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## **Ethiopia: New Anti-Terrorism Proclamation jeopardizes freedom of expression**

Reacting to the news that the Ethiopian Parliament has today passed an Anti-Terror Proclamation in Ethiopia, Amnesty International warns that the law could restrict freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and the right to fair trial, with serious implications in the run up to Ethiopia's 2010 parliamentary election. Although the Ethiopian government faces legitimate security concerns, any anti-terror legislation must be in accordance with international human rights standards. "The Government of Ethiopia has a history of stifling dissent and it is worrying that this law now risks further violating Ethiopia's obligations under international human rights law," said Erwin van der Borght, Amnesty International's Africa programme director. "The Anti-Terror Proclamation is expected to provide Ethiopian authorities with unnecessarily far reaching powers which could lead to further arbitrary arrests". Based on earlier drafts of the law previously made available to Amnesty International, "acts of terrorism" are vaguely defined and could encompass the legitimate expression of political dissent. The law defines "acts of terrorism" as including damage to property and disruption to any public service, for which an individual could be sentenced to 15 years in prison or even the death penalty. Thousands of protesters, political party leaders, journalists and human rights defenders were arrested and detained following the disputed November 2005 elections in which the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) retained political power.