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PRESS RELEASE

ON THE WORSENING SITUATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

More than 90,000 people have fled from war torn Mogadishu. Reliable reports indicate also that the Meles Zenawi regime is seriously preparing for war against Eritrea. In the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, a scorched earth anti guerrilla campaign is wreaking havoc, starvation and massive displacement. Almost everything is askew in the Horn of Africa and most of the blame for this can be brought to the door of the Meles Zenawi regime.

The invasion of Somalia has compounded the problems of the region rather the stabilizing it. The Somali transitional government, whose Prime Minister Ali Gedi had to resign recently, is an unpopular and wobbling "government". The president, Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf, is propped up by the troops of Meles Zenawi and has proved incapable of stabilizing the situation in the country. The much trumpeted rout of the Islamic Courts militia has proved illusory and the armed resistance of the Shabab militia is gaining ground. The troops of Meles Zenawi can neither leave nor stay safely in Somalia. Though a problem by itself, the Meles invasion of Somalia has also worsened the situation in the Ogaden where the war between the troops of Meles and the ONLF guerrillas has intensified. Various observers have condemned the Meles regime for violating the human rights of the people in the area.

It is apparent now that the invasion of Somalia has worsened the overall situation in the Horn region and further intensified the proxy war between the Meles regime and Eritrea. The so called war on terror has fertilized the area for more terror and violence. In the meantime, the repressive regime in Ethiopia is continuing with its gross violation of human rights, with massacres and brutalities. The regime is enjoying the full support of Washington which considers it as an ally in its war against terrorism. The impending war with Eritrea is also a harbinger of more disaster and whatever the results it will lead

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to no solution vis a vis the basic woes and demands of the people in the region as a whole. Stability and peace in the region depend on democratization in Ethiopia and the other countries. Where good governance is absent and democracy scarce, the grave ills and problems of the country will find no solution. Hence, the repressive regime in Ethiopia lies at the source of the aggravation of the problems of the Horn.

The EPRP calls for the immediate withdrawal of the troops of Meles from Somalia. It demands an end to the repression in the Ogaden region where even children are exposed to starvation and death. The West should stop supporting the brutal regime under whatever pretext or justification. More importantly, the anti democratic rule of the Meles regime should be condemned for all its crimes against the Ethiopian people. The people of the Horn have no enmity among themselves and can live peacefully if only the war mongers could leave them alone.

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