

Journalist Reeyot: Prisoner of conscience continues in defiance to TPLF/EPDRF prison.

By Ewnetu Sime |



The recent article posted on several websites entitled "metaram yemgebaw manew" (መታረም የሚገባው ማኑዋ) by Journalist Reeyot Alemu caught my eye <http://www.abugidainfo.com/amharic/index.php/16788>.

Reeyot is a winner of the 2013 UNESCO-Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. She is one of the many political conscience prisoners in Ethiopia. Based the regime so called anti-Terrorist Law which is designed to suppress free speech and fundamental democracy rights of the Ethiopian people, she has been thrown to jail. She was regarded as a "terrorist" and jailed in the infamous prison of Kaliti, initially sentenced to twelve years later reduced to five years. Her detention is the result of judicial proceedings that are clearly unfair. Since her detention the Ethiopians civic organizations and other humanitarian organization called for her and other prisoner of conscience to immediate and unconditionally release. To this date the ruling party TPLF/EPDRF regime refused to release her.

We have read dozens of articles about political prisoners who had experienced the terror, torture, and the solitary confinement in Mekelawi and Kailti prisons. Both prisons have a notorious reputation when it comes to dealing with political detainees. The prisoners are subject to ruthless TPLF interrogator with harsh and life threatening condition. She was not allowed to speak to her lawyer to contest the charge against her, and to see or speak to her family members or friends for extended time. She stated that all her rights were abused. It is clear that she doesn't want to reveal to the readers all brutality used by the police interrogators, but she indicated a hint. She - said the interrogator slapped her on her face and bangs her head to prison wall to shake her down. You may guess what is happening next.

Based on her article it appears that she is at the end of her prison term. The authorities demanded her to sign a paper entitled "ተመክሮ". Judging from title it might contains a broad array of restrictions on her rights and movements, , or statutory declaration accepting the accusation. Knowing the ruling party behavior, it is one of the oppressive tactics to dehumanizing and degrading political prisoners. Nevertheless, whatever the intent of the paper is, she decided not sign "ተመክሮ".

Reeyot's message has been the same, fight back. She is determined to defend the honorable causes of justice, equal rights, free speech and press for all Ethiopians. She is paying the sacrifice for what she believes. With her fight, she has demonstrated resisting pressure from jailers to accept any conditions that affect her to live as free person is important enough to pay even more price. As saying goes "the truth shall set you free". She is not looking for special favor or a gesture of good will. She flatly refused to accept a release by trading-off between her principle and "so called ተመክሮ". The jailers made her health condition worse by not allowing her to have hospital treatment. Our political process has become so messed up that no legendary figure available to look for inspiration. Reeyot is one of crusader of free press freedom and an advocate of social justice for all Ethiopians.

TPLF/EPDRF's crimes on Reeyout and Ethiopian people are ruthless. The regime is similar to Stalin, Pol Pot and other dictators in the world. They have been demonstrating merciless behavior to its own people the past 22 years. Fair minded people have to fight systematically for replacement of this tyrant. As the fight continues, one would hope things often changes for better. After all who would have

imagined that the Arab spring would oust their dictators? This will happen in Ethiopia too. Reeyot's principle and her story set an example to peaceful movement in recent Ethiopia history. She is one of an ordinary citizen that refused to admit crime which she never committed. All admired her guts and courage of conviction in battling her breast cancer as well as the complete idiotic jailers' ill treatments. She decided to fight rather than quietly live in servitude.

No one naively believes that TPLF/EPDRF's will change its behaviors. We have no option other than fighting back like Reeyot. As saying goes "No matter how epically monstrous TPLF/EPDRF becomes, the struggle does not end with them to get freedom. It only begins with them".