

## Chairman Honda Makes Pre-Election Statement on the May 23rd Ethiopian Elections

Written by Mike Honda

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As Chairman of the Congressional Ethiopia and Ethiopian American Caucus, I appreciate the strong friendship between the United States and Ethiopia. In particular, I believe that Ethiopia remains an important ally in the goal to achieve greater peace and stability in the region. This Sunday, citizens from all over Ethiopia will participate in the country's 4<sup>th</sup> constitutional elections; practicing what I expect will be the burgeoning democratic process of self-determination. Questions remain regarding free, fair, legitimate and non-violent elections, but it is my hope that the Government of Ethiopia will take its responsibilities seriously by creating a transparent and inclusive electoral environment for all parties. I also hope that the elections will maintain integrity through an independent electoral complaints system, an equitable implementation of the code of conduct, and an unobstructed operating environment for independent observers.

I lament that the Government of Ethiopia still holds many political prisoners during this tenuous time. It is my hope that in the spirit of democracy and goodwill, that opposition leaders such as Birtukan Medeksa be released. I believe that much progress can be made during Sunday's elections and it is with optimism that I expect to see within the process, signs of free, fair, credible and peaceful elections.

*The Congressional Caucus on Ethiopia and Ethiopian-Americans works to strengthen the relationship between the United States and Ethiopia and is a legislative voice for Ethiopian-Americans across the United States. The Caucus serves the Ethiopian-American community as it continues to grow in population and influence, and supports the community's interests both here and in Ethiopia. For more information on please call (202) 225-2631 or visit [http:// honda.house.gov/ethiopia.shtml](http://honda.house.gov/ethiopia.shtml)*

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