

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

His Excellency José Manuel Durão Barroso  
President of the European Commission  
European Commission  
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 26 January 2009

Dear President,

We write to express our concern and call your attention to recent developments in Ethiopia, which point to the erosion of human rights and political freedoms.

First, we are deeply concerned by the re-arrest of Ms. Birtukan Midekssa, leader of the Unity for Democracy and Justice Party. The European Parliament adopted, on 15 of January, a resolution on the Horn of Africa, which states:

*"[The European Parliament] Is outraged at the imprisonment of Birtukan Midekssa, leader of the opposition party Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ), and demands her immediate and unconditional release,"*

Secondly, we regret the fact that the Ethiopian Parliament has recently passed the so-called Charities Law, which will in practice outlaw the work of independent NGOs. In this respect, the above mentioned European Parliament resolution underlines:

*"[The European Parliament] Regrets that the Ethiopian parliament has ratified the Proclamation for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies; calls for significant adaptations to be made to guarantee basic human rights principles; calls for a non-restrictive implementation of this law, and insists on close monitoring of its implementation by the Commission;"*


We also recall the allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Ogaden region, described at length in the Human Rights Watch report 'Collective Punishment' (June 2008).

Taking in consideration that under the Cotonou Agreement, Ethiopia is obliged to respect human rights, democracy, the rule of law and accountable governance, we urge you to address these issues with the Ethiopian government, reiterating the call for the immediate release of Ms. Midekssa and demanding the revision of the Proclamation for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies.

Best regards,

  
Josep Borrell Fontelles,  
Chair, Committee on Development

  
Michael Gahler  
Vice-President, Committee on Foreign Affairs

  
Glenys Kinnock  
Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint  
Parliamentary Assembly

  
Hélène Flautre  
Chair, Subcommittee on Human Rights

  
Ana Gomes  
Head of the EU EOM to Ethiopia (2005)

  
Luisa Morgantini  
Vice-President of the European Parliament

CC:  
EU Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner  
EU Commissioner Louis Michel  
President in exercise of the European Union, Vaclav Klaus