



FEBRUARY 11/2016

FEAR OF DEATH: CRUEL TREATMENT AND TORTURE

PERSONAL LETTER SENT TO SOCEPP BY A VICTIM

"My name is Mikyas G., I am writing this letter because I fear that my brothers and father may be dead after being wrongfully accused. I just recently made my way to Canada from Ethiopia because my life was in danger at the hands of my own government. I returned to Ethiopia from America a few years ago and I was living a quiet, normal life after making many mistakes. The only family I had in Ethiopia was my stepfather and my two brothers. I was enjoying my new life back in my native land, but recently things changed for the worse. My family is from the Oromo tribe which is Ethiopia's largest ethnic group. I always knew there were many problems between simple Oromo people and this government but I never thought this would happen to me and my family. My two brothers were attending Addis Abeba University in their second year of enrollment. On the 11th of July, 2015, 37 students from Addis Abeba University were abducted by federal police. They were taken on the grounds of so called "political misconduct." The reason they gave was accusations that they were members of the O.N.G., but the reality of the matter is that these were just students and none of them were affiliated or had membership of any kind to any political group or organization. These students were beaten, tortured, and some even raped by the guards at the Maekelawi or better known as the "Dungeon." Out of the 37 students, 11 of them were women, and by the 5th of August after 25 days of this, the 11th of the female students was released after paying a bribe to Sgt. Thomas Arfinea and Sgt. Bereket Berhe, these were the same officers that assaulted them in such a manner. At this time, the other 26 students including my two brothers Fromsa and Ayana were still in prison. On the 2nd of November, 2015, I came across two of the female students Aden Kebra and Betty Webet who was in custody with the other 35 students and they told me they knew my two brothers and after they released the 11th female student they did not know where they took the other 26 male students including my brothers.

I received a message from my brothers through the female student and they asked me to let the outside world know about their situation. I lived in America for many years and because I can write and speak English they wanted me to write a letter to the foreign media and opposition groups about what was going on. I am not a political person, and

my brothers are not political, but because my brothers and these innocent students were being attacked by their own government I had to pick a side. On the 10th of November, 2015, I started writing the story of these students. My stepfather paid a bribe to have my brothers released but the officials kept saying they would be released soon. My plan was to send this letter to a relative in the U.S. and have them distribute it to the media outlets and opposition groups as I mentioned earlier. On the 16th of December 2015, Sgt. Thomas Arfinea and Sgt. Bereket Berhe and two other federal officers whose names I cannot recall came to my stepfather's house to search the house without a court order. As they conducted their search, they found a USB flash drive on my counter and they demanded that I open it and show them the contents. This flash drive contained the letter that I wrote for my brothers and upon finding the letter they took me into custody to Maekelawi and I was tortured for almost one month. I was beaten, kept without food for days, knocked one of my teeth was out, and they even went so far as to insert a broom stick in my rectum.

My stepfather finally paid the bribe to Sgt. Thomas Arfinea and Sgt. Bereket Berhe which was 10,000 Ethiopian birr for each of them. I was then released on the 5th of January 2016 and given a court date for the 5th of March 2016. They also told my father they can come and get me at any moment, day or night, as they wish and if needed they can and will kill me. From then on I was under very close watch, and due to the nature of this surveillance, I decided to come to Canada on the 17th of January 2016 where I have been since then. I recently called home to check on my stepfather but there was no answer, when I called a neighbor they said they saw federal officials take him in the day before. As you can imagine, I am scared for my life if I return to Addis. I have no one there. After making a change for the better in my life, my life was ruined by this government, I believe they've already killed two of my brothers because I did not see them when I was in Maekelawi and we still don't know where they are. If my brothers are gone, and my father is gone, then I ask for nothing but justice. At least bring justice to the other victims still living under this regime's terrorism. Thank you for reading my letter,"

NJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE

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