



ODF Statement on EPRDF Proclamation on Oromia special rights on Addis Ababa (Finfinne).

The Council of Ministers of the Ethiopian federal government released a statement on the long overdue legal assertion regarding the rights of the Oromia state on the capital. After careful reading and examination of the contents of the statement, we fail to see any substantial legal remedy that addresses the concern and the demand of the Oromo people. Contrarily, some of the rights that the statement tries to list are universal rights and basic freedoms that every citizen of a given country should have enjoyed in the first place and do not need a new proclamation.

Moreover, we find the language and narratives in which this so-called Oromia's special interest on Addis Ababa is framed disconcerting. The document is divisive, full of confusion, devoid of any substance and insinuates as if the Oromo people demanded some kind of preferential treatment at the expense of other Ethiopians residing in the city.

Without addressing the long-awaited demand and legitimate grievances of the Oromo people regarding the precarious and problematic status of Addis Ababa, the document appears rather intended to sow the seeds of discord, suspicion and intercommunal mistrust by exploiting the apprehension of various stakeholders on the future of Addis Ababa.

For over two years, across the width and length of Oromia massive protests were staged against the Addis Ababa Master Plan. Thousands were killed and tens of thousands herded into various detention centers for peacefully petitioning the government to respect and abide by the very laws it promulgated. Having brought the country under a state of emergency decree, the regime is relaunching the same Master Plan rejected by the Oromo populace under the guise of expansion of transportation and health services, rapid economic development, and proper compensation. The expansion of Addis Ababa and the land grabbing campaign over the last decades has not only resulted in the eviction and dispossession of Oromo farmers in Addis Ababa and the surrounding towns and countryside but also detrimental to the Oromo way of life and the environment. The much talked about economic growth that the government brags about rather benefited and enriched the coffers of its cronies.

We in the Oromo Democratic Front want to remind all Ethiopians that this government has lost all credibility. Any pronouncement and policy emanating from this regime must be viewed with cautious apprehension. What all Ethiopians are demanding is a fundamental change of the system rather than false promises of hollow fixes. And, failure to heed this genuinely popular desire for change risks plunging the country into further chaos and economic decay.

Time and again, EPRDF has been fooling itself and other through this ancient tactic of filling the political air with confusion and empty rhetoric. Instead of addressing problems, it is still trying, at this late hour, to divide and rule aimed at prolonging its grip on power. The fact is that these tactics have run their courses and lost potency. Change in Ethiopia is inevitable. The only way to put the country on the right track and address the political, social and economic worries of the People of Ethiopia is through meaningfully participative and fundamental reform and all-inclusive democratization starting from democratizing the ruling party itself. Once again, we call on the people of Ethiopia not to fail for yet another trap laid out by the TPLF/EPRDF. Say NO to the divide and rule tactics designed to weaken your resolve. Say Never to all attempts at putting one against another. The only way forward is to stand firm and fight in unison to end this brutal dictatorship.

Freedom & Justice for All!!  
Oromo Democratic Front  
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