

Public invited to notorious facility

Ethiopia on Friday invited members of the public to tour a notorious detention facility where high-profile political prisoners once endured abusive interrogations, weeks of solitary confinement and other forms of torture. The authorities said the opening of the Maekelawi (central) facility amounted to **‘a promise to never again repeat the cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment of any detainee in the country’**. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed drew praise for freeing political prisoners after he assumed office in April 2018, the same month the notorious centre was closed. However, a report on the [News24](#) site notes that critics contend that his government has recently embraced the repressive tactics of previous regimes, especially after the assassination of five military and government officials in June. On Friday, top justice officials, including Attorney-General Berhanu Tsegaye and Supreme Court Chief Meaza Ashenafi, walked with scores of ordinary Ethiopians through the grounds of Maekelawi, which had been spruced up for the occasion. Daniel Bekele, a former political prisoner who was recently named head of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, said this represented ‘a major turning point both symbolically and literally as a commitment to end the history of torture in Ethiopian prisons’.