

Aiga Forum

28th May 2010


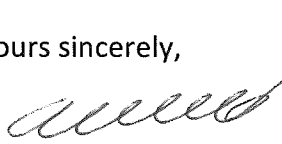
Dear Sir,

I was surprised and disturbed to read in your article of 26 May 2010 'HRW the global bandit and the EU-EOM symphony orchestra,' not merely that the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) was accused of offering money to a domestic observation mission, but further that this was reported without any attempt to seek a response from us. I now take the opportunity to refute the accusation allegedly made by the President of the Coalition and I trust that you will consider it consistent with your organ's journalistic integrity to publish my letter.

The EU EOM has had some contact with the Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Societies for Election Observation, since it is part of its mandate to assess the extent to which domestic observation groups are able to participate in the electoral process. As a result, a member of the EU EOM met with Coalition members on two occasions, to understand the scope of the Coalition's methodology and capacity.

The EU EOM has never offered money to any domestic observation mission. EU EOMs do not have any funding component. On some occasions EU EOMs are asked for funding, which are declined without exception. This was not the case with the Coalition, and beyond asking a standard question on how the Coalition funded its observation activities, neither the Coalition nor the EU EOM raised the issue of funding during the two national-level meetings between the missions.

Yours sincerely,



Tony Reis
Deputy Chief Observer
European Union Election Observation Mission to Ethiopia

CC. Yohannes Benti, Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Societies for Election Observation