ACT NOW

1.WRITE TO THE EUROPEAN **COMMISSIONER FOR HUMANITARIAN** AND DEVELOPMENT AID:

- expressing concern about the life sentence re-imposed on Birtukan Mideksa following her re-arrest in December 2008;
- urging him to use all diplomatic means to strongly encourage the government of Ethiopia to immediately and unconditionally release Birtukan Mideksa.

European Commissioner for Humanitarian Belgium

2. WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR **BIRTUKAN MIDEKSA:**

Greetings from [name of town]. We are thinking of you and send you and your family our best regards.

Birtukan Mideksa C/O Ethiopian Women for Peace and Development P. O. Box 1318 Wheaton, MD 20915 USA

BIRTUKAN MIDEKSA ETHIOPIA

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PLEASE HELP BIRTUKAN MIDEKSA, ETHIOPIA

Birtukan Mideksa, an opposition party leader, is serving a life sentence in Kaliti Prison in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Amnesty International considers her a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression and association.

Birtukan Mideksa was previously arrested in November 2005 after the Coalition for Unity and Democracy party, of which she was a leader, disputed the results of local and parliamentary elections. Post-election demonstrations turned violent - security forces shot dead 187 people and wounded 765 others, while at least six police officers were also killed. Birtukan Mideksa was charged with treason among other charges, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Local elders working with detainees negotiated a process which led to a pardon by Ethiopian authorities. Birtukan Mideksa and others were released in June 2007 after serving more than 18 months in prison. The exact terms of the pardon remain unclear.



In November 2008 Birtukan Mideksa spoke at a public meeting in Sweden about her pardon and the process that led to her release. When she returned to Ethiopia, authorities asked her to retract her statement, failing which she would be re-arrested. She refused and was re-arrested in December 2008, when the Ministry of Justice revoked her pardon and re-imposed her life sentence.

Since a court ruling on a complaint she filed against the prison, Birtukan Mideksa has been allowed more regular visits with her immediate family, including her mother and her four-year-old daughter. However, she has reportedly had only intermittent access to legal representation to date.