

# GABEO

**GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS**  
***An Affiliate of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference***  
***"Celebrating 40 Years of Excellence in Public Service"***

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March 9, 2010

Honorable Barack H. Obama  
President of the United States of America  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington DC 20500

Honorable Hillary Clinton  
Secretary of State of the United States  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington DC 20520

Honorable Ban Ki-Moon  
Secretary General  
United Nations  
New York, New York 10017

Dear Pres. Obama, Madam Secretary Clinton and Secretary General Ki-Moon:

As the sitting president of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, hereinafter GABEO, I am soliciting your assistance to stand with GABEO, as well as, with many worldwide organizations and U.S. Senators and Representatives to secure the freedom of a long standing Ethiopian political prisoner, Judge Birtukan Mideksa.

Judge Mideksa is a 35-year old young Ethiopian woman whose only crime is speaking out against the Ethiopian government. Judge Mideksa undertook a courageous stance when as a sitting judge she ruled famously on behalf of the then Defense Minister of Ethiopia who was imprisoned for the various political reasons. Despite the Ethiopian government's intimidation of the Judge, she remained steadfast in her convictions, beliefs and interpretation of the law. The Ethiopian government ignored her ruling and elected to imprison the defendant. Judge Mideksa resigned her position as judge and joined the opposition party.

Judge Mideksa rose within the party and with her leadership and guidance the party became famous with its success with its opposition to the stolen election of 2005. The Ethiopian government was not pleased with the Judge's political path and often bombarded her with threats and intimidation. Finally the government stepped up its verbal intimidation of Judge Mideksa to imprisonment.

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She was first imprisoned in 2005 following the elections and then released with the assistance of international intervention from the various human rights organizations. The Judge was subsequently re-arrested on December 29, 2008 and sentenced to life in prison because she gave a speech in Sweden condemning the Ethiopian government for her first incarceration.

Judge Mideksa is a human being, a single mother and a citizen of Ethiopia. She has done nothing wrong other than to criticize a government that has suppressed the human rights of so many of its citizens. We cannot sit idly by and watch this young woman serve a harsh, unjust prison term because she spoke out against the Ethiopian government. This sends the wrong message to millions of youth in the world.

Therefore, we are in need of your assistance and ask that you do whatever that is in your power to help bring about the release of this courageous woman. This would send a positive message to so many countries who suppress its citizens simply because they are not in agreement with the ruling party.

GABEO thanks you for your kindest consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

REP. TYRONE BROOKS  
GABEO, President