



February 3/2010

OPEN LETTER TO US AMBASSADOR DONALD BOOTH

Mr. Ambassador,

SOCEPP was pleased to hear your declaration, at the Senate Hearing to approve your nomination as US ambassador to Ethiopia, that you would exert pressure on the Meles Zenawi regime to respect the human rights of the Ethiopian people. Not that we have not heard such promises from previous US ambassadors who later turned to be apologists for the repressive regime in Addis Abeba with whom, as you yourself stated, the US has complex interests.

SOCEPP begs to differ strongly with your assertion that the "people in prisons after the aftermath of the 2005 election were all released". This simply is NOT true. Some 120 or so leaders and high level officials have indeed been released ( Judge Birukan Midiksa is back in Kaliti, a notorious prison you should visit in Addis Abeba) but of the 50,000 other unnamed prisoners rounded up at that time there are still more than 30,000 prisoners suffering in Zwai, Bir Sheleko, Dedesa, Shoa Robit and other such prisons. We suggest you ask the authorities to visit these prisons as well as the ones in Jijiga, Bahr Dar, Gondar, Arba Minch and the secret prisons in Addis Abeba itself (we can supply you the locations if you so desire). SOCEPP would also like to remind you that dozens of political prisoners (such as Tsegaye Gebre Medhin, Hagos Bezabih, Wondusirak Desta, journalist Berhanu Ijigu, trade unionist Abebe Ainekulu, Yishak Debretsion, Ms Aberash Berta, Tesfaye Kebede, Lemma Makonen and many others) have been disappeared by the regime. Would you be the first US ambassador to show some concern on the fate of the disappeared? We hope so.

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE  
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