



Европейски парламент Parlamento Europeo Evropský parlament Europa-Parlamentet Europäisches Parlament
Euroopa Parlament Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο European Parliament Parlement européen Parlaimint na hEorpa
Europski parlament Parlamento europeo Eiropas Parlaments Europos Parliamentas Europai Parlament
Parlament Ewropew Europees Parlement Parlament Europejski Parlamento Europeu Parlamentul European
Európsky parlament Evropski parlament Euroopan parlamentti Europaparlamentet

Federica Mogherini
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and
Vice-President of the European Commission

Strasbourg, 6 February 2018

Dear Federica,

This Monday, 5 February, prominent human rights activist and leader of the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), Bekele Gerba, was sentenced to yet another six months in prison alongside Dejene Tafa, Gurmessa Ayano and Addisu Bulala. They were all found in contempt of court after having refused to stand up and speak to the judges during the trial proceedings, in a fierce protest to the court's decision to dismiss its own decision to summon top-level government officials as defence witnesses.

Mr. Gerba was first arrested in December 2015, initially accused of being involved in terrorist activities and inciting violence – both false accusations. His imprisonment – such as the one of Prof. Merera Gudina, who has now been liberated – was part of a crackdown on opposition forces by the EPRDF/TPLF regime, through means of arbitrary arrests, torture and various ill-treatments, unjustly carried-out trials and other violations of civil liberties and fundamental rights, as it has been described by Amnesty International.

Mr. Gerba is guilty only of speaking against the injustices being perpetrated by the regime in Ethiopia. Earlier this year, Prime Minister Desalegn announced that political prisoners would be released in an effort to foster “national reconciliation”. Mr. Desalegn has so far failed on his promises, as shown by the treatment of Mr. Gerba, who, according to his daughter, risks losing his left eye vision and needs urgent medical treatment.

The regime in Ethiopia cannot continue to deceive Ethiopians and the international community with longstanding campaigns of misinformation and false promises. The EU must speak up and demand that all political prisoners are provided with proper treatment and are released. Until justice is upheld in Ethiopia there is no clear viable future for Ethiopians. The EU needs to be at the forefront of such an effort, by demanding that all rights be secured and respected.

*Best regards
Ana Gomes*

Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament