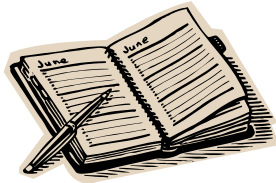


## Some of the dictatorial natures of Ethiopian PM Meles Zenawi and his regime



- As one of the worst enemies of freedom of expression in the world who has had the highest number of imprisoned journalists since 1992, Meles Zenawi has made the Ethiopian peoples voiceless by severely weakening independent press through continuous and indiscriminate crackdown, and by maintaining full control over electronic media and the Internet service, despite the provisions in the Constitution and the Press Law that allows the private ownership and investment; he has become the first head of state in the world to charge journalists with treason simply because they put pen to paper and attempted to help ordinary citizens exercise their right to freedom of expression;
- With full control over the National Election Board and the overall judicial system, Meles has deprived Ethiopians of their right to choose their representatives, snatched the peoples' votes during three consecutive national elections to eventually emerge as an absolute authoritarian, especially following the most recent (May 2010) election;
- In a country and under a government that claims to have been democratic, between fifteen thousand to twenty thousand political prisoners, including Mrs. Birtukan Mideksa (leader of the Unity for Democracy and Justice party), languish in substandard official and unofficial prisons in Ethiopia just because they attempted to exercise their constitutionally provided democratic rights;
- Politically-motivated extra-judicial killings, kidnappings and disappearances, extra-judicial arrests and extended imprisonments without trial (or mock trials) are the underlying characteristics of Meles' regime; the number one target and the biggest victims of these extra-judicial actions are the Oromos, among whom some have already been given death sentences and some condemned to life in prison;
- By issuing a law known as the Charities and Societies Proclamation, which criminalizes all kinds and forms of human rights activities by both foreign and domestic non-governmental organizations independent of itself, Meles' ruling EPRDF party has made the monitoring of human rights violations impossible;
- After bringing the major economic sectors under party control in the name of privatization, Meles and his ruling party are looting and using the scarce resources of the country not only to enrich themselves, but also to use it as a coercive tool to obtain involuntary political support through offer and/or denial of job opportunities. The more damaging effect of this partisan economic policy is that the absence of a leveled field of competition, discouraging the genuine private investors, severely impacting on the economic growth and development.