



Press Release

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Stop the regime of Meles Zenawi from using hunger as means of collective punishment to destroy the Ogaden community

Since 2005, the brutal regime of Ethiopia led by Meles Zenawi has displaced and killed thousands in the Ogaden Region. Recently the region is affected by severe drought that is causing untold destruction to the people of the area and the livelihood based on animal husbandry. The response of Zenawi's regime to the recent tragic development is to continue the sealing off the Ogaden region to international humanitarian NGOs, human rights defenders and the international press to operate freely in the region.

Ginbot 7, Movement for Justice, Freedom and Democracy strongly condemns the continued refusal of the Ethiopian government to allow access into the Ogaden region to all international and independent organizations that could have saved lives affected by mass hunger and the attendant mass disease currently ravaging the people of the region.

Ginbot 7 would like to remind the international community that the regime of Meles Zenawi is bent to the destruction of the Ogaden community and the regime would not in any way change its policy of collective punishment of the people of the region. In fact, the brutal regime of Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia would use the current famine as God sent tool to fulfil its evil ambition to destroy the Ogaden community by all means necessary.

Ginbot7 believes that the current hunger in Ogaden is a man made problem and warns the international community that any effort to channel aid to the suffering of people of Ogaden through the agencies and institutions of the Ethiopian regime would not bring the desired result. In fact, Ginbot7 believes such action would be a wilful neglect of the reality on the ground and a deliberate denial of the brutal nature of the regime of Meles Zenawi whose track record of human right abuse, crimes against humanity, war crime, genocide and corruption are well documented by credible and august bodies such as Human rights watch, Genocide watch, Amnesty International, Freedom House, UNDP and the likes.

Ginbot7, appeals to the international community, specially the US administration to review its policy of closely working with the most unpopular and brutal minority regime of Meles Zenawi. Ginbot 7 advises policy maker in the major Western countries, especially in the US, to look into how the financial, military and diplomatic assistance given to the Zenawi regime is used for the suppression of the rights of people to live

freely, causing mass dislocation, hunger and instability in the horn of Africa. Ginbot 7 believes such policy of standing by a renowned tyrant like Meles Zenawi and giving support to its repressive state would not, as it has been proved time and time again in other instances, bring any dividends except the hardening of the negative attitude the people of the horn of Africa have begun to hold against states and nations that support the Zenawi regime.

Ginbot7 calls the international community and agencies to demand a free access to the Ogaden to assess the need of the population, provide support and to investigate the crimes that have so far been perpetrated by the Regime of Meles Zenawi against the rights, freedom and lives of the Ogaden community. The international community needs to look into the Ogaden and see to itself that the suffering of the people of the Ogaden has its roots beyond the current drought and its immediate ramifications.

Ginbot7 also makes a call to Ethiopians around the globe to stand with our compatriots in the Ogaden in this time of their need. Ethiopians everywhere should highlight the long suffering of our brothers and sisters in the Ogaden and give all we can to independent organisations and agencies that are currently putting meaningful effort to alleviate mass hunger and disease within the Ogaden community.

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