



ANUAK JUSTICE COUNCIL

Justice, Peace and Freedom

The Movement for New Ethiopia Begins with a Worldwide Peaceful March for Freedom and Justice on May 15, 2008!

April 15, 2008

May 15, 2008, just one month from today, will mark the third anniversary of the Ethiopian National Election of 2005 when 26 million Ethiopians came out to vote for change in Ethiopia—and won. Even though Meles Zenawi fraudulently declared himself and the EPRDF the winners, nothing in his 17 years of rule challenged this repressive government more than our united votes on that day!

On May 15, 2008 and on the following weekend, from wherever you are, let us come together in a worldwide demonstration to show Meles and his supporters that he has **NOT** silenced Ethiopians despite clamping down more tightly on every one of our freedoms.

Let us protest throughout the world that we will not tolerate the horrific human rights atrocities being committed against our people. Let us use this opportunity to strike at the heart of such evil and injustice by using such “non-violent bullets as this protest.”

Let thousands and millions of Ethiopians stand up to resist even when constant surveillance and intimidation of any opposition makes them feel like they are behind bars in their own country!

This will be a day for freedom fighters to honor the people who died. They protested for change, justice, the rule of law and for freedom and were killed by Meles’ soldiers. We will now continue to fight from where they have left off so that they did not die in vain!

Meles and his supporters should be warned. They cannot control every citizen in this country of 80 million people. A few can be silenced, but it is impossible to silence all of Ethiopia and all Ethiopians throughout the world!

I say to Meles, “Your time is up! The suffering of the people is too great to wait. You may repress Ethiopians all the more in response, but it will only increase our collective hunger for freedom, justice, unity and democracy!”

“Be wise and find a peaceful way to cooperate with the will of the people. Negotiate—genuinely—while it is still an option! You cannot suppress 80 million people by force forever! Ethiopians, like Kenyans and Zimbabweans, are discovering their political rights. The emerging movement for democracy is rising up like the Southern Star all over the continent—for Africans do not want dictators. You are one of them! Africans want to rule themselves. So do the Ethiopian people! Open the way for them to choose while you still can! We are listening and watching for your first move!”

Right now, our country is one of the most miserable on the continent. The suffering of the Ethiopian people has never been worse. Coupled with double-digit inflation and growing poverty, the plight of Ethiopians in 2008 is much worse than 2005 and we all know it! Nine million Ethiopians now need humanitarian aid to survive! That is more than one out of every eight people in a country that already has one of the lowest per capita incomes in all of Africa!

We Ethiopians know that our government does not invest in its people, but invests in its own interests. Many of our problems can be directly linked to this dereliction of duty towards Ethiopians--our lack of water, food, health care, education, homes, jobs, development and decent lives.

Foreign aid, to which the EPRDF government is addicted, largely goes into the military and security forces in order to further suppress the people or into the pockets of the powerful cronies rather than ever reaching the people. The majority of Ethiopians from every group and region are left out.

Meles and his cronies may think that we Ethiopians cannot work together, but I personally have seen the change in Ethiopians. Because of that, I have great hope and the strong expectation that the division of past years has reached its tipping point. Ethiopians are tired of the conflict-mongering tactics of division that the EPRDF excels in using to maintain power. Instead, Ethiopians are seeing the light and want unity, peace and harmony with an increasing intensity not believed possible only a few years ago.

We have learned much in the last three years and have had time to start appreciating people outside of our own insulated groups. We want our goals, objectives and values to be based on universal God-given principles of justice and truth rather than simply based on the whims of those holding the power and the pocketbook.

Therefore, let us show the world that Ethiopia is now ready to stand together against oppression, tyranny and injustice! When this happens, those of us leaders who are working for a Movement for a New Ethiopia will have the backing and authority we need to stand before leaders in the west, especially among those countries supporting Meles, to convince them, more than ever, that Ethiopians deserve better and are ready to choose their leaders for themselves!

On May 15- 18, join with other Ethiopians from all over the world to demonstrate our shared commitment to the future of Ethiopia. So today, start organizing and planning for the largest, most united and most powerful rally ever demonstrated by Ethiopians both at home and in the Diaspora! These rallies are not new to Ethiopians as I was told that Ethiopians and Tibetans are the only well-known people to rally in foreign countries!

This is very true and therefore, I am calling on every Ethiopian from all over the world to come out on May 15-18, 2008 to rally with other Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia for a new Ethiopia! We must raise our voices to a thundering shout so Meles Zenawi and his supporters cannot block the sounds from reverberating throughout the world, pronouncing to all that we will never be silent until Ethiopia is freed from tyranny!

This is a time for every group within Ethiopia to raise the flag for freedom. Without giving up our ethnic, regional, political, civic or religious identities, let us also take on a national identity of people who live within the boundaries of the map of Ethiopia. We all want a future for this country—for ourselves, our children and for our neighbor's children.

