

The Honourable Pierre Pettigrew
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lester B. Pearson Building
125 Sussex Drive
Tower A, 10th Floor
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Dear Sir,

Students around the world are calling for action to end the crisis in Ethiopia. We are concerned that this nation, so recently struggling to form a new democracy, is sliding back into dictatorship.

We are especially concerned about the fate of students arrested and held since the student protest June 6th to June 8th, 2005 at Addis Ababa University. Over 3,600 citizens (mostly students) are being held without trial and without contact with family and lawyers. There has been no due process under law and in addition, there are serious concerns about the use of torture.

Our nation cannot stand idly by, celebrating our own democratic birthday, while those whose only crime was speaking up for democracy, suffer elsewhere. We are asking you to speak to the Ethiopian ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Dr. Berhanu Dibaba, and tell him to urge his government to release all those arrested in election related demonstrations and activities immediately.

We urge you to express our concerns strongly. Democracy cannot grow and flourish when leaders refuse to acknowledge protest and discontent. Ethiopians want only the same things Canadians enjoy: the right to vote, the rights of free speech and assembly, and the gift of a life supported and aided by government not lived in fear of one.

Students across Canada are awaiting your response.

Sincerely,