

Isaias, Meles and Al-Bashir make worst dictators list

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(PARADE MAGAZINE) Isaias Afewerki announced in May 2008 that elections would be postponed for "three or four decades" or longer because they "polarize society." All forms of media are controlled by the government. At least 10 local journalists remain in prison since their arrests in 2001.

U.S. link: In October 2008, the U.S. government banned the sale of arms to Eritrea, accusing Afewerki of "not fully cooperating with anti-terrorism efforts."

16. Meles Zenawi Ethiopia Age: 53
 In power since: 1995
 Last year's rank: 15

A former guerrilla leader, Meles shows no signs of sharing power with anyone. In January, his government passed a law forbidding any NGO that receives more than 10% of its budget from abroad from doing human rights work in Ethiopia. Despite Meles's excesses, the U.S. considers him an important regional ally and continues to train his military.

Age: 65
 In power since: 1989
 Last year's rank: 2

This month, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for al-Bashir on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his contributions to the tragedy in Darfur. The ICC charged him with "murdering, exterminating, raping, torturing, and forcibly transferring large numbers of civilians, and pillaging their property." Bashir's military campaign has been accused of driving 2.7 million people from their homes since 2003.

U.S. link: Both former President Bush and President Obama have spoken out strongly against Bashir's actions. Although we've imposed trade sanctions against Sudan, the U.S. still supplies the country with substantial amounts of sorghum and other food products. The U.S. also purchases from Sudan millions of dollars worth of gum Arabic, used in soft drinks, candy, and shoe polish. In 2008, U.S. trade with Sudan actually increased to \$148 million.

- List of top Ten is as follows
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|----------------------|---------------------|--|
| | 1 | Robert Mugabe, |
| Zimbabwe | | Unemployment and inflation high. |
| | 2 | Omar Al-Bashir, |
| Sudan | | Darfur continues to be a hotbed of violence. |
| | 3 | Kim Jong-Il, |
| North Korea | | Runs the world's most repressive regime. |
| | 4 | |
| Than Shwe, | Myanmar | Delayed access to aid after devastation. |
| | 5 | |
| King Abdullah, | Saudi Arabia | Most oppressed women in the world. |
| | 6 | |
| Hu Jintao, | China | Controls all media and represses religion. |
| | 7 | |
| Sayyid Ali Khamenei, | Iran | Permits execution of juveniles. |
| | 8 | |
| Isayas Afewerki, | Eritrea | No national elections, controls media. |
| | 9 | |
| G. Berdymammedov, | Turkmenistan | Restricts religion, |
| represses media. | | 10 |
| torture are common. | Muammar al-Qaddafi, | Libya |
| | | Reports of |

Source: PARADE MAGAZINE