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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

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EPRDF AND THE ALMOST HIDDEN FAMINE

As a concerned world rushes to bring help to millions of famine victims in the Horn of Africa, the brutal regime of Meles Zenawi, which is more to blame than the drought for the dire situation, has opted to keep silent or to minimize the impact of the tragedy in Ethiopia. Previous regimes in Ethiopia had also opted for hiding devastating famines (1973, 1984) and caused hundreds of thousands of unwarranted deaths.

Despite the attempt by the Meles regime and its acolytes to minimize the famine and claim it is present only in “remote border areas and refugee camps”, the famine spreading like an epidemic and is presently seriously affecting the regions of Tigray, the Afar, and Amhara. Somali, Borena, Guji, Burji and Geleb peoples and region. Many millions (at least five million) are in need of urgent help and are being endangered by the cruel regime’s attempt to cling to its fiction of economic development and surplus grain production. Actually, the prevailing famine testifies to the bankrupt agricultural policies of the regime, its corruption (the sale of stored grain to a foreign country), the marginalization and impoverishment of the peasantry, the sale of land the size of Belgium to foreign firms and the chasing off farmers from their lands, etc...are more responsible for the famine than the almost proverbial drought. Add to this the regime’s bloody anti insurgency campaign in the Ogaden where the famine has been used for political and military ends. Experience (1984) has also proved that the ruling front is known for massively swindling food aid (and also using it for political purposes) and it should not be trusted this time around with money and food aid. It should be noted that the Meles regime has been aided and supported by the USA and the European Union despite its totalitarian policies, massive repression and gross violations of human rights.

The EPRP condemns the Meles regime for exposing our people to this catastrophe once again and for trying to cover it up in various ways. It calls on the international bodies to help the famine victims in the Horn of Africa but to make sure the vultures in power do not lay their hands on the food aid. The grain stored for emergency situation like the

present famine has been depleted, sold, used up by the regime. In Ethiopia, many more people than in Kenya and Somalia are starving (consider also that inflation in July shot up to 39% and food prices increased by more than 41%) but the silence is deafening. Let us break the silence, condemn the cruel regime and effectively and directly help the famine victims.

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