of Ethiopia on the presence of mass graves. At least five known concentration camps are in operations out of the sight of the diplomatic community and international media.

We believe, the UN has learned from a bitter experience in the past that when governments fail to uphold the rights of their citizens and squash the rule of law, this august body that is led by you could not afford to be a bystander. To echo your words, “the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs cannot be used to protect those who commit genocide, large-scale ethnic cleansing, or other comparable atrocities.” We want to impress upon you that the stakes that are involved in this case are much larger than what happened in Zimbabwe, for which you sent your special envoy. The consequences of inaction would be horrifying even to contemplate and from the information filtering out of Ethiopia, we are convinced that unless the international community is willing to proactively intervene by sending an independent investigation team, the situation might spin out of control thereby transforming the already fragile East African region in to a zone of complete instability.

Dear Secretary General,

The urgency of your action in support of the decision by MEPs can not be sufficiently stressed and is practically impossible to exaggerate. It also can not be left for another day. Therefore, we urge and plead to you to bring the power of your good office to implement the proposal made by the MEPs.

Regards,

Meskerem Girma
Chairperson

Attachments:

- 1) Decision by European Members of Parliament
- 2) Selected samples of international news reports