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OPEN LETTER TO THE US STATE DEPARTMENT

SOCEPP would like to formally register its firm objection and rejection of the fallacious statements made by the head of the political department, Mme Windy Sherman.

Fraudulent statements on the state of affairs in Ethiopia have often emanated from Washington and the present one is not an anomaly. Mme Sherman gave blind support to the repressive regime in Ethiopia, to its alleged but unseen democratic practices and went as far to label organizations it had accused as terrorist. Mme Windy Sherman must be one of the very few foreign officials to, wash her eyes with salt as we say in Ethiopia, and to declare free and fair elections have occurred in Ethiopia and the coming general election in May will be free and fair. Election in 2005, regime defeated, martial law proclaimed, close to 200 protesters shot, opposition leaders and supporters jailed en masse, the election rigged. Diplomat Vicki Huddleston's nefarious role is remembered by most Ethiopians. The last election, rigged again and only one opposition figure entered the 540+ parliament. The election law and the electoral commission belong to the ruling party. Opposition parties are restricted from effective campaigning. In Ethiopia, almost everyone knows that the result of the coming May election is a foregone conclusion.

Close to 40,000 political prisoners in Kaliti, Kilinto, the ghost prisons in Addis Abeba and Tigray, the Zwai and other labor camps, disappeared people summarily executed, religious leaders persecuted, autonomous civic organizations banned and replaced by those working for the State, sale of children unto illegal adoption, sale of young women to modern slavery, bloggers and the free press repressed under an illegal anti terror law--no need to say more. The regime in Addis Abeba may be pro America but it is an ethnic chauvinist, anti democratic regime that is detested by most Ethiopians. The economic stride of the country is visible only to the regime and its propagandists and not to the impoverished millions who know their life of poverty, starvation, unemployment and high rate of inflation. The State owns the land, the main media, the judiciary and the regime has been condemned as one of

the worst predator of the free press. Of course, this regime has given America an air force base at Arba Minch and has become a foot soldier in what you call the war against Terror. However, our people are still asking if the soldiers in Somalia are dying for Ethiopia's interest or for that of Washington.

That the US has failed for decades to stand on the side of the Ethiopian people is not news. That US officials have been forced to shame themselves as they heap praise on a murderous regime has not also been a mystery. That the US, which knows the content and illegality of the regime's anti terror proclamation, would come out supporting its terrorist label on certain organizations, defies common sense. The Undersecretary asserts the Addis Abeba regime has been elected by the people but this is a fallacious statement, Regrettable, unfortunate but untrue. Add to this the fact that the avenue of peaceful and real political protest has been barred for decades and Mme. Sherman's conclusions crumble as groundless.

SOCEPP writes this letter to register, for History, the injustice on our people .

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE

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