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Repression Stepped Up Linked to Coming May "Election"

General elections in Ethiopia have proved as fruitful as milking the bull. The noted 2005 election led to the defeat of the ruling regime but it decreed martial law, shot some 223 people dead, rigged the election, jailed thousands of opponents and carried on business as usual. Every election time that comes the repression intensifies. It is no different this time as the May general election approaches.

Two opposition parties have been declared illegal and cloned groups made to replace them taking their names and offices. Attempts by legal opposition groups to hold meetings and rallies have been forcefully blocked, bloggers and journalists have faced increased repression, members of the opposition organizations have been jailed or removed from their civilian jobs. Some like Zerihun Gessesse of the Semayawi Party have been kidnapped by the security police and disappeared after they resisted threats calling on them to withdraw their candidacy. Zerihun was traveling from Kombolcha to Addis Abeba when he was taken by plainclothes men at Shoa Robit, jailed for a day and then taken to an undisclosed location in Addis Abeba where his being subjected to torture is expected. The whole election charade has been exposed before: the election law favors the ruling party, the electoral board is filled by members hand-picked by the regime and the vote is rigged. In the last election only one opposition candidate made it into the 547 seat rubber stamp parliament. A one party system is in place masked as a multi party system.

Halt to the repression. Call for the release of all the political prisoners!!

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE

SOCEPP, 30 RIGA COVE, WINNIPEG, MB R2P 2Z7, CANADA

E MAIL: SOCEPP@AOL.COM

socepp@socepp.info/ WEB SITE: <http://www.socepp.info>

