



## JUNE 20--WORLD REFUGEE DAY

### THE WORSENING PLIGHT OF ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES

As the world observes June 20 refugee day, SOCEPP is sadly obliged to state that the plight of Ethiopian refugees has worsened all over the world.

Hundreds of refugees perish in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean as they try to make their way to Yemen or Italy, immigration authorities deny them asylum on the flimsiest of pretexts, Libya holds hundreds in desert prisons, Sudan recently deported 48 Ethiopian refugees to placate the authorities in Addis Abeba. Egypt routinely shoots and kills Ethiopian refugees trying to enter Israel and Israel itself holds dozens of refugees in prisons. Fortress Europe is in place and from London to Oslo, Ethiopians have been denied asylum status and quite a few sent back to a very uncertain fate. Many female refugees have been raped by border police in many places.

That some countries in the West can still consider the repressive and dictatorial regime of Meles Zenawi as "safe country regime" or respectful of democracy baffles any common sense. The Meles regime has emerged as one of the worst human right violators in Africa and has worsened in the past few years so much so it has removed its tattered mask of a fake multi party rule and officially and arrogantly imposed its one party state. Ethiopians have little choice but to flee

as membership or activity in quite a few organizations deemed illegal or any dissent is violently repressed. From the Ogaden to Gondar, from Addis Abeba to Awassa and Moyale the real face of the Meles regime is totalitarian. To declare that Ethiopian refugees are fleeing the country for "no reason at all" is to trample on all notions of justice. It should also be said that the UNHCR has failed the Ethiopian refugees in many countries and their suffering in many places, especially in the neighboring countries, is deplorable.

SOCEPP calls on the UNHCR and host countries to respect the right of Ethiopian refugees and to accord them protection and asylum.

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE  
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