

## EU's Partnership with Dictatorship in Ethiopia

### Press Release

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Last week, the EU Election Observation Mission in Ethiopia (EU-EOM) released its much anticipated report. However, despite its findings, the message of the overly delayed report was as much farcical as the election it monitored. In the last 5 years, Ethiopia held two carefully orchestrated sham elections, and in both cases the EU-EOM observed the elections and concluded that both the 2005 & 2010 elections stood short of international elections standards. In the 2010 election, the EU-EOM report stressed that the electoral process was severely flawed and it precluded a level playing field. Ginbot 7 strongly believes that, like its predecessor; the 2010 report will end up further emboldening the dictatorial regime of Meles Zenawi to continue with its abhorrent and repressive actions of silencing dissent and abusing human rights.

For the second time in five years, the Ethiopian dictator barred the EU Election Observation Mission from travelling to Ethiopia to issue its report, and told the EU-EOM to get lost with its findings. Such blatant defiance by the regime is not surprising because Zenawi's past defiance has paid off generously in the form of accelerated aid and a blind eye to the many crimes his regime commits. What is surprising, rather perplexing is EU's continued collaboration with dictatorship in Ethiopia despite convincing evidences of its own election monitoring mission and the HRW reports display year after year.

Ginbot 7 is particularly alarmed and disturbed by the irresponsible statement issued by the EU High Representative, Catharine Ashton. Her statement that stands in stark contrast to the testimony of the Observation Mission came out side by side with the EU-EOM report which unambiguously said that Ethiopia's 2010 election failed to meet international standards. Mrs. Ashton has shown an utter disregard for the blatant violation of the basic rights of the Ethiopian people and the principles the EU espouses. In her outrageous statement, Catharine Ashton said: "the European Union reiterates its willingness to continue to support the Ethiopian objectives of poverty eradication, economic and social development as set out in the National Growth and Transformation Plan". According to

Catharine Ashton, the EU keeps on helping Zenawi's dictatorial regime regardless of the rampant injustice, inequality, and human rights abuse in Ethiopia.

History reminds us that the people of Ethiopia have repeatedly been betrayed by the West; however, the manner and the timing of the most recent betrayal as depicted by Mrs. Ashton's statement confirms EU's willingness to become an accomplice to the crimes committed against the Ethiopian people. Similar reckless statements by the British Foreign Office reaffirm EU's attempt to discount its own report and be a partner to dictatorship in Ethiopia. The underlying message of the two mortally insensitive statements issued by the EU High Representative and the British Foreign Office is very clear; it is the integral part of the deep seated assumption that assumes Africans can wait on freedom and democracy as long as "we" give them food. Ginbot 7 strongly condemns this bigoted and thoughtless stance of the EU that assumes freedom and democracy as exclusive Western accessories.

The people of Ethiopia understand that the responsibility of fighting for freedom, justice, and democracy lies on their own shoulders. Our only appeal to freedom loving people around the world, particularly to Western governments is to stop funding dictatorship in Ethiopia at the expense of their own tax payers which makes our struggle for freedom harder. Ginbot 7 Movement for Justice, Freedom, and Democracy in collaboration with other progressive forces of Ethiopia, will lead the fight for freedom and democracy and ensure that Zenawi's regime is the last dictatorship in Ethiopia. It is very clear that any regime that rules by force and conspiracy does not last long. Those on the wrong side of history, who willfully give a blind eye to tyrants will end up holding the bag of shame and disgrace.

The Ethiopian people shall win!

Ginbot 7 Movement for Justice, Freedom and Democracy