

A Protest letter against the torture and ill-treatment of Eritrean asylum seekers by the Libyan police and immigration authority in Libya

Saturday, July 31, 2010

H.E. Mr. Ali Abdella Awidan
Secretary of the People's Bureau of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Addis Ababa / Ethiopia

Dear Ambassador:

We Eritreans who are in here Addis Ababa, to participate for the national conference for democratic change in Eritrea, organized by the Eritrean Democratic Alliance and Eritrean civic societies in diasporas are really saddened by the torture and ill-treatment of the Eritrean asylum seekers in Libya, by your police and immigration authority. Despite repeated calls by the United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other International Human Rights Organizations upon your government to stop this outrageous action, it is still continuing.

Your Excellency

Ever since Eritrean independence, Mr. Isaias Afewerki's PFDJ dictatorial regime, has persecuted, tortured and arrested any individual or group of individuals: war disabled veterans, journalists, youth, elderly, parents, religious leaders, reformers, university students and more who were in any position to exercise their basic freedoms and civil liberties.

Furthermore, the National Service in our nation (Eritrea) is supposed to last for a year and half. However, in reality, this National Service has no end; hundreds of thousands are still serving for years on hard slave labor camps in pretext of National Service and National Development Campaign. This endless military service and forced conscription have caused mass exodus of our youth from nation to neighboring countries and much further beyond (including your country Egypt), since they don't see any future with the dictatorial regime except for forced slave labor camp or prison. Therefore, our youth and people who are fleeing from, Mr. Isaias Afewerki's PFDJ repressive regime, needs your protection not further abuse or killing and ill treatment of your police and immigration authority..

Your Excellency

We will be always thankful for your government and to the peoples of Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for the vital support during our struggle for independence of our nation Eritrea. However, the present acts of torture and ill-treatment of Eritrean asylum seekers by the Libyan police and immigration authority in Libya is immoral disgusting and should stop immediately. According to the recent report by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other International Human Rights Organizations there are many Eritrean asylum detainees including dozens of minors, some of whom were born in detention centers such as Misratah, some 200km east of the capital Tripoli, and al-Marj, some 1,000km east of Tripoli. In addition the reports indicated recently an Eritrean government representative from Eritrean Embassy in Libya was allowed to enter the detention centers and the Eritrean asylum seekers were forced to

fill in repatriation forms and those who refused to cooperate, they have been physically abused and some are still kept in solitary confinement, this is a violation of the framework of the African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, Article 11 of Libya's Constitutional Declaration of 1969 states that "The extradition of political refugees is prohibited." Article 21 of Law No. 20 of 1991 on the Promotion of Freedom states that: "The Great Jamahiriya is a refuge for oppressed people and those struggling for freedom and, therefore, refugees seeking protection may not be surrendered to any authority." Therefore, we are urging your government abide by its own declaration and stop giving access the representative Mr. Isaias Afewerki's PFDJ dictatorial regime whom the asylum seekers fled for fear of persecution and torture in the first place.

Your Excellency

With this appeal, we are respectfully calling on your government to immediately stop, the torture and ill-treatment of the Eritrean asylum seekers in Libya, by your police and immigration authority, and set them free from these horrible detention centers

We look forward to hearing back from you, as we look forward to the time when we Eritrean people can freely exercise the freedom and civil liberty to which we are entitled

Sincerely Yours,

Bashir Ishaq

Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of National Conference for Democratic Change

P.o.box 1143(1110)

Addis Ababa/Ethiopia

Email: Bashir.Ishaq@gmail.com

Phone: 251-911-46-5229

Copy to:

Mr Antonio Guterres

United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees

Case Postale 2500

CH-1211 Genève 2 Dépôt

SUISSE

Email: GUTERRES@unhcr.org

H.E. Dr. Jean PING

CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN

UNION COMMISSION

African Union Headquarters

P.O. Box 3243

Roosevelt Street

W21K19, Addis Ababa

Ethiopia

Fax:(251) 11 5513036

E-mail: chairperson@africa-union.org