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Six publishers and media organizations have been charged with defamation of public leaders and institutions as well as incessant violation of the country's constitution, the Ministry of Justice announced. The Ministry of Justice said that the five magazines, Fact, Jano, Lomi, Addis Guday, Enquand Afro-Times Newspaper have been charged for their irresponsibility, instigating enmity and endless violation of the constitution. The government has also designed various regulations to realize the complete implementation of expression of opinion and freedom of the press guaranteed by the Ethiopian constitution to the media (*WIC, Aug. 4*).

The Ministry of Justice has disclosed that it has established a formal lawsuit against five magazines and one newspaper for publishing information aimed at setting the people against the government and to overthrow the government. But the five publications said they have not been informed yet about the lawsuit or received any court summons. The first time they learnt about the ministry's action was when the printing presses refused to print their publications, having received orders from the government (*Addis Adams, Aug. 9*).

The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) said it has been consolidating its support for political parties that operate legally and work in accordance with the laws of the land. The Head of the National Electoral Board Secretariat Office, Nega Dufessa, said that in addition to funding political parties annually, the board has been providing a series of capacity building training. He also stated that the board provides financial assistance and allocates free airtime for political parties during election periods so that they could publicize their political objectives and programs. On the other hand, he said, the board takes measures on parties that fail to hold a general assembly every two years, do not adhere to electoral laws and do not report their audited income and expenses to the board. According to Nega, out of the 74 legally operating regional and national parties, 18 had fulfilled all the requirements in the board guidelines and received certificates. The board last year cancelled the licenses of three political parties which failed to adhere to the electoral proclamation, election code of conduct and other laws related to election, he disclosed. The banned political parties are the Oromo Liberation Party, Ethiopian Pan-Africanist Party and Ethiopian Somali Democracy and Development Party (*WIC, Aug. 8*).

Some 26% of the total cost needed for the construction of a multi-billion dollar hydro-electric dam on the Nile is being covered by the Ethiopian public, an Ethiopian spokesman said. Fekadu Ketema, spokesman for the office of the National Council for Coordination and Public Participation for the Construction of GERD, said "The bond sale is well in progress and additional fundraising mechanisms including SMS and lottery awards are put in place side by side with the bond sale with a view to enabling all segments of the society to provide financial support to the dam construction." Ketema said that the fourth round of a bond purchasing program has already been launched. He added that even Salini Construction Company, the Italian firm which is building the dam, has confirmed that "there is no financial shortage for construction of the dam. Ketema expected that the 4.8-bio-\$ dam – of which 35.8% of its construction has completed – will be operational as scheduled. Some 8750 employees are engaged in the construction of the dam with 2200 different types of machinery deployed to the site (*Anadolu Agency, Aug. 9*).

Ethiopian exports rose 5.8% to \$3.3bio in the year through July 7 partly due to an increase in oilseed revenue, the country's second-largest source of export earnings. The Horn of African nation earned \$642.7m from mainly sesame and niger seeds during Ethiopia's fiscal year, rising 46% from 2012-2013, according to an e-mailed statement from the Trade Ministry. Africa's biggest coffee producer received \$718.8m from sales of the beans, down 3.7% from a year earlier, as volumes dropped 4.1%. Ethiopia's government is trying to attract investment into processing agricultural products and diversifying the economy, with a goal to earn \$6.6bio from farming exports and \$1bio from textile and garment sales by mid-2015. - The World Bank in May gave the country \$250m to help develop export-led manufacturing zones and boost the business climate. Textile and clothing sales climbed 13% to \$111m in a nation where retailers such as Tesco Plc (TSCO) and Hennes & Mauritz AB (HMB) have begun sourcing the materials, the ministry said. Earnings from shoe sales jumped 57% to \$28.8m, according to the data. China's Huajian Group is among companies investing in shoe manufacturing in Ethiopia. The value of gold exports declined 21% to \$456.2m in 2013-14, while the sale of the leafy narcotic khat rose 9.5% to \$297.4m and shipments of flowers jumped 7% to \$199.7m, the Trade Ministry said (*Businessweek, Aug. 5*).

The Ethiopian Horticulture Development Agency said 245m USD was earned from export of flowers, vegetables and fruits during the just-ended Ethiopia fiscal year. Agency Director-General Alem Woldegerima told that of the total revenue earned 199.74m USD was secured from flowers, 40m USD from vegetables and 6m from fruits. The Director-General, who recalled that the revenue from horticulture during the previous fiscal year was 230.5m USD, said the performance of the just ended year has exceeded the previous year by 6.4%. Ethiopian flowers are mainly exported to Europe, according to Alem. He said the major consumer countries are the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, and Norway. Saudi Arabia, Japan, and the United States also import flowers. Fruits and vegetable are exported to Somalia and Djibouti, he added. Currently, vast land is covered by horticulture, the Director-General stated. Foreign investors are entering the country to invest in the horticultural sector, Alem revealed, adding that Israeli, Indian, Belgian and Kuwaiti investors are the majority of those. Dutch, Ecuadorian and Saudi are also following, it was indicated. During the past Ethiopian fiscal year, a total of 1,119 ha was given to foreign investors for the development of flowers, vegetables and fruits. Similarly, 100 ha was given to local investors. Sher Ethiopia from the Netherlands, Black Tulip and Fontana from Kenya and Esmeralda from Ecuador are reportedly either cultivating the land they secured or acquiring land. More than 80 companies, most of them foreign-owned, are engaged in floriculture in Ethiopia, it was learned (*ENA, Aug. 4*).

Middle East companies are running 179 investment projects worth over \$1bio in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Investment Agency said. Communication director Getahun Negash said the projects are being carried out in manufacturing, agriculture, real estate and machinery. "Some 80 of the total projects are in the manufacturing sector as the government gives prime attention to the sector," Negash said. "Second to manufacturing is the agriculture sector, which supplies inputs to the manufacturing sector. Some 35 of the total projects are in the agriculture sector," he said. Negash said Saudi Arabia has the lion's share of the Middle Eastern investment projects in Ethiopia with 86 projects, followed by

Yemen and Egypt, which have 29 and 23 projects respectively. According to Negash, Ethiopia, given its geographical location, has always had economic, cultural and commercial ties to the Middle East. He said that African countries such as Sudan, Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria have investments in Ethiopia. "The Sudanese have the largest investment in Ethiopia compared to other African countries," he said (*Anadolu Agency, Aug. 6*).

Ethiopia has set up a national committee to draw up a plan to prevent and contain any possible outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus, which is currently sweeping West Africa, the country's Public Health Institute said. "A national committee is set up to design a guideline to prevent Ebola," institute spokesperson Abel Yeshaneh told. "Members of the committee are drawn from Ethiopian Airlines, the Ministry of Health and other Stakeholders," he said. Ethiopian Airlines, which operates an extensive flight network connecting affected West Africa countries to other parts of the World, said that it is taking "precautions in connection the outbreak of the disease in some parts of West Africa." While continuing daily flights as usual, the national carrier said "stringent and specific surveillance is being carried out regarding all flights from West Africa at Addis Ababa airport." So far, Abel said, there is no reported case of Ebola in Ethiopia (*Anadolu Agency, Aug. 4*).