Some skeptics may say, "Who is this guy, Obang?" I will tell you, I am an Ethiopian who can no longer tolerate the pain of the people nor close my ears to the sound of their cries." No one has ever been held accountable for the thousands of Anuak who were massacred. The same applies to the Oromo, the Ogadeni, the Afar and there are many more who have been denied justice.

Some may say, "Obang represents the Anuak; therefore, let's not support him." I tell you, "No, I represent all Ethiopians and I will give you the reason." When I testified at the United States Sub-Committee on Africa hearing about Ethiopia in March of 2006, I stepped out first to face the Ethiopian people rather than the Congress members to say, "Look at me—I am one of you. Together we can make a difference. Together we will be stronger and able to make a better Ethiopia!" When I said, "I am not here only for the Anuak, but I am here for the Tigrayan, the Oromo, the Amhara, the Ogadeni....and others throughout our country," I meant it and I only more strongly maintain this position today!

Recently, an Ethiopian friend told me that she and 80% of her friends had never heard of the Anuak before the Anuak Justice Council started speaking about the human rights abuses being perpetrated against them by the Woyane or TPLF. How many other countless groups are out there? Right now, many might not know their names, but God does. Many of them have been suffering right along with the rest of us, but someday I hope to hear the stories they have to tell. Anyone within the borders of Ethiopia is part of us and together we must stand against injustice.

There is nothing wrong with representing the Gambella people or any other group, but I know that none of us will ever be free alone. We must do it together until we all are free of the shame, greed, corruption and the evil that has kept us in cycles of misery for years. If we do not stop it, our suffering will become the curse of the next generation!

I am calling on each of you to inform and organize others to come out in mass demonstrations of solidarity with other Ethiopians. The best success will be when new groups are invited to join together in new unions of common purpose. In every region our people have experienced great losses—in Benishangul-Gumuz, Afar, Harare, Amhara, Tigray, Southern Nations, the Ogaden, Oromiya and Gambella. This includes those courageous election protestors who died in the streets of Addis Ababa.

Our people are still dying every day, especially in regions being targeted by the Woyane or TPLF like in the Ogaden. We know that those hungry, homeless, orphaned, widowed, sick and those prisoners of conscience in prisons and detention centers throughout the country are in much larger number because of what we are enduring at the hands of this regime. By our action, let us show that the time for these oppressors is ending! We Ethiopians must come out on May 15-18 to make a stand for all suffering Ethiopians.

In preparation, I call on all Ethiopians of faith to pray and some may also want to fast. Fill the churches, mosques and synagogues throughout Ethiopia with the earnest and the persevering. Call on God for His help! Yet, we first must fully acknowledge our own faults so that God will hear our prayers. We are not without fault. He promises to help those who seek Him with open hearts and who come in earnest humility, willing to turn away from hate, division, greed, corruption, lying, indifference, envy and arrogance. Let this month be a preparation of our souls.

For Woyane or TPLF who are reading this, it is not too late to change! Do you think that if the pressure suddenly escalated that you would escape being scapegoated—that you would not be stopped or even arrested at the airports before leaving the country? If this government fell, would you be one of those airlifted out of the country like would probably be the case for those on the top like Meles? Has your conscience been convicting and tormenting you or is it deadened? If you have any softness of heart, let May 15-18 be days of change for you. Join with other Ethiopians against evil and injustice.

Out of fear, do not make the mistake of clinging to what is hurting your fellow Ethiopia, thinking and hoping you will be able to suppress freedom, justice and truth forever—it will eventually be too much for you and you will lose your grasp. Instead, consider how you might be part of the solution for a new and better Ethiopia. You could contribute to that solution even now.

We call you to join—if for no other reason than it is the right thing to do. Many of you may have gotten swept away with this system before fully understanding the implications. Free yourselves from this bondage you are in for you are the **“most unfree”** of all people in Ethiopia. Freedom of the soul and the conscience are the supreme gifts of life given by God who ultimately judges all humankind!

Above all, may Ethiopians seek God and reflect His mind and heart in their actions, treating each human being as a precious life given by God as we move forward towards a new Ethiopia. May He give those in more difficult places, the faith, protection, discernment and courage to follow God’s lead on that day and in the days that follow.

Then, may the imprisoning walls around us fall down as the walls of Jericho fell down for Joshua and his men. They never drew a sword, but blew their trumpets and raised their hands to the heavens as they marched around the city seven times until the walls collapsed!

Many Ethiopians who have never been involved in politics before are now joining in mutual effort to push forward for a new Ethiopia. Each of us is the change agent for whom we have been waiting. Additionally, more is going on under the surface than is publicly known. The channels of communication between groups is well underway. People from all regions of Ethiopia and from different ethnic and religious groups have begun the work, both inside the country as well as outside the country. This is not a political group, but a movement to free the country. Following that, the Ethiopian people can decide for themselves who they want to govern the country.

