

## ***Why We Oppose the Ethiopian Dictatorial Regime?***

*Since 1991 the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is ruling Ethiopia with an iron hand & without popular consent. The divisive ethnic policies it adopted to rule Ethiopia are intended to guarantee TPLF's monopoly of political & economic power by weakening the composite identity of Ethiopians that transcend ethnicity & religion. Politically engineered deep ethnic & religious fissures are threatening the very coexistence of its people.*

*Confident of the effectiveness of its ethnic policy (its success in freezing ethnic identities & dividing Ethiopians along ethnic lines) & under the intense pressure of Western countries, for the first & last time, TPLF held a relatively free general election in 2005. However, when it realized that it lost the election, it falsely declared victory for itself before all the votes were counted. When the people peacefully protested against the vote rigging, security forces killed 193 civilian protesters under the order of prime minister Mr. Meles Zenawi of TPLF. Moreover, the TPLF regime arrested & subjected to maltreatment 33000 opposition party supporters, including elected MPs and human rights defenders.*

*After the 2005 general election the TPLF has increasingly shown more paranoid & defensive posture. In 2010 general election it unilaterally declared to have won 99.6% of the parliament seats leaving no elbowroom for opposition political parties. TPLF suppresses political dissent by invoking counter terrorism laws that it promulgates at will & with a stroke of a pen by way of denying opposition political parties even elbowroom to present their alternative political programs. According to the recently released Amnesty International reports, there are at least 114 opposition political party members & journalist that have been arrested under false charges of terrorism. Some of the defendants like journalist Woubshet Taye & opposition leader Andualem Aragie have been tortured in prison. Forcibly evicted farmers opposed to the leasing out of their land are locked up in known & hidden dungeons of the regime dotted across the country.*

*Each day, hundreds of families join the ranks of the homeless that crowd the streets of major cities like Addis Ababa. In 2011 Ethiopia was home to 7 million orphans as against half a million orphans in 1991 when the TPLF took power. Three billion US dollars aid money flows to the regime annually from Western*

*governments & financial moguls such as IMF & World Bank. But this aid money does not reach needy Ethiopians. Aid money is misused by TPLF to buy the favor of its supporters at best; or at worst it finds its way into the pockets of the corrupt ethnic rulers who have transformed themselves into multi-millionaires who own millions of dollars in foreign banks. Highlighting this corruption, in December 2011, the Wall Street Journal stated, **“Ethiopia lost \$11.7 billion US dollars to outflows of ill-gotten gains between 2000 and 2009”**. Currently the regime is busy with a leasing spree leasing out millions of hectares of land to wealthy Indians, Arabs, Chinese & others by evicting Ethiopian farmers from their ancestral lands. Such draconian measures were not witnessed even during the brief occupation of Ethiopia by fascist Italy 78 years ago.*

*Our protest today is part of an on-going peaceful struggle by us members of the Ethiopian Diaspora:*

- to draw the attention of the Dutch public to the suffering of our people in Ethiopia.*
- to register our displeasure with the TPLF dictatorial regime that blackmails & pressurizes the Diaspora-based Ethiopians to raise funds for the maintenance of its odious rule.*
- to urge Dutch taxpayers to pressure their government not to extend financial support to a regime that dehumanizes its people, unleashes a reign of terror, suppresses democracy, abuses aid money to strength its dictatorial rule with impunity.*

*Economic aid should promote respect of human rights & democratic expression & not abet dictatorship!!!!.*

***Long live the solidarity of the Ethiopian & Dutch peoples - Amsterdam 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2012***