

**“We Must Learn To Live Together As Brothers Or Perish  
Together As Fools”  
Dr Martin Luther King**

September 8, 2006

Prime Minister Office  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

Dear Prime Minister Meles Zenawi:

Allow me first to extend my greetings and New Year good wishes. May you and your family have a Happy “enkutatash !

Below is a quotation from a letter written to you by Professor Mesfin Wodemariam on September 28 1998.

*" Mr. Meles , please open up your heart to love, and your mind to history, and allow the Ethiopian people to walk this path of democracy, while learning from their mistakes and progressing away from poverty and backwardness. I plead with you, in the name of your children, your compatriots who have sacrificed their lives, and all Ethiopian parents, please do not block off this opportunity that you have opened up to Ethiopians to become free" [1]*

I remember the first political debate an Ethiopian head of state had with opponents of his policies. As president of the transitional government you were one of the debaters with Dr Mekonnen Bishaw, Professor Enderias Eshete and Professor Mesfin Woldemariam. That was a clear display of democracy and humility from your part.

14 years later, one of the debate attendee, Professor Mesfin Woldemariam, is locked up in Kaliti prison in his old age. On September 28 the professor wrote you a letter.[1] He recognized your contributions in opening up democratic opportunities. He recognized the sacrifices paid by your compatriots TPLF fighters. The tone of his letter was respectful and civil. Do you think the professor who sat by your side and laughed with you together 14 years ago would harm you or your supporters now if he is out of jail? I leave the answer to your conscious.

As we are near to enterering a New Year I call upon your good conscious to take the initiative, come up with new strategies and break the gridlock of chaos and mistrusts in Ethiopia. **Let 1999 be a year of reconciliation, peace and dialog. Let 1999 be a year of mercy and forgiveness. Let 1999 be a year of holding up together and moving forward.**

## **“We Must Learn To Live Together As Brothers Or Perish Together As Fools”**

**Dr Martin Luther King**

As Professor Mesfin once said we are all responsible for the mess we are in in Ethiopia. Numerous mistakes were made. **We have had enough of recriminations towards one another. It is time now to put aside the past and look forward. It is time for a new beginning.** Thousands have died. Millions have left the country. Tens of Millions have lost hope. Enough is enough. We are all brothers and sisters. We are families. We are all children of Ethiopia. We are all children of God. The fate and destiny of our country depends on us. As Ralph Waldo said nothing can bring us peace but ourselves. We Ethiopians are the solution for our problems.

I have heard that your government is spending time and energy to lobby the Americans to block HR5680. The same Americans are being aggressively approached by the opposition to pass HR5680. All these show that we were incapable of solving our problems by our own and entirely depending to get food, medicine, peace, democracy on foreigners. Had we have the courage and humility to seat around the table and try to solve our crisis, had we have the love and respect to one another, had we not been filled with pride and resentment, had we thought more to have a strong, peaceful and prosperous Ethiopia for our children and grandchildren, had we spend our energy in lifting up other fellow Ethiopians instead of destroying them, had we labored on empowering our people, the outcome would have been much different. I cannot imagine where we could have reached together as Ethiopians.

For how long would we be starving when we have plenty of food? For how long would we be exiled when we have a country? For how long would we be humiliated when we have an honor? For how long would we be lonely when we have a people? For how long would we be beggars when we have a lot to offer? For how long would be thirsty when rivers are flowing out of our motherland?

It is right you are the head of state of Ethiopia. It is right you have power in your hand. You control the armed forces and security apparatus. You control the finance of the country. You managed to temporarily silence your opponents. You scored some victories here and there. However things will not stay as it is forever. By incarcerating Kinijit leaders, some of the people in your circle might think it is over with Kinijit. They might think Kinijit has lost. However the defeat of Kinijit is temporary. As Dr Martin Luther King said : “ *unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. The temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.* ”.

Though the TPLF seems to be the winner for now it will be the ultimate and permanent loser at the end unless it takes some concrete, positive and reconciliatory steps as soon as possible.

## **“We Must Learn To Live Together As Brothers Or Perish Together As Fools”**

**Dr Martin Luther King**

It is in this context that I recommend you make peace and reconciliation your biggest and only priority in 1999. **Making peace with your opponents is not a sign of defeat but a sign of greatness.** The great Israeli General Moshe Dayan once said: “If you want to make piece, you don’t talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies.”

I respectfully lay down my two recommendations I offer for your consideration.

1. instruct your justice ministry to drop all charges of all political prisoners.(Kinijit leaders, prisoners from ONC, reporters, human right activists, former TPLF members like Siye Abraham ...)
2. Call an urgent meeting with your party executive committee to form a negotiation team that immediately starts a dialog for a political solution with Kinijit and other political forces.

As a Kinijit supporter let me affirm you that Kinijit is ready for a dialog. Leaders of Kinijit have been consistently calling for peace and reconciliation from Kaliti. Kinijit is not against you, the EPRDF or any affcials from your administration. Kinijit is against no Ethiopian. Kinijit is for all Ethiopians. Kinijit envisions an Ethiopia where you would freely continue as leader of the minority party should your party looses an election.

Dear Prime Minister:

Let there be a new beginning for our country in this New Year. You are the only one who can do it. I understand I am asking for a miracle. I really do. However, yes it is a miracle that Ethiopia needs.

May the Almighty God give us this miracle!

Girma G. Kassa  
A Kinijit Supporter From Chicago  
[muziky68@yahoo.com](mailto:muziky68@yahoo.com)

[1] – [http://www.mesfinwoldermariam.org/docs/MWM\\_OpenLetter\\_PM\\_2005.pdf](http://www.mesfinwoldermariam.org/docs/MWM_OpenLetter_PM_2005.pdf)

[2] – <http://www.kinijit.org/content.asp?contentid=1338>