

Meles's Regime Persistently Violates Sidama People's Fundamental Rights

Press Release by United Sidama Parties for Freedom and Justice, (USPFJ)

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From the very beginning, the TPLF/EPRDF Meles's regime remained persistently & systematically violating Sidama people's fundamental rights to political, economic and socio-cultural freedom and liberty. The relative autonomy that is nominally granted to others Ethiopian nations and nationalities such as regional self administration remains conspicuously contentious in Sidama land since the regime assumed power by militarily toppling Mengistu Hailmariam's military junta in June 1991.

Meles's regime systematically blocks all Sidama linked development activities benefiting the society whether the programs are initiated by the Sidamas or supported by the international NGO such as Irish Aid are currently dismantled. Some of the remaining projects serve the agendas of politicians including Sidama radio that was established for non-political community services by Irish Aid in 1997/8 is currently being used by the Zone and Regional politicians to harass, intimidate and mislead Sidama people.

The Irish Aid development projects that become the most vibrant and successful grass root development program in the Sidama were systematically dismantled through malicious plots of regime's officials involving federal ministers such as Dr Kassu Elala & PM Meles Zenawi and who at times warned an Irish Embassy Diplomats by advising them not to support Sidama developments initiatives. Mr Zenawi further urged the Diplomats to divert the said aid to Tigray region- the order which was immediately materialized. In 1993/4 Meles's regime similarly ordered the Swedish government's aid projects that is meant to be implemented in Sidama's Arbegona district on forestry work to stop the project that was subsequently diverted to Tigray region once again. Despite the presence of countless numbers of international and government sponsored NGOs in Tigray region, Meles and his regime took away a single loaf of bread from the hands of Sidamas when the regime disallowed the only NGOs operating in Sidama region. As a result of the above and others economic injustices, Sidamas are exposed to a green famine orchestrated by this very regime for the first time in its history.

Others Ethiopians are also left with no option apart from putting up with gross violations of their fundamental rights. Regime's Kangaroo courts remain the voice of the regime where hundreds of civilians receive erroneous sentences for exercising their rights to democratic principles. Journalists and opposing politicians are sentenced to several years in prison for expressing their fundamental rights and for being members of opposition parties. Muslim communities are regarded terrorists for refusing to accept the regime installed leaders. Sidama, Oromo, Ogadenia, Afar, Gambela, Amhara and others numerous became targets of regime's divide and rule tactics making civilians their actions' prime victims. Killings, disappearances and imprisonments of innocents are rampant. Poverty and deprivation remains rife while regime's business companies are flourishing at the expense of over 98% of 85 million Ethiopians. EPRDF's regime uproots peoples from their lands to lease them to a transnational companies linked to the regime's businesses companies in one way or another <http://www.ginbot7.org/effort-and-the-tplf-business-empire/>.

Currently the Sidamas are being harassed, intimidated, tortured, terrorized, arrested and killed by the regime's forces attempting to impose its rule over them through its cadres. On the 1st of August, 2012, about 8 Sidama people in Gugumaa and 15 in Hawasa area including 1 vocal sidama were detained in allegation of coordinating Sidama people to claim their rights to regional self administration; the allegation he and others believed a100%.

Currently the regime militarized Sidama zone attempting to stifle Sidama people's unanimous movements whose objective is asserting their regional rights. As we write this press release, Sidama civilians are being hunted down & terrorized by the regime's assassins circulating in entire Sidama region whose aims are mass murdering- as they did on May 24, 2002 at Loqqe village (out skirt of Hawassa) when they mercilessly slaughtered about 100 Sidama civilians wounding over two hundred others.

Therefore, USPFJ:-

1. Demands EPRDF's regime to urgently remove its forces from Sidama region.
2. Urges EPRDF's regime to respond to Sidama people's constitutional quests for regional self administration without causing further blood shade.
3. Urges the regime to stop interfering with development activities of the Sidama region and stop using Sidama community radio as its political tool.
4. Demands EPRDF's regime to stop orchestrating poverty and deprivation in Sidama.
5. Urges EPRDF's regime to unconditionally stop harassing, intimidating, torturing and arresting Sidama civilians, business personnel and University students who are peacefully and constitutionally claiming their rights & release all arrested Sidamas.
6. Urges the regime to release all journalists and others civilians including Eskinder Nega who are unlawfully sentenced; stop incriminating political dissents.
7. Urges EPRDF's regime to stop harassing Ethiopian Muslim community that are claiming their basic rights by letting them to choose their own leaders!
8. Urges EPRDF's regime to stop killing, arresting and intimidating Oromos, Ogadenia, Gambellas, Gedeos and Burjis and others without further delay!!
9. Demands EPRDF's regime to bring those who are responsible for killing of Sidama civilians & others to independent justice.
10. Urges all Ethiopians to claim their constitutional rights defying regimes intimidations, harassments, arrests and violence to ascertain people's God given rights.
11. Urges AI, HWR, EU, OAU and Western and others global powers to stand on the principles of protecting civilians whose rights are continually crushed by the EPRDF's regime & publicly condemn regime's undemocratic and illegal actions against citizens.
12. Presently Ethiopia is on a cross road needing sensitive approach to transition if PM is unable to assume his role; USPFJ urges the entire global communities to stand with all democracy cherishing Ethiopians and opposition groups to create just and all inclusive Ethiopia's transition where all feels part of without further bloodshed.
13. Urges EPRDF's regime to facilitate the necessary preconditions to affect smooth & bloodless transition of power to people where regime's members as others Ethiopians can be a part of!

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