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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

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STATEMENT ON THE CRASH OF EAL FLIGHT ET 409

The EPRP extends its heartfelt condolences to the 90 victims of the Ethiopian Airlines crash.

The tragic accident has highlighted the plight of Ethiopian young women employees as domestic workers in Lebanon and the racism and brutal treatment they receive there in what is actually a modern slave existence. The Lebanese officials have exhibited the usual racism even around the handling of the accident and their treatment of the relatives and friends of the 23 young Ethiopians who perished in the crash. Ethiopian mourners at the Beirut airport were segregated and separated from the Lebanese mourners and the officials did all in their capacity to show their contempt for Ethiopians, dead or alive. Reprehensible as this is, it is only the tip of the iceberg. Young Ethiopian women sent off to Lebanon (and they are more than 30,000), in a operation that financially benefits the cronies of the ruling group led by Meles Zenawi, have been subjected to modern slavery conditions: subjected to crude racism, beaten up, burnt by boiling water, mutilated, murdered, raped by their employers or gang raped, deported without any wages, jailed when they demand their rights, etc... Many of the girls are underage (less than 18 years) and without any protection. Many who have tried to flee via Syria to Cyprus and eventually to Turkey and Greece have died, suffered imprisonment and rape and/or now suffering in Turkey and Greece.

While Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has paid due respect to the Ethiopian dead other officials including the Lebanese Minister of Transportation have shown callousness and the unsubstantiated accusations against the experienced Ethiopian pilot (before even the Black Box got checked) is very inappropriate. The racist bias shown to the mourners is condemnable to say the least. The EPRP has time and again called for an end the human trafficking and the cruel mistreatment of Ethiopian domestic "workers" in Lebanon.

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