

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK

Public Statement

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14th January 2008

KAMPALA: EHAHRD-Net CONCERNED ABOUT JAMMING OF MEDIA BROADCAST IN ETHIOPIA

The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net) is disturbed by news of jamming of Deutsche Welle (DW) Amharic language broadcasts by Government authorities in Ethiopia. Also affected by this problem is the Voice of America's Amharic and Oromifa language broadcast.

According to information received from EHAHRD-Net's contacts, it is believed that the jamming stems from the broadcasters' "coverage of the controversial May 2005 elections, the ongoing Ogaden crisis and the Government of Ethiopia's involvement in Somalia," among others. DW's Amharic language broadcast reaches some 20 Million listeners in Ethiopia, neighbouring Eritrea, and hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians in the US, Europe and Africa.

"As a Network, we are deeply concerned about this new development in the harassment of the media by the Ethiopian Government. The memories of the 2005 events following the disputed elections are still fresh in people's minds, and this situation must not be repeated. The people of Ethiopia have a right to information just as the various media organisations both local and international have the right to inform, endowed upon them not only by the Ethiopian Constitution, but also regional and international human rights instruments. As such, the Government must heed its obligations without fail," says Hassan Shire Sheikh, Chairperson EHAHRD/Net.

APPEAL

EHAHRD-Net appeals to the Ethiopian Government authorities to;

Immediately desist from deliberately jamming media coverage by the two international organisations as reported;

Respect media freedom as adequately provided for in the Ethiopian Constitution and other regional and international human rights instruments to which it is signatory;

We urge all our Network members to write to the Ethiopian authorities requesting them to stop harassing the media, and to immediately desist from jamming DW and VOA's broadcasts.

Send appeals to:

Prime Minister
His Excellency Meles Zenawi
Office of the Prime Minister
PO Box 1031
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: +251 11 1552020
E-mail: national.parliament@telecom.net.et , national.parliament@ethionet.et
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr Seyoum Mesfin
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 393
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: +251 11 551 43 00
Email: mfa.addis@telecom.net.et
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Justice
Mr Assefa Kesito
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 1370
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: +251 11 5517775 / 5520874
Email: ministry-justice@telecom.net.et
Salutation: Dear Minister

Please also send a copy of your letter to the Ethiopian representative in your country.

For further information, please contact:

Tumusiime Kabwende Deo
Press Officer
Mobile: +256-712-075721