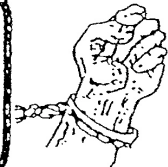




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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR ETHIOPIAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS (SOCEPP)



AUGUST 2/2007

VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS OF BETTE ISRAELIS—RAMPANT RACISM CONDEMNED

A recent example of the rampant racism and violations of rights to which Bette Israeli ("Ethiopian Jews") are subjected comes from Petah Tikvah where some 80 recent immigrants from Ethiopia have been denied the right to go to schools. Outwardly, the reason given is that the Ethiopians have not finished their "conversion process" while the real reason seems to be their their skin color.

The fact is that the state religious schools where they are supposed to finish their conversion process (the Bette Israelis have to go through this despite their protests) have refused to take them in. "They will scare off other students to private schools leaving only the poverty stricken children in the state religious schools" is the way it has been presented. This open discrimination is in line with the latest statement from the Israeli Interior Minister who called for an end to the Aliyah, no more Ethiopian Jews to be brought to Israel. The thousands of Bette Israelis suffering racial discrimination all over Israel seem to have no effective voice to defend their rights despite the existence of soöe human rights groups of their own. Many still live in trailers, only a few make it even to the vocational schools, they are recruited into the army where racism is rife, the young are pushed to drug addiction, prostitution and suicide. The racism and denial of rights cannot be ignored.

Israel also holds, in various prisons, many Ethiopian asylum seekers and has deported quite a few of them back to Ethiopia. SOCEPP has called for an end to this practice and to the overall violation of the rights of Bette Israelis

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