



May 3, 2014

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

As the world observes Press Freedom Day the situation in Ethiopia clearly shows that there is little to celebrate and that freedom of the press has been trampled more in the past year 2013. A week ago the regime in Addis Abeba arrested nine bloggers and three journalists to add to its very long list of repression against journalists and the freedom of the press.

As elsewhere, it resorts to charges of subversion and terrorism to jail and sentence to long prison terms journalists who dared and dare to report and write objectively. This is facilitated by its sweeping law that practically equates any and all criticism and dissent with terrorism. The repression against the free press is active not only in Ethiopia but in the Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia and other African countries but few can compare with the Ethiopian reality of relentless repression and muzzling. The anti-terrorism law has been invoked to imprison free journalists to long years of prison alleging that they have engaged in terrorism and subversion. The regime in Ethiopia has jammed radios and web sites up to now using the same pretext and law.

Those who back this repressive and regime and still pretend that they stand for human rights and democracy have failed to strongly criticize the gross violations of human rights in the country. Not any serious objection to the ongoing repression of the free press. The recent visit of John Kerry to Addis Abeba has highlighted this drastic and shameful silence or collaboration with the regime considered as an ally in the region. The crimes of the regime vis a vis the freedom of the press can be summarized as follows:

- A vicious campaign against independent journalists and newspapers;
- The jailing of journalists on trumped up charges;
- Underhanded pressure on journalists and their forced exile to foreign countries;
- Unacknowledged censorship'
- Substitution of the free journals by satellite ones that claim to be free but serve the regime to the end;
- Arrest, torture and jailing of free journalists.

A free and democratic country need a free press but this not the reality in Ethiopia. It is not the reality in Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and the Sudan too. An intense struggle has to be waged still.

Release all detained journalists in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa!

A free press for free countries!

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE
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