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THE CROWN COUNCIL OF ETHIOPIA

Crown Council Statement on the Passing of His Majesty King Kigeli V, of Rwanda

November 7, 2016 / 28 ጥቅምት 2009

*By His Imperial Highness Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie, President of
The Crown Council of Ethiopia*

We wish to acknowledge the profound sadness of the Members of the Crown Council of Ethiopia, and particularly the President of the Council, at the passing of His Majesty King Kigeli V Ndahindurwa, 80, the King (Mwami) of Rwanda, in the Washington, DC, area on October 16, 2016 (6 ጥቅምት 2009). His Majesty was a good and loyal friend to Ethiopia, and to the Imperial Family.

Her Imperial Highness Princess Saba Kebede and I were moved and honored to be able to attend the High Requiem Mass held for His Majesty at St. Athanasius Church, in Vienna, Virginia, near Washington, DC, on October 31, 2016, to be able to say our farewells to this courageous monarch and true father of all the Rwandan Peoples. We send our condolences and sorrow to the People, Royal Family, and Government of Rwanda.

We could not permit His Majesty's passing to go without tribute being paid to the suffering he endured in exile, and the sadness which haunted him until his death caused by the genocide of 1994 and later. It was His Majesty who had endeavored to warn the international community — particularly the United Nations and the United States of America — about the coming storm which King Kigeli knew was about to engulf his People.

His Majesty, who had been forced unlawfully from his country in 1961, had spent his early years in exile without resources, but nonetheless campaigning for the world to be aware of the tragedy which was incubating in his beloved country.

He never ceased to campaign for the welfare of Rwandans. But he also saw it as his duty to keep the thousand-year-old Rwandan Crown alive, and he never relinquished the Throne. He recognized that he was holding the Crown in trust for the next Monarch of Rwanda, who would be chosen by the Rwandan People and their Traditional System of Succession when the time was appropriate.

Those two great legacies — his attempt to prevent the genocide which he believed was coming, and his successful bid to keep the Crown alive — are testimony to this great King, who was prevented from serving Rwanda and Africa as fully as he sought to do. It was only this year that the Crown of Ethiopia declared His Majesty a Ras in the Ethiopian aristocratic realm. He had already been proclaimed a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Queen of Sheba, both honors which he proudly acknowledged.

He remained, until his death, always available to help where he could the People of Rwanda, and the fact that he died without wealth or privilege testified to his Christian belief that he could not prosper while his People suffered.

May we wish a thousand years more life to the Crown of Rwanda which he saved. May we wish a thousand more years for His Majesty King Kigeli V in the hearts and minds of the Rwandan People.