

## **New York City: Rally held in solidarity with nonviolent defiance in Ethiopia**

**By: Rally participant**

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Due to the recent uprising in Oromia region, followed by Amara in Gonder, and many other cities across Ethiopia is a sign for ending of the TPLF's dictatorial rule. Ethiopian diaspora around the world held series of anti- Woyane ethno-centric TPLF's regime rallies in support of the uprising at home. On August 26, 2016, the resident of tristate resident of NY, NJ and CT took their turn in demonstration, angrily denouncing the killing of unarmed civilians and jailing thousands of protesters by Ethiopia security forces. The rally was held in Manhattan in front of the United Nation Headquarter building at, East 47<sup>th</sup> street & 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.



Several people participated in this rally. The demonstrators carried slogans and Ethiopian flag (without the star), and chanted anti-Ethiopian Government slogans. The crowd were chanted “stop the killing”, “unconditionally release jailed protestors, political prisoners, journalists”, and demanded for a transition to democracy to end the ethno-centric TPLF apartheid single party rule (see more below). The rally organizer took turn and spoken loudly denouncing the regime ruthless repression. Their message include peace, unity, democracy and prosperity for Ethiopia.

In November, it was reported at least 600 plus protestors were gun down in Oromia region. In July 2016 in Amhara region, soldiers shoot point blank to unarmed protestors killing more than 97 peaceful protestors. Thousands of protestors were jailed in both regions. Despite ruthless crack down, pockets of protests, and sit at home strikes have continued across the country. The government continued hunting opponents. The uprising found support not only from Ethiopians community across the globe but also from organizations that advocate for democracy and human rights issues. Very recently, the UN commissioner for human rights has called on Ethiopia to investigate the killing of peaceful protestors by independent commission of inquiry. On August 8, 2016, Amnesty International also reported about the anti-government protests and the savage killing by TPLF's troops. It states: “At least 97 people were killed and hundreds more injured when Ethiopian security forces fired live bullets at peaceful protestors across Oromia region and in parts of Amhara over the weekend.....”

The lack of organized leadership is a concern for many of us. Organized leadership is fundamental to achieve a genuine political change. It creates a better opportunity for the country if the regime has drawn lessons from the Arab Springs. Unfortunately, the TPLF ruling elites is incapable of learning from the past history or from its own mistakes.

The massive turnout of civil society in protest against TPLF is an evident failure of their administration. It is the consequence of the brutal nature of regime for past 25 years. It is mind boggling why TPLF leading Ethiopia to go through another series of civil wars. There is an Ethiopian proverb fit to this “እኔ ከግዛቱ ሰርዶ አይብቀ አለኝ አህያ.” From its inception, the TPLF does not have well intention for Ethiopia. They became the king of kleptocrats stolen billion dollars from the country. Corruption, land grab, nepotism, and favoritism are the root cause of the citizen's disappointment. In Rio 2016 Olympic, the story of

Ethiopian swimmer by the name of Robel Kiros Habte shows the deep rooted favoritism. Robel was selected for Olympic swimming team not by his performance but by being a son of the president of Ethiopian Swimming Federation. He finished way last in competition. Ethiopians are outrage when they learn that a father selected his own son as qualified athlete when Robel had poor performance. This simple fact illustrate that the regime and its cronies are have no shame. On the contrary, the 2016 Olympic marathon silver medalist Feyisa Lilesa showed a heroic stand by showing a political defiance sign of protest for ongoing protestors killing as he finished the race. Feysia exposed the TPLF villains with their loyal troops in front of international stage. Ethno-centric TPLF elites do not have sincere desire to improve people rights. The ongoing nonviolent defiance is shaking up this rotten political system. The protestor's at home determination, self-confidence, courageous action will eventually set Ethiopia free.

Below are the additional chanting Slogans that were used during the rally:

**We are with you in your struggle for democracy!**

**Western democratic countries stop supporting the dictatorial rule in Ethiopia!**

**We hear you! The Wolkite people**

**We hear you! The Oromia people**

**We hear you! The Amharas people**

**We hear you! All the Ethiopian people.**

**We are here standing shoulder-to-shoulder with you in solidarity in your struggle for Democracy against the dictatorial rule of EPDRF.**

**We are all Ethiopians, no one will divide us.**

**Justice for Ethiopia now!**

**Enough is enough!**