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ALL ETHIOPIA SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (ME'ISONE)

"NEW ETHIOPIA" P.O. BOX 5077 10305 SPANGA SWEDEN

29th September 1983

Dr. Perez de Cuellar
General Secretary
United Nations
New York

Your Excellency,

On the occasion of the coming visit to the United Nations by the Ethiopian head of state, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariame, we would like to draw your attention to the plight of the Ethiopian people and to appeal to your excellency to raise the issue of Human Rights in our country during the dictator's stay in New York.

It is indeed an insult both to our people and to the rest of Africa that an impostor of his kind should be allowed to use the tribune of the General Assembly despite his record of consistent and gross violations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other international conventions on Human Rights. Behind this futile attempt of self promotion lies the bitter reality of the unbearable condition of our people under the dictator's oppression.

Government organized terror, and torture of detainees, unexplained disappearance of political prisoners and summary execution of thousands of Ethiopians have become the characteristic features of contemporary Ethiopia under Dictator Mengistu. Amnesty International's figures show that there are well over 30,000 political prisoners in the over crowded jails of our country. This figure is well over 5 times that of political prisoners held in all the other African countries combined! Today's Ethiopia is by far the largest single refugee producing country in the continent. One out of five refugees in the world is a victim of Mengistu's dictatorial rule!

Notwithstanding the regime's claims of a "stabilized" country, the anti democratic and repressive regime and the violation of

national sovereignty and independence of Ethiopia have not gone unchallenged. Naturally, Mengistu's response to the legitimate aspirations and struggle of our peoples continues to be systematic persecution of political opponents and an endless series of military offensives in areas of armed resistance. In the process, this most repressive regime in independent Africa has resorted to the biggest arms build up ever seen on African soil. The Ethiopian army which was only 40,000 prior to 1974 has now grown to the staggering figure of 250,000. Thousands of foreign troops and military advisors are stationed in our country. The continued flow of billions of dollars worth of arms from the Soviet Union is ruining the economy of the country.

The extremely negative implications of such systematic diversion of resources from desperate development needs to military extravaganza are clear. On this score too, the regime's record as compared to other third world countries in general and the rest of Africa in particular, is overwhelmingly negative.

Ethiopia is one of the FIVE least developed countries even by the standards of the 31 least developed countries in the world. But in terms of military expenditure it stands 12th among the more than 100 developing countries. With an annual official expenditure of 600 million US dollars, the regime's military budget is the highest among the 31 LDCs. This sum is almost equivalent to that spent by the 21 African LDCs combined. Ethiopia's military expenditure amounted to 17.4 US dollars per capita as compared to 5.3 US dollars for the other LDCs in the continent.

The results of these irresponsible and reckless policies followed by the Mengistu regime have proved disastrous for the Ethiopian peoples. For the 5th year running famine has ravaged well over half the country's regions claiming the lives of thousands of Ethiopia's peasants. Notwithstanding the extravagant claims about the "achievements" of the regime, the Ethiopian peoples are still denied their fundamental human and democratic rights and live under the most miserable material conditions even by the standards of the poorest countries in the world.

In view of all this we appeal to your excellency to seize the opportunity of Mengistu's visit to the United Nations to raise the issue

of Human Rights in Ethiopia and to condemn the atrocities committed against the Ethiopian peoples by the dictatorship, in line with the repeated condemnations and resolutions of the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights and of other concerned international bodies.

ME'ISONE - All Ethiopia Socialist Movement