

Statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia on the US State Department Human Rights Report 2010

The U.S. State Department's annual Human Rights Country Report for the year 2010 on one hundred ninety four countries, including Ethiopia, was released on 8 April 2011.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has thoroughly examined the Report on Ethiopia. It regrets that once again over 80% of the publication reproduces, almost verbatim, claims contained in previous reports. Not for the first time, the Report narrates groundless and unverifiable allegations and repeats the same politically motivated accusations obtained from dubious sources. The report refers to these as "reliable" and "credible" but ironically, it also identifies many of them as "violent movements" and "opposition sources".

There are some newly added entries but these, too, are also a compilation of fabricated stories, misleading judgments, and claims invented by opposition elements with known motives. In the spirit of "telling a lie often enough will make people in the end believe it", opposition networks are quick to see the State Department's annual report as a vehicle to tarnish Ethiopia's image. Some of the entries also find their way into the reports of "advocacy" networks such as Human Rights Watch, always quick to pickup anything detrimental to Ethiopia or which might encourage a down turn in Ethiopia-US relations.

In order to enhance better understanding between our two governments, Ethiopia and the United States have been involved in a series of political discussions under the framework of the Bilateral Dialogue Mechanism jointly established in Washington two years ago. Human rights is one of the issues in these discussions. Ethiopia was optimistic that the dialogue exercise would lead to undertaking objective assessments of situations in Ethiopia as well as the identification of areas in which the United States can extend support to our democratization process. Judging by the content of the Report, it is our understanding that the political dialogue mechanism did not produce the desired outcome, as the report only adds a few new lies and fabrications to the old ones that we had already responded to in detail.

The Ethiopian Government is disappointed that the Report again follows the old path of compiling fictitious stories without a serious attempt to verify the facts. The fact that this is happening at a time when the two Governments are actively engaged in a dialogue on the matter is even more disappointing. Indeed, the Ethiopian Government is entitled to raise the question as to whether the intention of the Report is to compile fabrications with a view to tarnishing the image of the Country or engaging the Government to address any challenges with respect to the human rights situation in Ethiopia.

The Government therefore, dismisses the Report in entirety and with the contempt that it deserves and the Government does not intend to respond in detail at this time.