

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 20, 2005

His Excellency Meles Zenawi
Prime Minister
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Your Excellency:

The Congress of the United States has watched with concern the growing unrest in your country in the aftermath of Ethiopia's May 15th legislative elections. Our concern has increased considerably due to the violence stemming from the arrest of students protesting the continued uncertainty over election results several weeks after the balloting, as well as the arrest and home detention of officials from the political opposition.

State-sponsored violence against peaceful, if enthusiastic, demonstrators must be considered unacceptable in a civilized nation such as Ethiopia. The beatings, arrests and shootings of hundreds of your citizens not only threatens wider social upheaval, but it also mars an election that, by all accounts, represents an advancement over the elections of 2000. The apparent election of so many opposition candidates obviously is a bitter disappointment to the ruling coalition. However, it is a demonstration of the increasing transparency and openness of Ethiopia's democratic process and should be accepted by the ruling coalition as such.

Mr. Prime Minister, Ethiopia is an American ally. Therefore, it is in our mutual interest that your country be as secure, stable and prosperous as possible. Along those lines, we urge you to immediately end the violent response to protestors and rescind the state of emergency as quickly as possible. We have pressed the opposition to calm their rhetoric and use existing electoral and legal processes to finalize the election results without increased tension, which they appear to be honoring. However, the agreement you reportedly signed with them in this regard on May 9th will be rendered meaningless if those imprisoned are not released, and if there is no accountability for the police or security officials who have maimed and killed hundreds of your citizens.

We trust that the election results scheduled to be announced on July 8th represent the expressed will of the people, and, to the extent that electoral challenges have been filed, we look for thorough investigations and impartial adjudication of those cases.

We also are very concerned that the situation in Ethiopia could escalate and result in the displacement of significant numbers of people within Ethiopia or as refugees outside your

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country. The people of Addis Ababa have been unable to work, buy food, access electricity, and tend to basic daily living needs due to the ongoing state of emergency and violence in the streets. Moreover, media reports suggest that violence is spreading to other parts of the country. These familiar disturbing signs often lead to destabilized countries, refugees, and internally displaced persons.

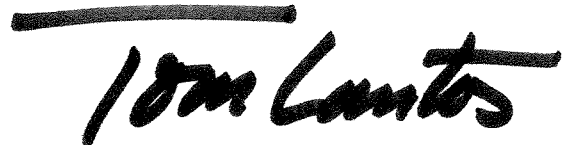
Your Excellency, we fear Ethiopia stands at the brink of an even greater political and humanitarian crisis than exists today. We ask you to take all necessary steps to end the corrosive violence and the rampant violation of the human rights of Ethiopians.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



HENRY J. HYDE
Chairman
Committee on International Relations



TOM LANTOS
Ranking Democratic Member
Committee on International
Relations



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Chairman
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human
Rights and International Operations
Committee on International Relations



BETTY MCCOLLUM
Member of Congress



ED ROYCE
Chairman
Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation
Committee on International Relations

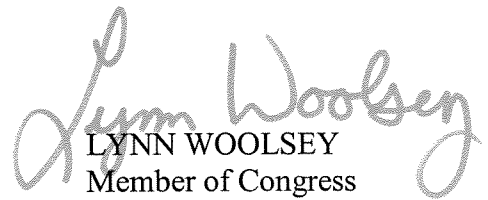


DIANE WATSON
Member of Congress

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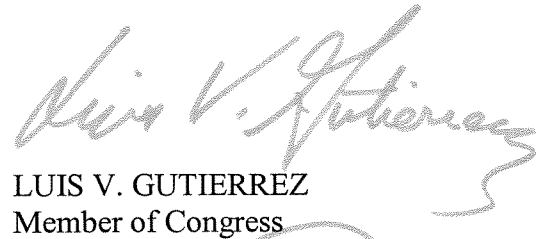
ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress



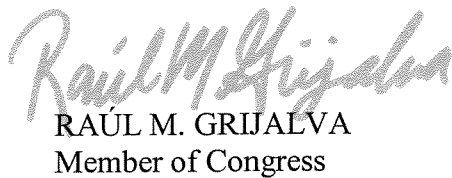
LYNN WOOLSEY
Member of Congress



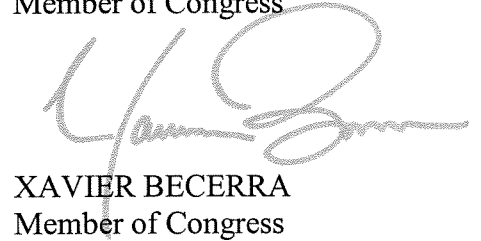
JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress



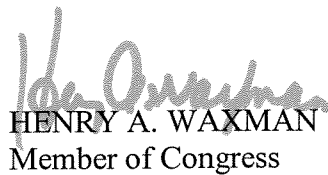
LUIS V. GUTIERREZ
Member of Congress



RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress



XAVIER BECERRA
Member of Congress



HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress

HJH:jc/jec