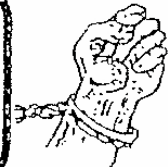




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



JANUARY 21/2009

INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY VIOLATED AGAIN

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has handpicked 26 members of his own ruling party/EPRDF/ who graduated from the State controlled Civil Service College and appointed them as judges. This follows a continuous purge of trained and experienced but independent judges all over Ethiopia.

At the same time, Meles Zenawi has handpicked and appointed federal judges on the basis of loyalty and partisanship to his ruling front. Thus, the chairman of the military appeals court, the former member of the investigating commission of the Gambella massacre (which exonerated the guilty regime), Tegene Getaneh Kifle, has been named president of the Federal Supreme Court while Woubshet Zerihun has been appointed president of the Federal High Court. Areda Waktola has become deputy president of the Federal First Instance Court in the same way. Knowledgeable observers have declared that the 26 appointed judges are ill trained and incapable in their field and were chosen only for their party adherence and loyalty.

The Meles Zenawi regime has totally violated the principle of an independent judiciary and the prosecutor's office and the courts are used in a Stalinist way as State instruments of punishment and railroading of dissenters. In this way, the regime has fabricated evidences and made sure the pliant courts sentenced political dissenters to long prison terms. There is no rule of law or due process in Ethiopia as the suffering of more than 35,000 political prisoners who never even were brought for trial attests.

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE
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