



Unity for Human Rights and Democracy Toronto

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PRESS RELEASE

We, members of Unity for Human Rights and Democracy Toronto are shocked and saddened to hear of the death of Yenesew Gebre, a 29-nine year old teacher from southwest Ethiopia who set himself on fire on **Friday, November 11, and died on Monday November 14** in the town of Dawro, Waka, Southern Ethiopia, after confronting government officials at a public meeting.

It gives heartbreaking testimony to the unbearable pain he, and hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians which suffered under the brutal and oppressive rule of the Tigrean Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) under the leadership of Meles Zenawi for the past 20 years. Mr. Yenesew Gebre is an Ethiopian; he is one of us and has a name. He is the son, brother, uncle, best friend, teacher or valued colleague of others who also have names. We are sure his absence in this world will be deeply grieved by all of them and our thoughts and prayers are with them at this time. He is part of our greater Ethiopian family and together, we mourn the loss of his life.

The Canadian government has spent hundreds of millions of Canadian tax payers' money supporting the regime in Ethiopia in the past 20 years. Particularly, in the past decade millions of dollars were spent to revitalize the justice system in Ethiopia, which today is in a total collapse. The regime of Meles Zenawi, uses the justice system as a tool to intimidate political opponents. Political motivated trials in the past also indicate that, **the judiciary in Ethiopia is neither independent nor impartial**. In the last twenty years no person accused of an offence in relation to his political activities has received a favourable ruling. Simply put, the justice system is manipulated controlled and directed by the regime.

According to Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) sources, Yenesew was very angry at the injustice the people of his community were subjected at the hands of ruling party officials. It also appears that Yenesew had been fired from his teaching position due to his political views and unswerving stand against human rights violations, tyranny and oppression. **As Canadians it hurts us a lot to see our government supporting and particularly, sending Canadian Tax payer's money to a dictator that does not respect basic Human rights.**

We, members of Unity for Human Rights and Democracy Toronto, demand Canada review, and most importantly stop its financial support to the regime of Mr.Meles, and raise the issue of an immediate political reform in Ethiopia.

Again, our condolence goes to the family and friends to Yenesew Gebre.

Yousuf Omer

President

November 21, 2011