Prime Minister Meles Zenawi passed away late on August 20, 2012. Prime Minister
Meles died after being treated abroad for the last few weeks, the Council of
Ministers announced. The Council said the Prime Minister was a visionary leader
for Ethiopia and steadfastly worked for the renaissance of Africa. He has been
representing his country and Africa at international forums to consolidate peace
and stability. The Council decided that Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
Foreign Affairs Hailemariam Desalegn become Acting Prime Minister of the country
(State media (August 21). - Ethiopia's Prime Minister H.E. Meles Zenawi died at
midnight on August 20. Ethiopians lost their dedicated leader who has
contributed to the transformation of the country from absolute dictatorial
military rule and poverty to a democratic and developmental one. The Premier was
one of the most remarkable transformational leaders in Africa and the rest of
the world (WIC, August 21).

Thousands of Ethiopians descended on the centre of the capital Addis Ababa on
Tuesday to mourn Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, their firm-handed ruler of more
than two decades, whose body was flown home after his death in a Brussels
hospital at 57. Supporters mourned him as the savior of a long-suffering nation
and Washington praised its ally, but opponents hailed the death of an autocrat
one group described as a "genocidal tyrant". Traffic was congested from the
airport to his residence, where his body was to be put on display. - Secretive
to the end, Meles left it to officials of the European Union to disclose that he
was being treated in the Belgian capital when he succumbed to an unspecified
illness. An EU source said he had been a patient at the Saint-Luc University
Hospital in Brussels. His deputy Hailemariam said they had spoken only recently:
"He was recovering well, even taking part in light sporting activities. We were
often in touch while he was recovering and we were optimistic that he would go
on towards a full recovery," he said. "Meles was one of a kind. It is very
difficult to replace a man of his stature." - In Brussels, a cortège
accompanied by police outriders left a hotel next to the hospital, and took his
casket to a private Belgian airstrip. Belgian military officials and police were
there as it was loaded onto an Ethiopian Airlines jet. Hours later in Addis
Ababa, the coffin was carried out of the aircraft, draped in the green, gold and
red national flag. On the tarmac, a sister of Meles wept. "My brother loved this
country. He deserved better," she said, a black scarf covering her tearful eyes.
Outside the airport's terminal, thousands of well-wishers huddled in the rain to
pay their respects. Some carried placards reading: "Meles, your legacy will
never die." (Reuters, August 21).

Thousands of Ethiopians gathered Thursday for the funeral of Abuna Paulos, head
of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Abuna died last Thursday at the age of 76,
four days before the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Abuna Paulos'
funeral was held at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Ethiopia's capital Addis
Ababa. Among the mourners was Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, who is
set to take over as Ethiopia's new leader. Most people had to listen to the
service on the radio outside the church compound, as the crowd was too large to
accommodate everybody. Many people were crying outside, mourning the death of
their religious leader. Many people at the funeral said they will remember Abuna
Paulos mostly for his development work in Ethiopia. - But the patriarch was also
frequently criticized. His critics felt that his ties with the government were
too strong. They also said he tried to make his own position more powerful by
attempting to put the patriarch position above the synod, the council of the
church. Also, Abuna Paulos was appointed leader while his predecessor, Abuna
Merkorios, was in exile. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church officially states that no
new patriarch can be appointed if the former one is still alive. Abuna Merkorios
and his followers started a rival synod in the United States. The General
Secretary of the Orthodox Catholic Church, Abuna Heskin, says that people who
are criticizing Abuna Paulos are judging without knowing the truth (VOA, August
23).