

Reply by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the statement on May 21, 2010 by Mr. Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, on the fourth national elections in Ethiopia.

An Irresponsible Statement:-

The referred to statement amounts to a blatant interference in the internal affairs of Ethiopia, in particular on a matter of supreme importance to the peoples of our country. It represents a condescending and paternalistic attitude of one country towards another. Obviously, it is totally unacceptable to the Government and peoples of Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Government does not owe any third party any explanation or justification, above and beyond what is entailed by its obligation to international treaties to which it is a party, on how it conducts its affairs as a sovereign nation. What the Minister did was actually attempt to influence the election in Ethiopia by offering an excuse to the most hard-line parties in Ethiopia for behaving in a non-democratic manner, and in a manner not conducive to nurturing a climate of peace. The implication of this for a region such as ours must be obvious.

On the other hand, the Minister might find it useful for his attention to be drawn to the following with regard to the May 23, 2010 election:

"There has been a large turnout of the Ethiopian electorate in the general election. This huge turnout and the election as a whole which was characterized by a peaceful and calm atmosphere demonstrates the respect the Ethiopian peoples have for the democratic process." Mr. Berman (Chief Observer European Union Election Observation Mission to Ethiopia).

The same sentiment has been expressed by most of those within the international community interested in the Ethiopia election. In light of this, the statement can only be viewed as an initiative, based not on facts, but on an erroneous assessment, from thousands of miles away, of the situation in Ethiopia.

One thing is clear, if the minister's unfortunate statement indicates his Government's attitude towards Ethiopia it would not help the relations between our two countries.