

The plights of Ethiopian asylum seekers in Switzerland!

The Ethiopian association in Switzerland (AES) has, for years, been defending the right of asylum seekers here in Switzerland and trying to bring to the attention of the world community and the pertinent human right groups the ever-increasing sufferings of Ethiopian asylum seekers in Switzerland by giving a written account of the issue to various offices and through demonstrations staged in Bern and Geneva.

Ever since the adoption of the April 2004 restrictive, hate driven anti-asylum law by the Swiss rightwing dominated authorities, Ethiopian asylum seekers have been;

- Simply abandoned on the street with out any means to live on. Even some spent the last bitter winter in public toilettes.
- Others imprisoned for several months just for attempting to go to another country after they were left on the street. Denied fair trial, the right for representation by their own lawyers, appeared to court with out interpreters.
- Denied medical treatments and follow-ups except in emergency cases.
- Received inhuman and degrading treatments from some cantonal authorities.
- Married couples denied normal matrimonial life because the OIM has assigned them to live in different cantons. They are told that they can live together when they get back to their country.
- Others, already engaged are prevented from getting married.
- Forced to live in abandoned bomb shelters on isolated mountaintops.
- Their ID cards are confiscated.

While this being the fact here in Switzerland, back home, the EPRDF is overwhelmingly rejected at the ballot box in the latest election and its international political image has been tarnished by the election fraud, the escalated human right abuses and violent terror that is witnessed all over the country.

Obviously the government of Ethiopia is extremely upset by the support and sympathy expressed to the oppositions groups and the worldwide chain of protests staged in major cities of the world by the Ethiopians in Diaspora. The ruling party kept on accusing the Diaspora of assisting the opposition financially and serving as their voice at the international stage.

In a futile attempt to mend their political bankruptcy, they are extending their retaliatory war against Ethiopians living abroad with the aim of breaking the presumed external financial and political support apparatus of the opposition and neutralize the internationally spreading protest by getting asylum seekers deported back to their torture camps. They have made agreements with the Swiss government to get Ethiopians deported in exchange for the promised financial-support. To this effect the foreign Ministry has allegedly instructed the embassies and consulates in Europe to issue a travel document, with out any condition, to any Ethiopian that the respective governments want to deport.

Accordingly the Ethiopian consulate in Geneva has already started implementing the issuance of the travel document and consequently the deportation process.

- ☞ According to the Swiss officials more than 1240 Ethiopian “failed asylum seekers” are facing deportation.
- ☞ So far the Ethiopian Mission in Geneva has issued travel documents for 13 Ethiopian asylum seekers whose identities have been provided by the Swiss authorities. The documents have already been submitted to the deporting officials.
- ☞ The Mission says they have instructions from the Ethiopian foreign Ministry to issue travel documents to any Ethiopian whom the Swiss authorities want to deport.
- ☞ So far one Ethiopian from canton Luzerne has been deported
- ☞ Another 2 Ethiopians from Winththur and is scheduled to be deported on the 13th of July 2005. they already have all the travel details with Lufthansa and other instructions from the police.

In view of the above mentioned facts and the present unsettled and dangerous situation in Ethiopia it is inhuman and unacceptable to deport asylum seekers back to their predators.

To this end;

- ❖ We call the attention of the Swiss people, its embassies, overseas offices and human right organizations to act against their government from committing regrettable acts which more or less resemble in effect the one that happened against the Jewish refugees during the Second World War.
- ❖ We urge the reputed **Lufthansa** and other airways and airliners not to take part in this inhuman act.
- ❖ We call on all our compatriots throughout the world to protest to international humanitarian organizations and Switzerland embassies worldwide to immediately intervene to stop the deportation.

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