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RADIO AND INTERNET ACCES STILL DENIED IN ETHIOPIA

The regime in Ethiopia has once again resorted to deception by declaring that no jamming of opposition radio stations and web sites exist. A recent such argument by a high government official has reportedly pointed to the fact that one previously jammed TV and radio station is freely accessible in Ethiopia.

Though it is true that those with satellite dishes can watch the previously banned TV station which has been unjammed now, it is absolutely false that the restrictions against other radio stations and web sites have been lifted. Access to the internet and radio stations remains denied. Thus very many web sites (like Debteraw, Assimba, Ethiolion, EPRP.com, Socepp (a human rights organization), etc. are not accessible for reasons that are termed security and stability concerns by the regime itself. Radio stations like Finote Democracy have been jammed for the last five years at least. The regime in Addis Abeba has thus contravened its own Constitution and international laws on freedom of expression, speech, of the media and more.

Censorship is officially nonexistent in Ethiopia but the regime has imposed stifling censorship in other ways:

1. It owns most of the printing houses;
2. It threatens publishers willing to print books critical of the regime;
3. If such books get published it sends its security agents to go to book stores and distributors to threaten them to drop/reject that particular book.

And yet some critical books do manage to appear. However, several writers, poets and journalists' are blacklisted by the regime. This is the reality.

That is why the EPRP, whose web site and radio are restricted, calls on all international advocates of human rights to raise their voices against this repressive action. Britain, the USA and all others who back the repressive regime in various ways are expected to raise their voices to condemn the jamming and censorship actions of the regime in Addis Abeba.

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