

20 February 2007

‘Trial of prisoners including Members of Parliament-elect, human rights activists and journalists in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Brutal repression and massive unrest took place in the aftermath of the 2005 Ethiopian general elections, which the EU declared short of meeting international standards for free and democratic elections.

The trial of 76 prisoners, many elected MPs, journalists and human rights defenders, all of whom contested the outcome of the elections, began in May 2006. The 76 defendants in court refused to defend themselves, with the exception of three civil society activists, on the grounds that they did not expect to receive a fair trial. Charges of treason, ‘attempted genocide’ and other capital political offences could potentially lead to a death penalty sentence. The fairness of the trial, which resumes on 19 February, is of serious concern.

Can the Council report on the conditions of detention and share with Parliament the report of the observers, namely the British judge Michael Ellman, who have been following the trial on behalf of the European Commission and the Council?

Answer:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2007-0800&language=EN>