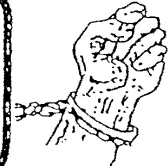




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



March 19/2010

MELES ZENAWI: TRAMPLING ON INFORMATION RIGHTS

With the same arrogance that Meles Zenawi has often expressed when he dismisses all calls for the release of political prisoners ("there are none in Ethiopia!"), he has now gone on record boasting that he will order the jamming of the VOA Amharic service. Actually, with the help of the Chinese, the Meles regime has already tried to jam the VOA, and has jammed for the last six months the Finote Democracy radio (a twice a week broadcast to Ethiopia in Amharic).

Meles Zenawi is a predator of the Free Press and at present most of the independent papers have been banned and their publishers and editors hounded into exile or burdened with huge fines. On the other hand, the regime, controls the media, radio and TV, and the FM radio (including the hate spouting Fana radio) belong to the ruling Tigrean front (TPLF) also known as EPRDF. The regime has trampled on the freedom speech, of the press and the right of the people to be informed. Many web sites have been blocked, censorship is active, and the jamming of the radios is but one example of the Meles regime's totalitarian ways.

That Meles Zenawi can come out openly boasting he will order the jamming of radios indicates the level of arrogance that the violator of rights has reached. With elections scheduled for May (and already deemed rigged), the regime is desperately trying to block the people's right to be informed, to know. China abets and aids in this violation of rights and deserves strong condemnation and those donors who sustain the brutal regime of Meles Zenawi should reconsider their policies and distance themselves from it.

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