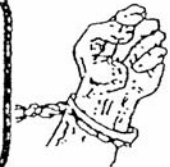




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



June 7/2007

THE ADOPTION RACKET AND THE VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

The sale of Ethiopian children to foreigners has continued to be a brisk business with the EPRDF government getting anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 US dollars per child sold under the flimsy cover of adoption. With some 5 million orphans and impoverished children with parents who cannot sustain them, the EPRDF is in full control of the sale of children which has brought it millions in the past two or three years alone.

The operation is so profitable that a few foreign NGOs involved in adoptions have opened offices in Addis Ababa. Ethiopian civil code laws have specific and strict laws and rules/procedures on adoption all of which have been ignored by the EPRDF that is concerned only with money. The rights of children have been trampled upon. While the laws demand at least two years of observation, study and ascertaining of each case and the background of those wanting to adopt the children nowadays you can apply for adoption in September and whisk the child away by December. The countries that are "adopting" Ethiopian children most are the United States, Canada, France, Ireland and Sweden. The market is controlled in Addis Ababa by the government and its officials like Haddush Halefom while other loyalists and relatives of Meles Zenawi himself are also active in the racket. It is no secret that brothers and sisters have been brutally separated and sold to different buyers and some of those coming to adopt these children are not even separated from their racial prejudices and are looking only for "exotic pets" à la Angelina Jolie or Madonna.

The separation of children from their parents is by itself an act that should be condemned. That parents are poor does not imply that their children shall be sold on the international market as adoption of Ethiopian children does not often

involve orphans but children from poor parents. The persistence of grinding and degrading poverty is the responsibility of the government in place and that it is profiting from the sad situation it has itself perpetuated is a crime indeed. The adoption racket is just that-- a racket that has netted millions for the repressive and cruel regime and it should be condemned for that. The right of children in Ethiopia should be respected.

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE
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