

**TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or Institutional letterhead to express shock at the reported death of imprisoned writer Fessehaye Yohannes.**

9 February 2007

His Excellency Isaias Aferwerki  
President  
State of Eritrea  
Asmara, Eritrea

Excellency,

I wish to add my name to this appeal from PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the international writers' organization, International PEN. PEN Canada is writing to express shock at news of the alleged death of writer and Honorary Member **Fessehaye "Joshua" Yohannes**.

According to information from credible sources in Eritrea, poet and playwright Fessehaye "Joshua" Yohannes, who was a journalist with the now-banned weekly *Setit*, died in detention on 11 January 2007. Fessehaye was paralysed in one hand and had been walking with difficulty for years. He reportedly succumbed to the extremely harsh conditions in which he had been held since his arrest in September 2001.

Last year, a report also circulated about the death in prison of three other independent journalists: **Medhane Haile, Said Abdelkader** and **Yusuf Mohamed Ali**.

**PEN Canada is seriously concerned by this news. If true, it would constitute an inexcusable tragedy. We therefore call on you to prove that Fessehaye Yohannes did not die; or, that if he did, that his body be given to his family so that they can provide him with a proper burial. PEN Canada also urges you to prove that Medhane Haile, Said Abdelkader and Yusuf Mohamed Ali are alive. We also ask that the other journalists in prison be released immediately and unconditionally. While they remain behind bars, PEN Canada demands that they be treated humanely and have regular access to food and to any needed medical care.**

Sincerely,

[Your name and address]

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Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations  
800 Second Avenue, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York NY 10017

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Please send copies of your appeal to the following Canadian authorities:

The Hon. Peter MacKay  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Lester B. Pearson Building, Room A-10  
125 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2  
Fax: (613) 996 3443  
E-mail: peter.mackay@international.gc.ca

The Canadian Embassy to Eritrea  
c/o The Canadian High Commission  
P.O. Box 1013, 00621  
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