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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

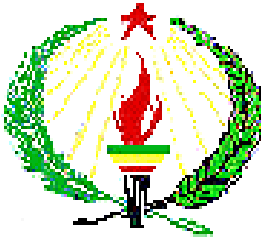
March 8, 2009

MARCH 8 - INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

THE STRUGGLE OF ETHIOPIAN WOMEN FOR THEIR RIGHTS **CONTINUES**

Ethiopian women observe March 8, alas, not with cries of victory but with declarations and vows to continue the struggle for their basic and fundamental rights. Regime change in Ethiopia has not augured well for women seeking emancipation and empowerment, demagogy to the contrary by the ruling groups notwithstanding.

During the 1974 February Revolution, Ethiopian women rose up for their rights and called for real change. The totalitarian military regime that forcefully established itself massacred conscious women in its Red Terror campaign and opted for giving verbal recognition for the equality of women setting up its own satellite organization for women. The present regime has all the buzz words about the role of women in a society's drive for real change but has acted consciously against the struggle of women to achieve their rights. With this regime and its all inclusive bankrupt and cynical policies, women and the young have had to endure aggravated suffering and repression. The rights of women have been trampled upon in a serious way. Young women have been trafficked and sent to modern day slavery to the Middle East. Preteen girls have been turned into prostitutes. Harmful traditions are more or less in place barring the verbal occasional propaganda to the contrary. The spread of AIDS that the rotting and immoral system has favored has victimized more women



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than men. Attempts by women to have their relatively autonomous associations have been quashed. The overall repression that the existing regime relies on has meant women have become more victimized than ever before especially in the rural areas. The regime holds very many women political prisoners like Aberash Berta who has been disappeared for more than eight years now. The Meles regime's terror campaign in many places (Gambella, Ogaden, Gondar, Wollega, etc..) has victimized women and their children.

In Ethiopia, women are more than half the population but they are second class citizens in terms of rights. Basic demands for equal pay, equal opportunities, for equality are ignored. The EPRP has for the past 36 years struggled for the rights of women and will continue to do so till Ethiopian women achieve their rights primarily through their own conscious and organized struggle.

Victory to the struggle of Ethiopian women.