



## Thilo Hoppe

Mitglied des Deutschen Bundestages  
Stv. Vorsitzender des Ausschusses für wirtschaftliche  
Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung

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## Press Release

### Shocking wave of arrests in Ethiopia

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*Thilo Hoppe, member of the German parliament, is deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Ethiopia.*

It is extremely alarming that, in Ethiopia, leading opposition politicians and independent journalists are hit by a fresh wave of arrests. There is strong suspicion that the Ethiopian government seeks to systematically muzzle critical voices.

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has repeatedly and randomly accused the Ethiopian opposition to engage in terrorist activities.

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This March, 370 oppositionists had already been arrested, among them 217 members of the “Oromo Federal Democratic Movement” (OFDM) which is known for being critical of the government. At the beginning of September, following a meeting with representatives from Amnesty International, opposition members Bekele Gerba and Olbana Lelisa were arrested.

Yesterday also saw the arrestment of Eskinder Nega, independent journalist and former Amnesty “Prisoner of Conscience”, as well as that of Andualem Arage, Secretary General of the largest opposition party “Unity for Democracy and Justice”(UDJ), the party of Birtukan Mideksas. Also Debebe Eshetu, a well known artist and spokesperson of the UDJ, who had previously been detained following the 2010 elections, was arrested last week.



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The German government has to send a clear signal to the Ethiopian authorities by strongly condemning the recent wave of arrests. It has to urge the oppositionists' release and explicitly state that human rights violations will affect development cooperation between the two countries. Otherwise, the ongoing human rights dialogue would turn into a mere travesty.