

**SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL
PRISONERS – CANADA (SOCEPP-CAN)**

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RELEASE NETSANET DEMISSE & DANIEL BEKELE NOW!

SOCEPP Canada unequivocally condemns the recent conviction of the two renowned Human Rights activists - **Netsanet Demisse and Daniel Bekele** by a court in Addis Ababa on Monday, December 24, 2007. It is remembered that at the time of their arrest in 2005, these two activists were working for Action Aid and as Anti Poverty campaigners in Ethiopia.

The TPLF/EPRDF government accused the two activists of fabricated charges of “insinuating an uprising”. The fact of the matter is that both are prisoners of conscience who have been jailed for helping the people of Ethiopia to exercise their democratic and constitutional rights.

Once again, with its latest action, the court in Ethiopia has proven beyond a shred of doubt that it continues to function as a political weapon of the ruling party and never as an independent institution. By convicting the two activists, the court system has once again failed to uphold the people’s basic Human Rights including the right to free speech and freedom of expression.

The action of both the government and the court continues to undermine any chance of planting the seed of institutionalized protection of Human Rights in Ethiopia.

We condemn this illegal act and call on the ruling TPLF/EPRDF regime to release the two activists immediately and unconditionally.

We further call upon the ruling group to release all political prisoners including the leaders and supporters of EPRP, who have disappeared since their arrest by the EPRDF forces in 1991, of CUDP, OLF, ONLF and others.

We call upon the government of Canada, Canadian Parliamentarians and human rights advocates to condemn this latest violation of rights and demand the immediate and unconditional release of these two activists and all political prisoners in Ethiopia.