

**Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners-Canada (SOCEPP – Canada)**

**የኢትዮጵያ ፖለቲካ እስረኞች አንድነት ኮሚቴ (ኢፖአኮ-ካናዳ)**

P. O. BOX 413 STATION E, TORONTO, ON (CANADA) M6H 4E3

Email: [socepp-can@humanrightsethiopia.com](mailto:socepp-can@humanrightsethiopia.com), [socepp.can@sympatico.ca](mailto:socepp.can@sympatico.ca)

[www.humanrightsethiopia.com](http://www.humanrightsethiopia.com)

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It is widely reported that in the last two weeks, the government of Mr. Meles Zenawi has intensified its attack on activists in particular members and supporters of the opposition Coalition Medrek. Accordingly, it is reported that at least 200 of Medreks supporters and members have been jailed in a crack down. These individuals are arrested in Oromya region mainly in Wollega Zone.

While the government is using different pretext, it is believed that this is a preemptive strike against a possible mass protest like that of Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen and other parts of North Africa and the Middle East.

We are very concerned that this recent action is an escalation of repression and a clear sign of what the government is planning to-do to preempt any popular uprising.

As we reported on February 14, the government security forces have targeted independent media personalities such as Eskinder Nega for intimidation.

Once again, we call up on the international community to put the ruling party in Ethiopia on notice that such repressive behavior is no more acceptable. Just like the people of North Africa, just like Libyans, Ethiopians too are yearning for the full respect of their rights including the right to free expression, to peaceful demonstration.

Further still, we emphasize that the road to stability is secured through more democracy, tolerance and reconciliation not repression. The right of Ethiopians to freedom of expression has to be respected. SOCEPP Canada demands that the recent detainees and all other political prisoners have to be set free.

Injustice and repression must stop now!!

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