

The Ethiopian News Week in Review at Ezega.com

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January 10, 2009 (FPRC) -- The leading stories this week was the death of Abate Balcha in Miami, Florida, USA. He was found dead on New Years Day in his apartment in Miami. By all accounts, the 39-year old Samuel Abate Balcha had no enemies. He was well loved by his friends & neighbors and was a hard worker. His killer has yet to be found. Now close friend Lazaro Diaz is making a plea to the community for help in bringing Balcha's killer to justice. "He didn't deserve this, for someone to take his life," said of Balcha.

"It's a mystery why anyone would take his life, he was pretty much loved by everybody," said Miami police detective Bosch. Detectives say Balcha was killed possibly on December 30th. His body found days later by a concerned neighbor, his apartment ransacked. Police say Balcha, who was born in Ethiopia and had lived in Miami for four years, was a civil engineer but was working as a truck driver for a delivery company while going to school at Miami-Dade College to learn English.

Another news that received much attention was the hunger strike by Ethiopia's leading opposition politician, Birtukan Mideksa. She is reportedly in her 10th day of a hunger strike after she was jailed for life on Dec. 29 following a dispute with the government. Birtukan Mideksa, 34, has been taking only juice and water and is being held in solitary confinement in a windowless 3-meter by 4-meter (10-foot by 13-foot) cell in Ethiopia's Kaliti prison, said her mother, Almaz Gebregziabhere, who visited her in prison yesterday. "I didn't recognize her because of how she's changed," said Gebregziabhere, 72, in an interview today at her home in Addis Ababa. Prison officials have banned all visitors except Gebregziabhere and Birtukan's 3-year-old daughter, Halle, from visiting her, Gebregziabhere said. Birtukan was re-arrested Dec. 29 after she rejected government demands that she make a public statement saying she had formally requested the original pardon.

Bereket Simon, an adviser to Zenawi, said he wasn't aware of Mideksa's hunger strike. "We have a prison system whereby we hold prisoners in a humane condition," Simon said. "This is a case where she has said that she didn't ask for pardon and the decision of the judiciary is being applied. At this point, I don't think it requires intervention by lawyers." Simon also said the government wasn't interested in potential mediation efforts by the independent group that negotiated Mideksa's initial release.

Also in the news was the new NGO law that banned any human rights or political activities by groups receiving more than 10% of their income from foreign sources. Many groups inside and outside the country reported that the law will criminalizes human rights activities by foreign NGOs, including campaigning for gender equality, children's rights, disabled persons' rights and conflict resolution. Reportedly, it will also impose disproportionate and criminal penalties for even minor administrative breaches of the law; establish a Charities and Societies Agency with broad discretionary power over civil society organizations; and allow government surveillance of, and interference in, the operation and management of civil society organizations. The law has been criticized by western governments and organizations, including the US Department of State and Amnesty International.

At Ezega Jobs, a number of new vacancies were posted. Vacancy ads that received the most attention were “Data Entry & Testing” posted by Ezega.com; “National Project: Accountant/Administrator” posted by Ethiopian Institution of Agricultural Research; “Assistant Manager IT Service (Mekele)” posted by Sur Construction Plc; “Office Manager” posted by German Technical Cooperation, GTZ; and “Senior Auditor” posted by Ethiopian Airports Enterprise. For more information on these and other jobs, please visit <http://www.ezega.com/index.aspx> .

At Ezega Real Estate, several homes for sale and rent were posted. Most viewed posts were “G+1 home with semi-basement” in Addis Ababa for ETB 2109169; “Modern, big villa for sale” in Addis Ababa for ETB 6,000,000; “1,200 square meter land” for sale in Bole, Addis Ababa for 8,000,000, “2 BR 1B House for rent” in Addis Ababa for ETB 5,000; and “Villa for sale” in Addis Ababa for ETB 2,000,000. For more information on these and other properties, please visit <http://www.ezega.com/RealEstate/Index.aspx> .

For detailed information on these and other posts at Ezega.com, Ethiopia’s leading online source for News, Jobs, Real Estate, Classifieds, Entertainment and Social Networking, please visit <http://www.Ezega.com>.

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