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reported Police brutally attacked and dispersed peaceful demonstrators in the capital Addis Ababa on Jan. 25 as they try to protest against the ongoing government repression on opposition political parties and dissents in run-up to the country's general elections. Political activists say Sunday's attack against the peaceful demonstrators is further evidence of the authorities' determination to clamp down the activities of opposition political parties ahead of the elections. According to reports, demonstrators were brutally beaten with batons, sticks and iron rods. Reports show the victims were taken to hospital right away, and some of them are still receiving medical treatment. Among the seriously injured was Sileshi Hagose, member of the general assembly of the party and editor in chief of a newspaper. Recently released photographs show that he was wounded in the face and head, and his hands were seriously broken (*Abugida, Jan. 27*). - The Addis Ababa Administration said it has not given any permit to the Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) (Andinet) party to hold a peaceful protest rally in Addis Ababa on Jan. 25. But the party had said it would go ahead and hold the demonstration because it has fulfilled the requirement of notifying the Administration about it. A high official of the Addis Ababa Administration said the faction of Andinet that is led by Ato Belay Fekadu is not legal. He is not a representative of Andinet and hence cannot call a peaceful rally, he said. The official added the party had neither made known its slogans nor the areas where it intends to hold the rally, and hence was disqualified (*Addis Admas, Jan. 24*).

The managing director of *Enqu* magazine, Ato Fekadu Mahtemework, was arrested on Jan. 21. Ato Fekadu was summoned to the Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority. He was arrested on allegations that he has denied the government of 600,000 Birr in tax arrears. Ato Fekadu appeared in court last week but was sent back to prison until investigations are finalized (*Ethio-Mihidar, Jan. 27*).

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi said Egypt does not oppose Ethiopia's right to development through implementation of projects on the River Nile, in a meeting with Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn. Al-Sisi added, however, that there should be consideration of Egypt's water rights, particularly as the river Nile constitutes the only source of the country's water needs. Al-Sisi and Desalegn agreed that the solution for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) issue will be coordinated through a joint commission, according to an official presidential statement by spokesperson (*Daily News Egypt, Jan. 31*).

Ethiopia expects to open a new railway line linking the capital Addis Ababa with the Red Sea state of Djibouti in early 2016, a project at the centre of plans to create new manufacturing industries, the head of the state railways said. The 700-km line is being built at a cost of \$4bln by China Railway Engineering Corporation (CREC) and China Civil Engineering Construction (CCECC). Ethiopia is seeking to have 5,000 km of new lines working across the country by 2020. Among the new national railway lines, one will connect the region of Afar, where Ethiopia is encouraging the mining of potash for fertilizer, to Djibouti, the main export point for land-locked Ethiopia. For now, logistical difficulties such as poor roads and an old fleet of trucks mean transporting goods from the capital to Djibouti can take days. The new railway line will cut the journey time to about eight hours (*Reuters, Jan. 28*).

The Addis Ababa Water & Sewerage Authority (AAWSA) is acquiring 294 mobile toilets, each with three m² of area, for close to 30 m birr from the Metal & Engineering Corporation (MetEC). MetEC's Ethiopia Plastic Industry was awarded the contract and will deliver two rooms, for men and women; two hand washing facilities; a 750 liter water tank at the top and a septic tank, which will be buried underground. AAWSA recently received 116 mobile toilets with 11m Br from MetEC. Currently, the city, home to four million residents, has 63 public Toilets under the control of the Authority, 27 of which are communal. For the current fiscal year, the city administration has allocated 41.5m Br in budget the AAWSA, with plans to boost the total number of toilets beyond the 1,000 targeted in the Growth & Transformation Plan (GTP). Its plans include an additional 830 mobile, 20 public and 70 communal toilets (*WIC, Jan. 26*).