

The declaration of a State of Emergency by the lawless TPLF regime in Ethiopia is a blatantly egregious act making a bad situation a lot worse.

Statement by the allied Oromo liberation forces on the official declaration of a State of Emergency by the TPLF *shifita* regime in Finfinne/Addis Ababa.

While Oromia is in mourning, burying the dead and still counting victims of the October 2 Irreecha Massacre, the lawless regime that perpetrated that Irreecha tragedy has declared a state of emergency in the country. "State of emergency" primarily aims lawful protection of life and property. But this is TPLF rule, whose distinctive marks are wanton destruction of life and embezzlement and looting of public and private property, ever since the regime came to power. The regime always has been a single-party tyranny, in spite of the constitutional facade of multi-party system, and there has been no respect for civil and political rights of anyone other than members of the regime and their armed surrogates. Oromia in particular has been under military rule since the on-going peaceful protest began on November 12, 2015. The declaration of a state emergency now, therefore, is nothing more than formalizing the existing state terror. It is more of the same poisonous pill that cannot moderate the TPLF's lawless brutality. There is obviously no respite for their victims in Oromia or elsewhere.

We have in the past pointed out the TPLF's myopic political prism and their obvious incapacity to understand, much less resolve, the perennial issues at stake on their own. The fundamental issues are persistent and deeply rooted, including a call for recognizing and ensuring basic democratic liberties, freedom and self-determination, a process which will require sober and inclusive deliberations by all interested parties. These are issues that cannot be resolved single handedly by authoritarianism and violence of TPLF. Only a civilized peaceful political process with the participation of the principal interested parties can lead the way out of the current logjam.

The protest in Oromia is non-violent and its aims are respect for basic democratic rights, freedom and democracy; in short, it aims for the achievement of universally-recognized rights. These aspirations are gaining support from all population groups in the country, without exception. The proper reply for the sacrifices of the people of Oromia who persist in their peaceful protest should have been opening up of dialogue with the genuine representatives of the people to address those issues of democracy, freedom and peace. The declaration of the state of emergency and applying the same worn out tactics and strategies of more violence and repression reveals that the TPLF is desperately out of depth, out of message and totally bereft of constructive ideas. Once again we remind them that the road to solution and out of the problem lies in dialogue, not more violence and repression. They should act now to save themselves and the region from looming catastrophe that their obstinacy is leading us toward.

To the gallant people of Oromia: the declaration of a state of emergency is yet another phase of TPLF terror with which you are already familiar and, albeit with serious sacrifices, an approach that so far you have successfully withstood. You have everything to gain to persevere in the struggle. At the same time, we need to be watchful against a TPLF divide-and-rule policy of turning one against the other in order to continue oppressing all. Your protection of non-Oromo in Oromia, including ethnic Tigrean residents, is exemplary. It has won you world-wide admiration and sympathy and support of all your neighbors.

We take this opportunity to say again, in order to deny TPLF any pretext, and to give peace a chance, that combatants of different liberation forces are requested to continue observing voluntary cessation of hostilities, except in cases of strict self-defense.

To the African Union and leadership of individual member states: Your deafening silence and inaction in the face of TPLF brutal regime's atrocities in and around your headquarters in Oromia is an indelible stain on the continental body's good name and ideals. It indeed does no honor to the continental body and its pledge to promote the interests of Africans if you remain quiet while the uprooting and wanton destruction of inhabitants' farmsteads in Oromia in localities that can be seen from the windows of your headquarters is going on! Does the massacre of Oromo pilgrims in Ireecha really mean nothing to the AU? We hope and trust that you will uphold "respect for the dignity of the human person in Africa" as an ideal for launching a continental unity that founding fathers like Abubakar Tafewa Balewa spoke of.

We implore the US, UK, EU and others who are supporting the TPLF regime: Use their influence to impress on the TPLF the need to work for a peaceful transition in cooperation with representatives of the people, instead of pushing the country towards a dangerous precipice, which the current barbarous exercise of drawing on more irresponsible and arbitrary emergency powers is bound to speed up.

We express our gratitude to all democratic forces who expressed their solidarity and empathy with the people of Oromia at this trying time including, Amhara, Konso, Ogadenia, Harari, and many others. We also acknowledge the principled solidarity expressed by Tigrean democratic individuals and organisations. We wish to reiterate that, with the support of you all, the peaceful struggle being waged and sacrifices being paid by the people of Oromia for human dignity, freedom, democracy and self-determination, will prevail over evil forces of tyranny and usher in a new era of freedom, brotherhood of peoples, tolerance and democracy.

The struggle for freedom and democracy shall prevail.

Coordinating committee of allied Oromo Liberation Forces

(ODF, OLF, OLF-“U”, and FIO)

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