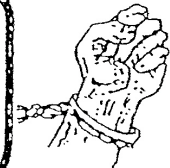




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN  
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



February 10, 2011

**SOCEPP CONDEMNS THE ECOLOGICAL DISASTER  
BEING PERPETRATED BY THE MELES ZENAWI REGIME**

More than 3000 acres of protected forest land has been leased by the regime to Indian firms that plan to fell the trees and farm the fertile land. Protest by the local people has been ignored and local officials who raised their voice against this damaging deforestation removed from their posts.

The Tigray front led by the now Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was notorious for felling trees and destroying bamboo forests in Gondar and selling the same to the Sudan. When it took power in 1991 it was accused of destroying the protected Nech Sar Park and of giving permission to Arab princes and sheikhs to hunt endangered wild animals like the Red Fox, lions and elephants. The Meles regime has never been ecological friendly. Recently, it has started out leasing thousands of hectares of fertile land and national forests to foreign investors coming from India, China, the Middle East, etc... One of the regions affected by this irresponsible and anti national measure is Gambella in the West whose people were subjected to a brutal massacre some years back. The Gambella people have protested against the destruction of their forests and the desecration of ancestral lands. But to no avail.

The violation of the rights of the people as a whole and that of the Gambella people in particular deserves all round condemnation and SOCEPP raises its voice on the side of the people to call for a halt in the handing over of Ethiopia's land and protected parks and forests to foreign firms.

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