
ECDC NEWS

Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.

901 S. Highland Street. Arlington, Virginia 22204

Phone: (703) 685-0510 ● Fax: (703) 685-0529 ● E-mail: info@ecdccinternational.org ● Web Site: www.ecdccinternational.org

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 25, 2010

ECDC President Expresses Condolences Following Crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight

As Lebanese aviation and military personnel began searching the Mediterranean sea for possible survivors of an Ethiopian Airlines crash on January 25, ECDC President Tsehaye Teferra expressed profound sorrow and condolences to the carrier's president and to the families and friends of those who perished in the disaster.

"As you seek to provide solace to the grieving families of those who died in the crash and conduct investigations into its causes," Tsehaye wrote in a letter to Ethiopian Airlines President Girma Wake, "know that you have the support and best wishes of those of us in the Ethiopian Diaspora who have so frequently used—and highly valued—the services you provide."

Lebanese President Michel Suleiman declared a day of mourning following the crash as the prime minister, Saad al-Hariri, went to the airport to meet distraught relatives.

It later became clear that all 90 people on Flight 409 perished. Eyewitnesses reported seeing "a ball of fire" plunging into the sea. The plane had taken off from Beirut's Rafik Hariri airport and was heading to the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa.

Ethiopian Airlines has a far better reputation for safety than many other African airlines, according to a report in the Guardian newspaper in London, with only two notable crashes in the past 20-plus years, one of which was caused by a hijacking.

Among the 83 passengers and seven crew listed as being on the plane were 54 Lebanese nationals, 22 Ethiopians, one Iraqi, one Syrian, one Canadian and one Russian, two Britons and the French ambassador's wife, Marla Pietton.

-#-