

**FREE  
BIRTUKAN  
MIDEKSA**

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# FREE BIRTUKAN MIDEKSA! END POLITICAL REPRESSION IN ETHIOPIA!

Birtukan Mideksa, an opposition party leader, is serving a life sentence in Kaliti Prison in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She is a prisoner of conscience.

Birtukan Mideksa was arrested in November 2005 after the Coalition for Unity and Democracy party, of which she was a leader, contested disputed local and parliamentary elections. Subsequent demonstrations turned violent, resulting in the deaths of almost 200 people. She was charged with treason in one of several trials, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Local elders negotiated a pardon with the Ethiopian authorities, and Birtukan Mideksa and others were released in June 2007 after serving more than 18 months in prison. The terms of the pardon remain unclear.

In November 2008 she spoke about her pardon at a public meeting in Sweden. When she returned to Ethiopia, the authorities asked her to retract her statement; she refused and was rearrested in December 2008. The Ministry of Justice revoked her pardon and re-imposed her life sentence.

## SET HER FREE!

Send this postcard to the European Commissioner

*Image:* Demonstration calling for Birtukan Mideksa's release, Addis Ababa, 16 April 2009.  
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**Dear Commissioner,**

I am writing to express my concern regarding the life sentence imposed on Birtukan Mideksa following her rearrest in December 2008. Amnesty International considers her to be a prisoner of conscience.

Birtukan Mideksa was originally charged with treason and sentenced to life imprisonment in one of several trials which started in 2006, after the Coalition for Unity and Democracy party, of which she was a leader, contested disputed local and parliamentary elections and took part in demonstrations which turned violent.

Birtukan Mideksa and others were released in June 2007 after local elders negotiated a pardon with the Ethiopian authorities. In November 2008 she spoke at a public event in Sweden about the process which led to her pardon. On her return to Ethiopia, the authorities asked her to retract her statement; she refused and was rearrested, her pardon was revoked and her life sentence was re-imposed.

I urge you to use all diplomatic means to strongly encourage the government of Ethiopia to immediately and unconditionally release Birtukan Mideksa.

Yours sincerely,

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

Attach post  
stamp

**Karel de Gucht**

**European Commissioner for  
Humanitarian and Development Aid**

**Berlaymont 10 /165**

**1049 Brussels**

**Belgium**

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*Image:* Birtukan Mideksa, November 2008.

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