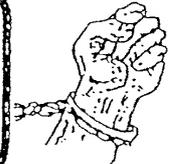




የኢትዮጵያ የፖለቲካ እስረኞች አንድነት ኮሚቴ (ኢፖእኦ)
SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



September 16/2010

President Bollinger
Office of the President
Columbia University
New York.

Mr. President:

My name is Ali Hussein Saeed. I am writing you to officially condemn in the strongest possible terms your University's hosting of Ethiopian head of state Meles Zenawi at this month's global forum.

As the General Secretary for the Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners (SOCEPP), as a crusader for human rights in Ethiopia, and as a victim of the torture routinely inflicted on that country's people at the behest of her government, I am truly shocked and outraged that an institution as distinguished and world-reknowned as Columbia University would allow this man on its premises, let alone invite him, the best example of bad governance and brutal repression, to give an address on the topic of Ethiopia and African leadership!

Mr. President, the individual whom you intend to honour next week with the role of key note speaker, is known throughout my country of birth and throughout the African continent as a cold-blooded killer. He has committed countless crimes against the Ethiopian people which include, but are not restricted to, genocide in Gambella, massacres in Ogaden and elsewhere, the torture and disappearance of thousands of political dissidents, the repression of political opposition, invasion of neighboring Somalia to commit atrocities, war mongering in general and fanning religious and ethnic hatred as a matter of policy. For my people, the name Meles Zenawi is synonymous with 'tyrant.' Is this not this same Meles who has been repeatedly condemned as the "predator of the free press"? Is he not the very dictator whose dungeons are full of tortured political prisoners? As just one example, at least 200 people were massacred, 763 injured and thousands

arrested in the wake of anti-government protests following the fraudulent May 2005 election.

Mr. President, the presence of this man at your forum, and the elevated stature with which the university's flier introduced him makes an absolute mockery of your university's esteemed status as an institute of Higher Learning and seeker of truth. Considering even a basic commitment to democracy and truth, Columbia University could not ever be expected to laud and serve as a platform to tyrants like Meles Zenawi.

Sir, I am a torture survivor and former political prisoner. I was held for years by the previous equally despicable totalitarian regime. An award winning film *Memories of a Generation* was made about my life and has been viewed by many around the world. I have endured suffering and despair the likes of which only a fellow torture victim could understand.

The sight of such a notorious oppressor of my countrymen receiving such royal treatment at the hands of one of the most distinguished and reputable academic institutions in the world returns me to the grief that I had hoped to leave behind in those dark, dismal, horrific chambers from many years back.

Mr. President, decency calls for a vigorous condemnation of Meles Zenawi and his regime, not praise and adulation. I urgently request that you cancel butcher Meles Zenawi's visit to your campus.

I thank you and I expect you to do the right thing.

Sincerely yours,
Ali Hussein Saeed
General Secretary
Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE
SOCEPP, POSTFACH 51213, BERLIN 13372, GERMANY
SOCEPP, 30 RIGA COVE, WINNIPEG, MB R2P 2Z7, CANADA
E MAIL: SOCEPP @AOL.COM

WEB SITE: WWW.SOCEPP.DE