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Ethiopian National Transitional Council

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20 November 2012

**Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
United Nations Headquarters
New York, New York**

Re: The Election of Ethiopia to the UN Human Rights Council

Your Excellency,

First and foremost the Ethiopian National Transitional Council expresses its admiration for the work that the United Nations does to promote and protect Human Rights throughout the world.

Ethiopian National Transitional Council (ENTC) is a grassroots advocacy movement working to establish a democratic, free and just system in Ethiopia. The Council is engaged in the struggle to reclaim the Rights and Dignity of all Ethiopians ruled by a dictatorial regime tainted with consistent acts of human rights violations.

ENTC is disappointed by the recent election of the Ethiopian State to the UN Human Right's Council (UN-HRC). For an institution that should stand for the protection of human rights and dignity all over the world, the election of the Ethiopian state to UN-HRC shows a stark contradiction. Ethiopia currently is represented by a regime that has clamped down on any form of dissent; imprisoned, tortured, killed political opponents; tightly controls the free press and freedom of expression, and has rigged elections. The regime has also instituted systemic repression of Universal Human Rights by drafting and implementing draconian laws such as the Press Law, the Anti-terrorism and Non-governmental Organization's laws. These Laws are used as instruments of oppression to falsely justify its repression. Hence, ENTC Strongly believes that Ethiopia's regime does not deserve to be a member of any Council on Human Rights let alone at the United Nations Human Rights Council.

It is understandable if the UN is skeptical of complaints from opposition movements about the Ethiopian dictatorial government. However, the UN-HRC through its own Universal Periodic Review Working Group has released several reports corroborating our claims. ENTC would like to highlight the report from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Human Rights Committee dated 15 September 2010 that has enumerated several serious Human Rights Violations. Among the violations listed, the egregious ones consist of Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment; Lack of Liberty and Security of the Person; Ill-treatment of Prisoners; Arbitrary use of the Anti-terrorism Law (Counter-terrorism Measures); Lack of Right to a Fair Trial; Lack of Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Association; Lack of Right to Take Part in the Conduct of Public Affairs; and Lack of Rights of Persons Belonging to Minorities.

The above list is by no means exhaustive when compared to the gross atrocities being committed by the government on the Ethiopian people. In fact, the overall human rights conditions in Ethiopia have drastically deteriorated since the publication of those reports. A senior Human Rights UN official Navi Pillay, was “seriously alarmed” by the current climate of intimidation against journalists and human rights defenders in Ethiopia. Those words are clear indication of the state of human right situation in Ethiopia. Furthermore, reputable institutions such as the Amnesty International, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the European Union, the United States Department of State, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and scores more have consistently raised their concerns over the gross human rights violation and atrocities being committed by the Ethiopian Government.

Your Excellency,

As per the UN General Assembly’s resolution, the Human Rights Council should be comprised of “elected Member States that are pledged to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights.” By this UN resolution and the several reports from the UN-HRC, the current Ethiopian Government does not qualify to be elected in the Human Rights Council. In fact, it is the presence of human rights violator states within the defunct UN Commission on Human Rights that led to the commission’s dissolution and replacement in 2006 by the UN-HRC.

ENTC understands the workings of the United Nations, and the requirement to have member states adequately represented from different geographical regions of the world. However, the inclusion of human rights violator States such as

Ethiopia in the UN-HRC will seriously undermine the UN's credibility, and weaken the Council and ultimately lead it to follow the unfortunate but inevitable path of its predecessor.

Your Excellency,

The UN Human Rights Council website has a quote from you that states "All victims of human rights abuses should be able to look to the Human Rights Council as a forum and a springboard for action." Unfortunately, the Ethiopian Government's inclusion in the Council is a direct contradiction to your beliefs and statements and it seriously undermines and directly contravenes the principles that you stand for.

Therefore, ENTC requests your personal attention and urges the UN Assembly's institutional focus on Human Rights Violation in Ethiopia. It is by only bringing to the forefront and demanding remedies to the violations enumerated in the extensive list of the Ethiopian Government's Periodic Review Report, that the UN can address the grievances of the Ethiopian People and give voice to the millions voiceless Ethiopians that are deprived of their God-given Human Rights and Dignity.

Thank you for considering our request, and extending your help for our organization's and the UN's cause.

Yours faithfully,

**Ethiopian National Transitional Council (ENTC)
Leadership Council**