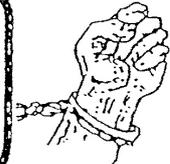




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



April 5/2011

STOP THE REPRESSION IN DJIBOUTI

The president of Djibouti, Omar Gelleh, has changed the Constitution to be able to run for a third term election on April 8 and, in the process, has intensified the repression unleashed against the people. Jean Paul Noel Abdi, chairman of the Djibouti Human Rights Association, is charged and in prison while dozen others are being tortured for staging protest demonstrations.

On February 18, Djiboutian people staged a massive protest demonstration. Among those arrested on February 18 were three leaders of political opposition parties, who were detained for a day. The government has initiated judicial inquiries for sedition against the three, but has not brought charges against them. More than 100 people rounded up that day were charged with assault ("*atteintes à l'intégrité physique ou psychique de la personne*") and demonstrating without a permit. Here is a report by an international human rights body:

"About 80 were brought to court on February 27. After the judge dismissed 40 cases, proceedings were recessed and the justice minister, Mohammed Barkat Abdillahi, removed the judge and replaced him. Defense lawyers told Human Rights Watch that the new judge then promptly convicted 25 defendants and sentenced them to prison. Two require medical attention but have been denied access to doctors. Others remain incarcerated. According to the Ligue Djiboutienne des Droits Humains (LDDH), Djibouti's main human rights organization, these detainees are among a total of 71 political prisoners in Djibouti. The opposition had planned demonstrations every Friday until the election. However, there was no demonstration on February 25, as there was a heavy police presence at the stadium plaza, the site of previous protests, and the street leading to it. On March 3, the Interior Minister Yacin Elmi Bouh denied a permit to hold a demonstration the next day, The political opposition parties, claiming that the Guelleh administration had made it impossible to conduct a fair election, chose not to nominate candidates for the presidential election, effectively boycotting it. The government used that decision as an excuse to deny permits for rallies in front of opposition headquarters on March 25. Even though the rallies were designed to call attention to what the opposition considers objectionable policies rather than to support a candidate, the Interior Ministry said that only parties fielding candidates could hold public meetings during the two-week election cycle. The blanket ban on demonstrations contravenes article 15 of the Djiboutian constitution, which protects the rights to freedom of expression. It also violates articles 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Gelleh is facing a serious insurgency challenge by FRUD in the North and a popular protest in the country as a whole. He is trying to overcome this by repression and torture and massive rape of women as a counter insurgency tool. This should also be condemned as the time of Gelleh has passed—the message is: Gelleh go away!

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS INJUSTICE EVERYWHERE
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