

## Sidama Nationals' Demonstrate in Pretoria and handed their Petitions in; the Abuse and Disappearance Continues in Sidama;

Sidama Nation Online, March 31<sup>st</sup> 2006.

Sidama nationals, in exile, South Africa, who fled persecution from the tyrannical Ethiopian regime and its cadres such as 'Melese Marimo', staged-out on demonstration on 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2006 in the capital of South Africa, Pretoria. The theme of their demonstration was, exposing serious human rights abuses of the Sidama people and the appointment of the well-known human rights abuser in Sidama, Melese Marimo, as an Ethiopian Ambassador to South Africa. Melese Marimo ordered the massacre of Sidama peaceful and armless demonstrators who were seeking their fundamental and constitutional rights on May 24, 2002 in Awassa city. Since then, he continued his abuse of the rights of Sidama people in various forms, intensity and magnitude representing PM, Meles's regime.

Ironically, most of the Sidamas who took part in demonstration have fled Ethiopia since the May 24, 2002's massacre of the Sidama people. They fled persecution from the very person who is appointed as an Ethiopian Ambassador to South Africa. However, Melese Marimo hasn't stopped abusing the rights of the Sidama people on May 2002's massacre. He ordered another massacre of the innocents and continued his conspiracy with incumbent regime and helped the killings of other Sidamas; ordered the torture and arrest of thousands in the region since the beginning of February 2006.

Emphatically condemning such an appointment; Sidama community in Pretoria staged out on demonstration and handed their petitions to South African government, various Western embassies such the USA, UK, Canada, France, Germany and others in South African; and international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, USA and other religious organisations. All parts promised Sidama community in SA that they will look into such serious allegations of human rights abuses by the Ethiopian government and its politicians as per international agreements.

Meanwhile, it's been learnt that about 18-24 Sidama students have been taken to unknown location by the security forces of the regime since the new form of harassment started in the region, about 1 and a half month ago. No one knows their where-about and their families have expressed their grave concern about the safety of their loved ones.

In another development, regional cadres are said to have been negotiating with influential Sidama intellectuals and religion leaders regarding the release of indiscriminately arrested thousands of Sidamas. The pressure is mounting on the cadres from entire Sidamas also to stop harassing Sidama citizens for no reason. It's yet to be confirmed whether they are going to listen and release all prisoners or using federal government as an excuse.

Sidama Nation Online, March 31<sup>st</sup> 2006.