



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Ana Gomes

Member of the European Parliament

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
15.01.2009

European Parliament asks for immediate release of Birtukan Mideksa

The European Parliament approved today a resolution on the Horn of Africa. This resolution asks for the immediate and unconditional release of Birtukan Mideksa, leader of the Ethiopian opposition party Unity for Democracy Justice (UDJ).

Ana Gomes, Member of the European Parliament (Portugal, Socialist) and head of the Election Observation Mission of the EU to the 2005 elections in Ethiopia, has declared the arrest of Ms. Mideksa as "another outrageous move from the Government of Meles Zenawi to neutralise opposition parties, which only illustrates that the Ethiopian government does not respect basic principles of human rights and democracy and, therefore, violates its obligations under the Cotonou Agreement".

"I have recently met Birtukan, when I invited her to meet with Members of the European Parliament, in Brussels. She is a very determined politician fighting for democracy and an energetic young mother. I am deeply concerned about her arrest. I urge the European Commission and the Council of Ministers of the EU to persuade the Ethiopian government to release her and all other political prisoners", Ana Gomes added.

In her statement at the European Parliament, Ana Gomes has also denounced the Charities Law, recently passed by the Ethiopian Parliament. "This law will in practice criminalise independent NGO activities", said Ms. Gomes.

Note: *The final text of the resolution should soon be available on the European Parliament's [website](#).*

For more information, please contact anamaria.gomes@europarl.europa.eu