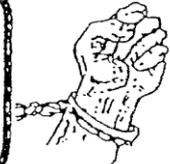




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



APRIL 28/2014

REGIME ARRESTS BLOGGERS AND JOURNALISTS

The repressive regime in Addis Abeba, which is expecting a morale-boosting visit from John Kerry, has arrested six bloggers (known as Zone 9 bloggers) and three journalists for their dissent against the regime.

This is actually not news coming from Ethiopia where scores of journalists have been jailed on trumped up terrorism charges, dozens forced into exile, tortured and disappeared. The regime has been called one of the worst predators of the free press and a gross violator of human rights. The Zone 9 bloggers had been harassed before by the regime's security agents and have now been rounded up and taken to the Maekleawi (central) jail where torture is the usual rite of passage. The six arrested are: Befekadu Hailu, Atnaf Berahane, Natnael Feleke, Mahlet Fantahun, Zelalem Kibret, and Abel Wabela. Tesfalem Weldeyes, a freelance journalist, was also arrested during the operation. Edom Kassaye, female, a second freelance journalist, was arrested on April 26. Reports confirm that The police searched the bloggers and journalists' offices and homes, and confiscated private laptops and literature. On April 26, another journalist, Asmamaw Hailegeorgis of Addis Guday newspaper, was also arrested and is reportedly detained in Maekelawi. The jailed have been denied visits by relatives.

The repressive regime in Addis Abeba enjoys the full support of the USA and the West, gets Chinese support to jam web sites and radios, has its security personnel trained by Britain and others and has no ground for complaint. Unhindered by any serious criticism it has continued to repress the people of Ethiopia to no end. Thousands have been removed from their fertile traditional land and resettled by force in faraway arid areas. The confiscated land has been handed over to China, India and Arab countries. In the near distance famine looms in this hapless country that has more than 40,000 political prisoners by one recent estimate.

SOCEPP has for the last 19 years documented extensively the human rights violations of the regime in Ethiopia. Complaints and calls have fallen on deaf ears. The regime is shielded from serious pressure because it is considered a strategic ally in the region for the so called anti-terror war. What a shame on the USA and the West!

SOCEPP calls for the immediate release of the six bloggers, three journalists and all the political prisoners.

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE
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