

**Ambassador Ghirmai Ghebremariam  
Embassy of the State of Eritrea  
1708 New Hampshire Ave NW  
Washington DC 20009  
Fax: 1 202 319 1304**

**Dear Ambassador Ghebremariam,**

**On the occasion of Eritrea's Independence Day, I wish to congratulate the Eritrean people on the achievement of independence after 30 years of liberation struggle. Over the years, the Eritrean people have experienced and overcome many hardships and difficulties. However, the dream of freedom and justice for all has yet to be realized.**

**Eritrea is a party to international treaties and covenants, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (The African Charter) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), that guarantee freedoms of speech, political assembly, and fair and speedy trials. Eritrea's own constitution guarantees "no person shall be deprived of liberty without due process of law" (Article 15-2) and that "no person may be arrested or detained save pursuant to due process of law" (Article 17-1).**

**I respectfully call your government to release men and women who are prisoners of conscience detained without charge, trial or any legal status, because of their political opinions or religious beliefs, or because they or their children have evaded military service.**

**As an example of a prisoner of conscience in Eritrea, I would like to bring your attention to the case of ESTIFANOS SEYOUM, who has been imprisoned without charge or trial at a secret location since 2001. His whereabouts should be made public immediately.**

**President Issayas Afewerki should make the coming 16th year of Eritrea's formal independence a year for the implementation of the human rights improvements urgently awaited by the international community, as well as many Eritreans in the country and abroad.**

**Yours sincerely,**