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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

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CONDEMN THE BRUTAL EXTORTION
OF THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE

It is outright extortion and daylight robbery and fleecing. The brutal Meles Zenawi regime has used the building of the so called Millennium Dam on the Nile as a cover to bleed the people of Ethiopia for more cash at the very time they had to endure a 25% inflation and price rise on food prices.

At issue is not whether the dam to be built at 80 billion Birr (4.7 billion US dollars) is worth the effort or not. At issue is not even the hue and cry by Egypt that greedily wants almost most of the water of the Nile for itself. The core of the problem is that Ethiopia has not yet enjoyed adequate and regular electric supply after the building of four major dams (Tana Beles, Tekezie, Gilgel Gibe 1 and 2) and the near completion of Gilgel Gibe III. The regime is selling power to neighboring countries and pocketing the money into its corrupt coffers. The issue with the new dam to be built on the Nile is that it costs 80 billion Birr and the people are being forced to pay for it. The same people that are suffering under heavy inflation and a 25% rise in the price of basic necessities, a 40% rise in the rate of electric power and who are forced to bear a recent increase in the price of petrol. Moreover, some 12 million Ethiopians still depend on food aid from outside and the majority of Ethiopians earn less than US \$2 per day.

The callous regime has copied its totalitarian predecessor and declared all forced payments as voluntary contributions. It is daylight robbery par excellence. All civil servants are forced to pay their month's salary. Students have been ordered to pay up or leave school. In Woldiya, Wollo, students have already been told their quota: tenth grade students have to pay forty Birr, all 7th grade students 10 Birr and all second grade students 2 Birr. The food budget of even prisoners has been slashed and the official media ordered to present this as the prisoners' voluntary contribution for the dam. The State appointed head of the Orthodox Church has ordered all churches to buy at least

30 million Birr worth of bond to finance the dam. And so and so on. The robbery is intensified. The propaganda machine is active. The forced extortion and imposed levy is in evidence for all to see and the so called Millennium dam appears as a curse, a diversion, a ploy, a means for the regime yet again to steal money from the people and the country. And this is what the EPRP continues to condemn with vigor even if the whole thing may end up being the last straw and to provoke the mass protest that will herald the end of the anti people regime.

Condemn the levy and extortion imposed on the people of Ethiopia!

Support the struggle of the people for their rights and a democratic system!

Down with tyranny and oppression!

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