

NORM COLEMAN
MINNESOTA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2307

April 30, 2004

The Honorable
Aurelia E. Brazeal
United States Ambassador to Ethiopia
P.O. Box 1014
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
CHAIRMAN
PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

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FOREIGN RELATIONS
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COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

COMMITTEE ON
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Dear Ambassador Brazeal:

I write to express my gratitude for your service to the United States and my admiration for the reputation you have gained as an effective and accomplished ambassador.

My home state of Minnesota is home to 12,000 Ethiopian Oromo, over 3,000 Ethiopian Annuak, and smaller numbers of other Ethiopian ethnicities. I write to bring your attention to some serious issues that my constituents have raised with me.

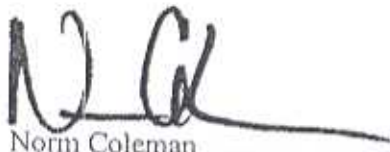
As you know, the Oromo are the majority ethnicity in Ethiopia, yet they appear to be discriminated against by the Ethiopian government. In particular, there are reports that the Ethiopian central government forced the Oromo regional government out of Addis Ababa, its traditional headquarters, and also of suspensions issued to hundreds of Oromo students by the University of Addis Ababa. I would greatly appreciate any information you might have concerning these issues.

Numerous members of my constituency in Minnesota have also contacted me with allegations of atrocities being committed in Gambella, including mass killings and the displacement of tens of thousands of refugees. It is my hope that the government of Ethiopia is fully investigating these matters and is working to pacify the area and bring the refugees safely home. I would greatly appreciate any information you have concerning the situation in Gambella and the status of the refugees in Pochella and elsewhere. While I realize the difficulties that your embassy faces concerning this matter, I would strongly urge you to do all that you can to determine the source of this conflict and to work with the Ethiopian government to prevent such violence and atrocities from ravaging and destabilizing Gambella again in the future.

I am grateful for Ethiopia's partnership in the global war on terror. These are unprecedented times, and America will continue to work with our allies to fight terrorism. It is my hope that our partnership with Ethiopia on counter terrorism issues will invite, rather than preclude, a serious dialogue on these critical human rights issues.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Coleman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Norm Coleman
United States Senate