



Kinijit International Council

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Washington Update

Engineer Hailu Shawel, President of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) in Ethiopia, and Dr. Taye Woldesemait, Kinijit International, chairman met with Kinijit International last week at The National Press Club in Washington, DC to focus on strengthening Kinijit in order to create Ethiopian-American institutions that will foster future progress for Ethiopia in economic development, democracy, and human rights.

The purpose of this meeting was to organize Kinijit's resources more effectively here in the United States. Each person attending has an assignment to support the CUD in Ethiopia. This was a five-hour meeting and the topics were wide ranging.

We discussed personnel, internal communications, finance, diplomacy, and public relations. There were many contributions made by fellow Ethiopians on all of these issues. The attendees came from all walks of life and many areas of expertise. We continue to add people who have specialized knowledge that help CUD in Ethiopia.

Recently, the Meles regime pretended to conduct local elections. These elections were, in fact, a sham, carried out to create the impression that Ethiopia is a legitimate democracy. The Ethiopian people, international media, and western governments all realize what really happened. The real representatives of the Ethiopian opposition were not even on the ballot, the Meles regime maintained total control over news media, as well as over the electoral board even the regime's mouthpiece "Ethiopian Reporter" commented that it was "surprised" that only the regime's party, EPRDF, sent observers to the "polls".

Engineer Hailu has a vision for 21st Century Ethiopia. He has set a new National Agenda setting out the improvements that can be introduced in Ethiopia after the end of the Meles regime. All his efforts are, of course, peaceful and non-violent.

During what should be a festive time, high prices are denying too many Ethiopians the basic necessities, and others are having to sacrifice simply to eat. In addition to the domestic problems facing Ethiopia, the Meles regime has mired the country in a conflict in Somalia.

A new threat has emerged on the Sudan border, where troops have occupied Ethiopian territory. The incursion by Sudanese troops is reportedly supported by Qatar and Eritrea.

We cannot end without reminding everyone about the status of the legislation now before the U.S. Senate. The House passed on October 2nd, 2007 HR 2003, the Ethiopia Democracy Accountability ACT of 2007 and now is being presented to the Senate. Please contact your state's U.S. Senators and remind those in the House to continue to push HR 2003 to continue to support this bi-partisan piece of legislation.

Mesfin Mekonen, Kinijit International Council