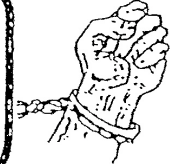




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



May 3/2009

STATEMENT ON WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

As the world observes Press Freedom Day (May 3), SOCEPP reminds all that the regime of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has virtually crushed the free press, jailed or forced into exiles dozens of journalists, closed publications and newspapers, passed a repressive press law, hiked the price of printing paper and publication and set up papers controlled by it as "independent" newspapers. The regime controls nationwide TV and radio broadcast while the ruling Tigrayan Front (TPLF) has, in addition, its own radio (Radio Fana).

Freedom of the press is more than endangered in Ethiopia. The regime has blocked independent web sites, jams opposition radios like Radio Finote, and hauls journalists to court under flimsy pretexts and imposes fines that they cannot pay. Worse still, journalists like Tesfaye Tadesse have been knifed to death while Berhanu Ijigu and others have been disappeared since the early 90s. While the regime claims there is no censorship this has been exposed as false in reality. Books are actually banned, denied print access, book sellers are threatened and forced to stop sales, protest CDs are banned like those belonging to poet Ali Hussein, newspapers cannot report fully on the nepotism and corruption that characterizes the regime in power for fear of serious reprisals.

SOCEPP calls for a vigorous condemnation of the regime in Addis Ababa for its brutal suppression of the freedom of the press.

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE
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