God-willing, at the right time, the results of this work will come out of the darkness to be seen by all like that amazing and inspiring halo around the sun that was just seen yesterday, on the same day as the local election, by Ethiopians throughout the country and even reported in international news. It was seen not only in one particular region, but all over the country, just like the change I envision for a new Ethiopia!

If we Ethiopians are to see the rising Southern Star of freedom, justice and democracy come to Ethiopia, it will not only take the politicians, the activists, the educated, the economically privileged, our religious leaders and others perceived to have more power, but it will require every individual, including the homeless, the unemployed, the youth, the marginalized, the uneducated, the beggars and the many other precious Ethiopians struggling within our country.

I especially call on the youth at the universities, colleges and schools throughout the world to organize a non-tribal, Pan-Ethiopian student movement and connect it to each other in different parts of the world. Get a team together and contact me personally. This is about your future and you have a strategic investment in it.

We do know rallying together will be much easier for those outside the country than for those within, especially those who are known to be threats to this regime because they are known to be opponents of the regime. Because of this, the rest of Ethiopians must come out in great numbers everywhere. It will make a huge impact if many of the average Ethiopians within the country come out to stand against injustice.

Imagine on that day, if groups of Ethiopians, like Christians, would emerge from their churches and homes with nothing more than their Bibles in their left hands—walking silently without shouting or insulting Woyane, pointing their finger to the sky signifying that God is their only hope!

Imagine if the same thing was done by the Muslims only with the Quran in their left hands and their finger pointing to Allah.

Imagine the non-believers walking side by side among the others. Their left hands can cover their hearts in love towards each other while their fingers point to the sky in hope.

What would that mean to the Woyane or TPLF to see such a demonstration of people who do not want to hurt or insult anyone, but passionately want freedom, peace and harmony? Think about the message of such a demonstration in the international news!

The political activists, like the new party with Birtukan and others with her, whom I personally know and dearly admire, have their hands tied so we cannot depend upon them to do it right now. Woyane watch their activities 24 hours a day. This is the same with other political groups, liberation fronts, journalists, human rights activists, religious groups or anyone else being monitored—something that makes their lives very difficult; yet, I know they are doing their best. These people are my heroes and I am with them in heart and spirit.

On May 15-18, I will join with them and with Ethiopians all over the world in standing up for freedom, justice and truth. Remember, Ethiopians must show their solidarity as a means to demonstrate our unity and commitment. It will lay the foundation for the Movement for a New Ethiopia.

Right now, a good number of talented and committed Ethiopians, many never involved in politics before, both in the Diaspora and within Ethiopia are organizing a Movement for a New Ethiopia where all of us will belong! I am counting on millions of Ethiopians to stand together with me and each other on that day! Such solidarity will build the credibility necessary to advocate for Ethiopians in the international community.

One friend in the European Parliament recently told me, “Following the May 2005 election, injustices in Ethiopian were well known at the European Parliament and in the media because average Ethiopians were rallying before them in every EU member’s country. This put us in a much better position to act, but this is not the case today.”

This friend went on to advise, “The Ethiopian people must do the groundwork in order to again bring the Ethiopian issues to the forefront—the issue of the lack of democratic process, the violation of human rights abuses and the repression of all individual freedoms back.” If we lose our voice, no one will take it up for us. However, if we come together in greater solidarity than ever before, it will be hard to ignore us! We have a job to do!

Yesterday, at the recent local election, Meles was able to intimidate and control the opposition, gaining the appearance of more political control, but as we look forward to May 15th, let us be reminded that it was not by the plan of a human that the Ethiopian sun was surrounded by a halo, it was a demonstration of Divine power against which, no human can stand. Let us place our hope in God to deliver us.

May the walls of oppression and injustice fall down, without a shot being fired and without the spilt blood of another precious Ethiopian! Together, let us point our fingers towards the heavens—to God, our only hope! He created that yearning in our hearts for freedom!

Think on this following example. When the Italians invaded Ethiopia there was one Ethiopian who became well known as “the Ethiopian man who rallied by himself.” Can you imagine that? This man held high the Ethiopian flag and marched in New York, Washington D.C. and in other cities in America. All he had with him was the Ethiopian flag and sign that said, “I am marching for justice for my people!” He is a hero of Ethiopia. Let us all imagine ourselves as that man! Who knows, but freedom may come when and how we least expect it!

“Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

Blow the trumpet., declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, “Spare your people, O LORD. Do not make [them] an object of scorn, a byword among the nations...”

Then the LORD will...take pity on his people. (Joel 2: 12-14, 16-17, 18)

For more information please contact me by email at: Obang@anuakjustice.org
