

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

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**The 2010 Election failed to meet International Standards: Meles Zenawi's regime no longer carries legitimacy to rule!**

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As predicted, the May 23, 2010 election in Ethiopia has been effectively hijacked by the ruling party. As ably reported by HRW and many others, this is solely the result of a long campaign of intimidation, harassment, lack of a level playing field, fraud, and election-time irregularities. And with this new reality adding fuel to the fire, Ethiopia continues to dangerously slide away from democracy and into the state of absolute totalitarianism.

It is noteworthy to state here that Canada has sent its own election observers as part of the EU team to monitor the Election in Ethiopia. We applaud the position this observer team and the US representative in Addis Ababa have taken by clearly stating that the election failed to meet international standards.

What should come next is most crucial. Western donors like Canada must now hold Meles Zenawi and the ruling EPRDF regime responsible. As far as the electorate is concerned, Meles Zenawi's regime no longer carries legitimacy to rule. Therefore, as happened in the case of Zimbabwe and Kenya, the ruling party has to be pressured to move towards a fresh start through the process of consensus building which may include an all-party round-table discussion.

In view of the above disturbing turn of events, therefore, we demand that:

- The government of Canada and the international community put pressure on Meles Zenawi and his party to begin a fresh process monitored by an independent body for a free and fair election. Ethiopia has to start afresh. Until such time that the government agrees to engage in a legitimate process, Meles Zenawi and his regime have to be isolated by the international community while keeping all the necessary pressures in place.
- The government of Canada and the G8 countries must reconsider the decision to invite Meles Zenawi to the G-20 summit planned to be held in June 2010 in Toronto, Canada. Meles Zenawi symbolizes a totalitarian rule. His disregard of the internationally accepted human, democratic and political rights of the people of Ethiopia must outrage us all.
- Canada, the international community and various human rights groups must take a swift action now and avert further human tragedy which looms over Ethiopia.

**Ethiopians shall be free of a totalitarian rule!**