

For immediate release
October 6, 2010
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Statement of Support

Release of Birtukan Mideksa

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As the founder and Chair of the Congressional Ethiopia and Ethiopian American Caucus, I would like to take this opportunity to express my full hearted support of Ethiopian leader Birtukan Mideksa's release today after close to two years of imprisonment.

Having advocated for Ms. Mideksa's release for several years, today's event is a significant step forward for the future of Ethiopian governance and serves as a strong message by the Ethiopian Government for furthering basic human rights in the country. As the leader of the opposition party Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ), Birtukan Midesksa was one of several opposition leaders who were imprisoned for life after the 2005 elections. After being pardoned in 2007, she was re-arrested in December 2008.

The fact that Ms. Mideksa continued to advance Ethiopia's fight for justice and democratic freedoms, even after 2005, is a testament to her dedicated public service and strong leadership for Ethiopian communities at home and abroad. Moreover, her perseverance while battling deteriorating health and separation from her child while in prison should not be underestimated. Ms. Mideksa has struggled to bring improvements to Ethiopia's civil society and it is my wish, along with many of my colleagues, that her work for greater peace and stability in Ethiopia is realized.

I hope that Ms. Mideksa's pardon will promote greater momentum for diplomacy and humanitarian efforts in her home country and strengthen relations between the United States and Ethiopia. I look forward to the working with Ms. Mideksa, the Ethiopian Government and related U.S. officials in the near future to ensure safety, security and stability in the Horn of Africa.

Sincerely,

s/ Michael M. Honda
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
Founder, Chair of Congressional Ethiopia and Ethiopian American Caucus

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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>