

Ethiopian American Civic Advocacy (EACA)



28-Feb-2006

To: Richard K. Arme
1200 Nineteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC, 20036-2412
United States

Re: Lobbying for the Ethiopian government

Dear Richard K. Arme:

It has come to the attention of the Ethiopian American Civic Advocacy (EACA) and Ethiopian American community in the United States that your firm represents the Ethiopian Government, and by extension the ruling party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front/ The Tigray People's Liberation Front (EPRDF/TPLF) led by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. We are under the assumption that your firm is not aware of the scale of the atrocities that have been committed by the ruling regime on the people of Ethiopia during the last 15 years it has been in power.

The ruling regime in Ethiopia has been documented to be responsible for: ethnic conflicts that claimed countless lives; brutal suppression of peaceful protests on numerous occasions by mass killings; disappearances and detentions; political persecutions of opposition leaders/members, civic leaders, free press journalists, civil rights lawyers, and civic activists. Meles Zenawi's organization also used terrorism as a weapon both before and after coming to power. Initially, the TPLF directed its terrorism against Ethiopians and foreigners. Since coming to power, the TPLF has deployed state-sponsored terrorism almost exclusively against real and imaginary domestic opponents. TPLF terrorist activities are well documented by United States Home Land Security's National Counter Terrorism Center. The crimes committed by the ruling regime in Ethiopia are vast and difficult to list in one letter. Therefore we have attached herewith documentations from internationally respected media, independent observers, State Department and human rights watchdogs compiling the atrocities and grave human right violations committed by the Ethiopian Government just during the last few years.

As you may know, the Ethiopian Government's budget is up to 30% supported by Western governments and their institutions in any given year. Prime Minister Meles's government has mismanaged a large amount of foreign aid it receives, leaving the country in more debt while doing little to fight poverty or the recurring famine. In the last 15 years the ruling regime has spent a fraction of the billions of dollars of aid they receive on lobbying firms such as yours to secure the continued support of the West.

The political support of DLA Piper and its Advisors secure for the repressive regime of Ethiopia has: resulted in the extension of the life of a brutal dictator and his regime; contributed to the pillage of Ethiopia; been used for the subjugation of Ethiopians; and put American national security at risk given the Ethiopia-wide and regional instability brought on by Meles Zenawi's measures in the Ethiopia and neighboring countries. Your lobbying firm's role is no less crucial than the role of the arm dealers in helping Prime Minister Meles' regime to continue to brutalize and suppress its very own people. We urge you to go over the documentation we provided with this letter, and conduct your independent research on the matter. We also humbly request your firm reconsider your association with the Ethiopian Government immediately, and hope the good name of your firm will not continue to be associated with a regime that has blood on its hands and is responsible for the plight of millions of its citizens and instability in the Horn region. It is our strong hope that your firm will choose to stand for what is right and we anticipate your positive response. We would like it to be known that there are now a million Americans of Ethiopian origin living across the United States determined more than ever to expose the atrocities of the ruling regime of Ethiopia to the citizens of the United States. Those that have interests with the present government of Ethiopia will by extension be perceived as being insensitive to the brutalization of innocent civilians.

We are very confident that after carefully weighing the evidence you will clearly cease from being associated with such a brutal Regime.

Awaiting your positive response,

Sincerely,

Dr. Kassa Ayalew (Chair)
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