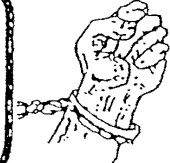




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



December 15/2009

SOCEPP OBJECTS TO THE IOM REPATRIATION OPERATION

SOCEPP strongly objects to the International Organization for Migration's recent repatriation of 160 Ethiopians "with dignity" from Libya back to Ethiopia. The refugees need to be resettled in third countries and not sent back to an uncertain fate under the arbitrary decision of the Meles Zenawi regime.

Hundreds of Ethiopians in Libya are stranded and suffering intensely with no possibility of going to a third country. Imprisoned in the desert in containers and cells, they have not received any protection from the UNHCR or any such agency. Desperate and lost, they become easy victims of those pressurizing them into repatriation--better the devil we knew kind of mentality. Moreover the claim that the repatriation is done "with dignity" is more than ridiculous since it cannot mean anything but suggest that going to Ethiopia by plane is more dignified than trekking to Libya by foot and buses and other means. What dignity? Why did the IOM fail to arrange a resettlement to a third country other than sending back the refugees to the very regime they had fled from? Another ground for objection is the very fact that reports have not affirmed that the IOM has not followed up the cases of the repatriated even though the Meles regime is notorious for persecuting those who have fled and returned either voluntarily or by force. Numerous refugees sent back from the Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti have perished or disappeared or are suffering in jails.

SOCEPP calls on the IOM to stop sending back the refugees to Meles Zenawi to face an uncertain fate. If the IOM really cares about Ethiopian refugees in Libya it should help organize their resettlement in third countries.

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE
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