



**Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

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# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Human Rights of Oromo People Spotlighted in Letter to Secretary of State**

**Washington, D.C. - July 6, 2011:** Personal testimony of Oromo members of Lutheran churches in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) prompted a letter from the Rev. Richard H. Graham, bishop of the Metro D.C. Synod, to the Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State. The letter, written June 16, 2011, expresses concern for the well-being of the Oromo people and requests that all developmental and military aid to the Government of Ethiopia be tied to that government's compliance with internationally-recognized human rights agreements.

Members of the Metro D.C. Synod heard from persons in the synod's youngest congregation, the Oromo Evangelical Church of Washington DC, and from a new worshipping community in its midst, the Oromo Christian Fellowship, during its 2011 Synod Assembly in Leesburg, Virg. In a legislative portion of the gathering, the synod adopted a resolution entitled "Human Rights Violations against Oromo People." The well-being of the Oromo people is its focus along with the request for developmental and military aid to the government of Ethiopia being tied to compliance with internationally-recognized human rights agreements, including through the letter to Secretary Clinton, and encouragement for prayer among the membership.

Noting Secretary Clinton's "special attention to individuals and groups who are being exploited, marginalized and oppressed," Bishop Graham stated "confident hope" for her "attention to the present campaign that is being waged against the Oromo people."

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A complete copy of the letter sent by Bishop Graham is available at  
<http://www.metrodcelca.org/about-us/staff/statements-from-bishop-graham/>.

The full text of "Human Rights Violations against Oromo People" is available at  
<http://www.metrodcelca.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/11synasmweboromo.pdf>.

### **About the ELCA Metro D.C. Synod**

*The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod is one of the 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), made up of 78 congregations and 33,680 baptized members. Synod congregations are located in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Northern Virginia, plus an ELCA congregation in Bermuda. Two congregations are older than the United States of America itself; our*

*youngest joined the ELCA in 2011. In addition to English, members worship in Korean, Norwegian, Oromo (Ethiopian) and Spanish among many languages. We maintain ties with El Salvador, Namibia and Slovakia through the ELCA Companion Synod program.*

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