

Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners (SOCEPP – Canada)

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Extreme repression only breeds extreme reaction

Ethiopian teacher burns himself to death in protest: A call for immediate action

A number of media sources confirm the disturbing news that on November 11, 2011, a teacher by the name Yenesew Gebere, who resided in Waka, Southern Ethiopia, burned himself to death in protest. Our condolences to his parents, siblings and friends and May he rest in peace as we continue the struggle for justice. .

This individual who is professionally a teacher burnt himself in protest against the ongoing brutal clampdown on dissent in the country. Yenesew Gebre was seen making an impassioned plea at a protest gathering before setting himself on fire.

It is reported that addressing fellow protestors he said: *'I want to show to all that death is preferable than a life without justice and liberty and I call upon my fellow compatriots to fear nothing and rise up to wrench their freedom and rights from the hands of the local and national tyrants.'*

This unprecedented action is a clear evidence of the unbearable level of repression in the country perpetuated by the tyranny of TPLF/EPRDF.

As documented by a number of human rights groups, the regime is doing every thing in its power to silence peaceful dissent. This in turn is fostering extreme reaction.

Besides human rights abuse, increased unbearable poverty, economic deprivation, lack of meaningful opportunity and discrimination are all adding up to hopelessness and extreme measures.

Repression, increased dissent and further repression creates the condition for extreme reaction. At this point, replacing the dark practice of the regime with bright ideas and vision requires an active measure by the international community.

Hence, we call upon the Government of Canada and other Western nations to take the initiative to put pressure on the incumbent regime and to stop further tragedies. It is time for Canada and the rest of the international community to suspend non emergency aid to the ruling EPRDF/TPLF regime in Ethiopia.

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