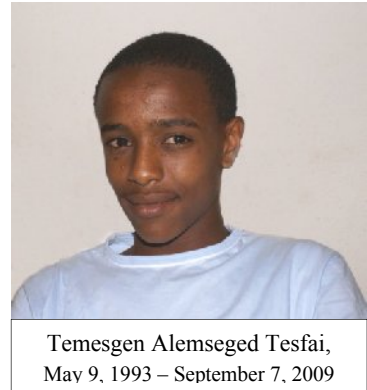


TEMESGEN ALEMSEGED TESFAI, RIP

Our son, Temesgen, the joy and centre of our lives, left us on the evening of the 7th of September 2009. He died of stab wounds inflicted on him outside his school compound by youths with whom, apparently, he had had no previous quarrel. He was buried at Addi Arkai on 9th September 2009, in the presence of thousands of grieving well-wishers. He was 16 years old.



The circumstances of his death are under police investigation. We will, therefore, refrain from commenting on them.

Temesgen was an intelligent, witty and playful boy who loved life, books, basketball and music. His capacity to give back the love showered upon him as an only child was enormous. His ability to maintain the balance between being “Mummy’s Boy” and avoiding the fate of the “spoiled child” was all his own. He was his father’s companion, friend and consolation.

The outpour of sympathy and grief coming to us from inside Eritrea and all corners of the world is overwhelming and profoundly touching. It has helped soothe the immediate pain of sudden loss and deprivation and decreased the potential damage of the initial shock to our spirit.

We will miss this irreplaceable child of love, laughter, and great promise. The healing process will, therefore, be long and painful. But the broader question is not confined to the healing of two bereaved parents. Our son’s tragic death has opened the opportunity for our society to pause and look deeper into itself; to re-examine and reassess the condition of our youth – their hopes and aspirations, their energy and accomplishments and their disappointments and frustrations. These issues need to be addressed at the national level, so that our streets stay safe, our cultural and moral values remain intact and no parent suffers the deep grief and hurt that we now have to live with.

We would like to express our thanks and deep gratitude for the astonishingly broad and unreserved sorrow and good-will expressed to us upon the loss of Temesgen. “People are not merely sympathizing,” one of our sisters assured us, “this is empathy, the like of which I have never witnessed.” She was right. Thousands have put themselves in our shoes to grieve along with us in a manner rivaling our own. It has helped us in more ways than anyone can imagine. It has also assured us that our son’s tragic death will not have been in vain.

Thank you all for seeing us through these difficult moments.

His parents,
Alemseged Tesfai and Abrehet Haile