

## **Injustice of a different scale**

Dear friends, colleagues and the Ethiopian community at large,

As a member of the p2p board, I have been asked to organize our effort to support our fellow Ethiopians returning from Saudi and that is why I am sending you this personal letter of plea to contribute to the pledge drive!

The past few weeks have been difficult days to witness the unjust, inhuman and uncivilized deportation of Ethiopians and many other immigrants from Saudi. I am sure you have heard it in the news or have seen clips of videos. Those barbaric acts that were perpetrated on innocent helpless work immigrants have outraged us beyond description. For us, who are so much proud of our past history and our place in history, this was something difficult to swallow. How can a neighbor humiliate and discard such an amount of foreign citizens without a notice and treat them like animals? How can humans who have no power of defending themselves be treated by a country who claims to be a responsible member of the world community in such a manner? As a Muslim Ethiopian, but above all as just one proud Ethiopian the treatment of Ethiopians by Saudis in such a manner makes me wonder to question their knowledge of the very religion that they profess to protect. I know I am preaching here to the quire but allow me to indulge myself in looking back at the history of Islam in the eyes of an Ethiopian. In its infancy, this great religion of Islam was persecuted and ridiculed heavily by the Arabs, and Prophet Mohammad, peace be up on him, fearing the worst which is the complete destruction of his followers, send his very first trusted followers to Ethiopia to save the religion. Remember; he did not send them to Jordan, Syria, and Israel which are logical neighbors of Saudi: he did not even send them to Egypt or Libya who though farther and in Africa are Arabs whose customs and cultures are the same; no, he send his followers to Ethiopia telling them that “there is a king who is just and though he is not Muslim he allows the free worship of your religion”. What did King Negash (AKA Najashi) did? Well, he was as good as described. He took them in his arms, protected them and refuses to hand them to the Saudi Arabs who demanded that they be extradited to face their charges. For this, Ethiopia has a special place in Islam religion and Prophet Mohammad

himself- peace be upon him. It is because of this that Negashi, the small town in Tigray, Ethiopia is considered among the holiest of the holiest cities in Islam religion. Why? Because Ethiopia and Ethiopians played a critical role in the survival of the religion itself.

Fast forward 1,400 years and now we are here. The so called protectors of that very religion, the Saudis are awash with money that seems directly drilled from the ground and Ethiopians are looking for work wherever they get it. It would have seemed intuitive for Saudis to repay the debt owed to us but instead we have been treated at a level that equals slavery and apartheid. It has been said that those who are deported are illegal immigrants. Well, that might be partly true but I have not heard that they are not humans as well. I am asking that because that is precisely how they were treated. Time will come, for sure, though it might not be in our life time, that the roles will be balanced if not reversed. I hope at that time too we treat them the way King Negashi and his subjects treated them the first time but their predecessors will know what injustice we have been served when it was our turn to ask for help.

For us Ethiopians, Ethiopia seems to raise at the crossroads of history all the time- from the early Christianity, the trusted protectors of the Arch of the Covenant, our role in Islam religion, our decisive victory over Italy to herald the beginning of the End of colonialism in Africa and our steadfast support of each and every African country in their fight against colonialism and apartheid, we have been in the right side of history. This makes us proud. The Saudis might not know it and might only see us through the prism of dollars and oils and hence we weigh less in their eyes. On the values that we think matters most: justice, moral and giving helping hands- well we weigh heavy and it is because of this that I am asking all of us to come together and help our countrymen and women in this difficult time.

Well over 50,000 Ethiopians have been massively deported in a very short time. In addition to the degradation of self esteem they endured, the psychological trauma they sustained is beyond description. What we can help is financially and morally and P2p is organizing an action of the Diaspora to just do that. We will call all our members to contribute to this blessed cause. We will also reach to any organization or group who are working to fund raise. By doing so, our plan is to collect a substantial amount of monetary help and present to the returnees as a donation from

the Diaspora. What we are asking is direct contribution and word of mouth to every individual and organization to take part in this just cause. We have been airing our anger and frustration in different mass media outlets. Now is the time to get back to action and show once and for all how we can come together and help those in need. We have created a separate account for this task. Use face book, twitter or any other media to pass this information to more friends.

To Jump start this effort, few less than a dozen P2p members have donated over \$ 5000 dollar. I am asking each and every one of you to follow this kind gesture and make a meaningful contribution. **No amount is small** or big! I, Dr. Enawgaw and Dr. Anteneh will be organizing this activity. We will be updating you with the developments regularly.

**Please visit this site and have your online donation at:** [www.peoplepeople.org/rescue](http://www.peoplepeople.org/rescue)

For those of you who want to deposit directly or send checks, the account and Bank are here:

**People to People Rescue and Rehabilitation**

**Account # 235-0041**

**Kentucky Bank Flemingsburg Rd Branch**

**339 Main St**

**P.O.Box 157**

**Paris, Kentucky 40362**

All contribution is tax deductible!

A friend in need is a friend indeed!!

*Dawd S Siraj Dec 18, 2013*

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