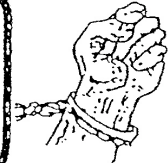




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



March 31/2009

UPDATE

Deportees from the Sudan Surface in Kaliti Prison

Fifteen Ethiopian refugees, some of them, like the elderly (Shaleka) Atanaw Wassie, who have been in the Sudan since the mid seventies, were rounded up in July 2007 and deported to Ethiopia in September 2007. All 15 had subsequently disappeared in the maze of secret prisons and solitary confinement and brutal interrogation in Addis Ababa.

The 15 deportees have now been brought to the notorious Kaliti prison and reports indicate that they would be charged as rebel operatives, smuggling arms, ammunition and uniforms to rebels operating near the Ethio-Sudanese border. It is known that the regime in Ethiopia has ceded some of the Ethiopian land to the Sudan and Sudanese soldiers are presently occupying Nefso Gebeya hill and farmlands in Quara region of Gondar.

SOCEPP has now learnt that the 15 deportees were interrogated round the clock, mistreated and denied medical attention for quite a while. Major Atanaw, a founding member of the EDU opposition that fought against the Mengistu regime, is in his seventies and in poor health. Pressures to make him and others confess and "ask for pardon" from Meles Zenawi have not succeeded up to now. Sudanese security chief Salah Gosh has recently said that the two regimes would intensify cooperation on security matters and this can only mean that Ethiopian refugees would become helpless victims of the Sudanese authorities and the intelligence agents of the Meles regime operating freely in the Sudan. Another joint Ethio-Sudan security meeting is scheduled for April.

SOCEPP calls for the immediate release of the 15 deportees. Kaliti is a death trap for elderly and sick prisoners. International bodies should also call on the Sudanese regime of President Beshir to stop violating the rights of Ethiopian refugees.

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