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THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA
CONTINUES TO WORSEN

As the United Nations Human Rights commission prepares to evaluate and assess the records of the regime in Ethiopia this same repressive regime has been busy

- Arresting journalists;
- Beating up bloggers;
- Engaging in land grab activities and thereby removing farmers from their lands and forcefully resettling them elsewhere;
- Killing students who protested peacefully;
- Murdering people in Gondar who said No to the expropriation of their lands and houses;
- Trafficking children in an ill-disguised scam and profitable operation called adoption;
- Trafficking young girls to the Middle East unto domestic slavery;
- Keeping more than 40,000 dissenters behind bars and in labor camps;
- Repressing (Gambella, the Ogaden, etc) and engaging in ethnic cleansing of Amharas;
- Fanning ethnic and regional conflict between the people;
- Engaging in massive corruption involving billions;
- Trampling on due process of law and the elementary notions of democracy;
- Forcing citizens into exile;
- Collaborating with Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti to harass and hurt refugees;
- Condoning child prostitution, genital mutilation, and preteen marriages and violating the rights of women and children as a whole.

Torture is systematic and brutal. Ethnic discrimination is regime policy and choice. Dissidents are kept in notorious prisons like Kaliti, Zwai, Dedesa and Bir Sheleko not to mention secret/ghost prisons which are not accessible to foreign observers. The Addis Abeba regime has issued a decree against NGO and charity organizations making their work almost impossible. A sweeping and convenient law called a law against terrorism has been the justifying ground for

the arrest and condemnation of critical journalists, writers and poets. Books are banned but not openly though effectively. Several independent journalists are in prison accused as terrorists because of their critical articles. The regime has banned opposition radios (most are jammed), blocked several web sites claiming political and security reasons and even gone as far kidnapping dissidents from neighboring countries. Several opposition organizations are deemed illegal and their leaders and members denied the chance to have legal existence in their own country. And yet the regime enjoys extensive support from the West because it is considered an ally in the so called war against Terror. In Somalia, where the regime has sent troops, it has been accused of atrocities.

The human rights record of the TPLF/EPRDF is dismal and worsening by the month. It has spent millions of dollars on lobbyists and so called human rights organizations that deny its violations and spin lies and false reports. To dupe others, it has set up its own human rights commission (the so called Inba Astebacki Committee or "Tears Wiping Away Committee" without dealing with the issue of why the people are weeping in the first place), which is a dead body by all accounts.

No freedom of the press and association. Complete totalitarian control of the civic society and the banning and dissolution of civic associations. Forcing people to make contributions to the regime's pet projects ranging from building a dam to helping the so called Meles Zenawi Foundation. Economic injustice against the people with no wage increment for years in the face of 35% inflation, full control of the economy by State controlled companies, spreading famine and poverty. Child labor, the breakup of the health system, the bankruptcy of the education system all define the existing regime. A climate of fear and the reality of cruel repression exists. The country is on the brink of disaster in all aspects. The primary need for democratic governance and the respect of human rights is absent. The violation of human rights knows no bounds and the regime has arrogantly refused to give any explanation on the fate of the thousands of political prisoners, on that of the disappeared since 1991, on the conditions of its jails, prisons and labor camps, its routine trampling on due process and the rule of law.

The UN Commission on Human Rights should rise to the occasion and must condemn the regime for its illegality and violations.

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