Submission No 16

Review of Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa

Name:

Dr Gelaye Tadesse Chairman

Organisation: The Ethiopian Democratic Forum (EDF)

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Submission No: 16 Date Received: 12/12/09
Secretary:

The Ethiopian Democratic Forum (EDF)

PO Box 560 Inglewood WA 6932

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Re: Submission for Review of Australian Relationship with African Countries

Dr John Carter The Secretary of Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade

Dear Dr Carter

Thank for giving us the opportunity to submit our view about the relationship of the Australian government with African Countries. As African is vast and home for many dictatorial regimes, it is not possible to cover everything. Therefore, we would like to focus on Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is no stranger to Australia and the Australian people. Ethiopia's civil war and famine are prime subjects that brought Ethiopia to international fame. Very sad! The root causes of tragic situations in Ethiopia are gross human rights violation and absence of democratic government.

Historically, Ethiopia has been ruled by dictators. We don't intend to talk about the past; again as it is a huge subject. When we focus on the current government of Meles Zenaw led Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF)/Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), there are countless human rights violations including genocide and state sponsored terror. To list a few just as sample:

- 1. Jailing of opposition political party, Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP), leaders and members (Tsegaye Debteraw, Aberash Berta and many others) since 1991 and denying their where about.
- 2. Killing of 193 unarmed civilian demonstrators protesting rigged election of the 2005.
- 3. Jailing tens of thousands of people following 2005 election.

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- 4. Forcing detainees to share razor bald with intension to spread HIV virus in the country where HIV Aids is rampant
- 5. Killing of over 600 ethnic Gambella in 2003/4
- 6. Killing ethnic Sidama in the regional city of Awasa in 2003
- 7. Similar killings have taken place since 19991 in various parts of the country including Addis Ababa, Gondar, Bale, Wellega and Areka. No one brought to face justice.

In addition to the above points, there is no freedom speech, no freedom of media and independent judiciary system. Mr Zenawi's cadres are the prosecutors, the judge and jury. Under such a system, many people are thrown in to jail for crime they never committed.

Corruption is rampant, involving the highest office the country. In the country where millions are starving and thousands of children are dying of hanger, the former guerrilla leaders who marched in Addis Ababa in 1991 in their bare foot are today billionaires. International aide and donations go direct into their pocket.

As the case of Ethiopia is huge and could not be covered just in one letter, we are happy to attend in person to discuss the direction of the relationship of the Australian Government with Africa in general and Ethiopian in particular. Meanwhile, we would like to urge you:

- Not to support African dictators in general and Mr Zeanwi of Ethiopia in particular
- To make effort to bring those who committed genocide such Mr Zeanawi to face justice
- To ensure that humanitarian assistances go direct to the people
- To support democratic movements in order to make a fundamental change in Africa in general and in Ethiopia in particular.

For further information please call 0413 587 584 or write to the above address.

Dr Gelaye Tadesse Chairman Ethiopian Democratic Forum