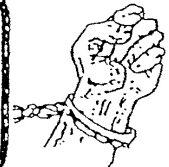




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



March 30/2010

DEMAND THE RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS
NOT JUST THEIR HUMANE TREATMENT IN CAPTIVITY

It is encouraging to note that some members of the US congress and administration are finally expressing some criticism of the totalitarian regime in Addis Abeba, an ally in the so called US war against terror. Yet, we are forced to say too little too rare especially when we observe officials like the US undersecretary of State for African Affairs, Johnny Carson, call on the regime to "treat prisoners humanely".

To call for prisoners to be treated humanely is a just demand. However, the main demand that one expects from Washington, that bankrolls the repressive regime of Meles Zenawi, is not "treat them humanely" or (as was heard from Washington in 1997 "bring them to trial without delay" but a firm call/ demand: "Release all political prisoners, Stop arresting political dissidents and rivals". All other demands appear as a pat on the back and just going through the motions of protesting. The Meles regime is not jamming only the VOA Amharic service and web site but Ethiopian radios like Finote Democracy and very many web sites and thus the demands should be: stop jamming all radios, stop blocking web

sites, respect the freedom of the press and opinion and not merely stop jamming the VOA service. As concerns political prisoners, the concern should not be for one prisoner but for the release of all political prisoners.

Washington should demand firmly that the regime allows human rights bodies to visit all prisoners and prisons in Ethiopia. The claim to quiet backdoor diplomacy does not cut it anymore as it is non-existent and ineffective. Washington is the main lifeblood of the Meles regime and it can, if it so wishes and stays true to human rights principles, put effective pressure on the repressive regime. Where there is the will there sure is the way.

Demand the immediate release of all political prisoners

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