

Desperate Measures of Divide and Rule will not Undermine the Unity of the Oppressed Nations

Press Statement by Sidama National Liberation Front (SNLF)

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The oppressed nations of Ethiopia have never accepted the TPLF minority rule since it purged national liberation movements and country wide opposition political parties from the Transitional Government in 1992. In spite of adopting the most liberal constitution that on paper guarantees the rights of nations and nationalities to self-determination including secession and human and democratic rights of individuals, the regime continues to grossly abuse these rights every single day.

Any nation that demands the basic rights enshrined in the very constitution promulgated by the regime itself is brutalized, its people massacred by the special killing squad known as the 'Agazi' forces, and imprisoned and tortured with impunity. Over 70 peaceful Sidama civilians were massacred in Loqqe suburb of Hawassa on 24 May 2002 by the Agazi forces for peacefully demanding that the Sidama capital should not be moved out of Hawassa. To this date, the TPLF regime continued to displace Sidama farmers from lands surrounding Hawassa as part of its grand plan to take over Hawassa, and make it a federally administered city, leaving the farmers destitute. As we speak the regime is working to displace more Sidama farmers from their capital city and surrounding villages stretching to Malga Wondo also known as 'Wondogenet' under the same scheme of federalizing Hawassa. The Sidama nation vehemently rejects such measures and demands the regime to respect the constitutional rights of the Sidama nation to regional self-determination.

In similar manner, over 500 Anuaks were massacred in Gambella by Agazi forces in December 2003 for demanding their basic rights. Hundreds of Ogadeni Somalis were massacred since 2007 in the name of quelling insurgency by the Ogadeni National Liberation Front which is fighting for self-determination of the Ogaden Somali.

The TPLF minority regime responded to the ongoing peaceful protests of the Oromo nation which has begun in November 2015, with unprecedented level of barbarity. Since November 2015, over 700 unarmed Oromo civilians have been confirmed brutally massacred by the 'Agazi' killing squad while over 75,000 civilians and political leaders are imprisoned and tortured across the vast Oromia region and the rest of the country. Nevertheless, the gallant Oromo nation has forged ahead with its demand for self-determination despite the ongoing barbaric massacre of its civilians.

Due to the brutality of the TPLF rule, the oppressed nations of Ethiopia have become increasingly united to confront the barbaric and merciless minority regime of the TPLF. Five oppressed nations of the south, Oromo, Somali, Sidama, Benshangul-Gumuz and Gambella have established an alliance for freedom known as Peoples' Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (PAFD), whose goal is to liberate their peoples which account for 67 percent of the total population of Ethiopia from the TPLF minority dictatorship. Recently the Amhara nation has also joined the resistance for freedom, and their resistance and the brutal responses of TPLF's barbaric regime in Amhara region is ongoing.

Cognizant of the imminent threat to its political survival, the TPLF regime has once again been actively involved in divide and rule propaganda to undermine the unity of the oppressed nations. In particular, it is working tirelessly to sow seeds of conflict among the

majority Cushitic nations of Oromo, Somali and Sidama so as to divide and rule them. It actively arms the Special Forces in Ogaden region to attack the Oromo peoples to instigate conflict between the two sisterly Cushitic nations. It also attempting to instigate conflicts among the Oromo, Amhara, Afar, Gambella and other oppressed nations.

In Sidama, the regime has employed bogus religious leaders and some reckless community members to preach baseless propaganda that, 'if the current TPLF government is forced out of office, the Oromo rule will be worst for the Sidama nation, and that the Sidama people will be evicted from Oromia and so on. The Sidama nation rejects this baseless propaganda with the contempt it deserves. The Sidama nation fully understands the deep seated fraternity of both Oromo and Sidama nations. It never gives into such lies and deceits of the regime and its Sidama quislings. Nonetheless, we fully understand the repercussions such deceitful and baseless political propaganda and will remain vigilant to educate our society to understand and uphold the historic bondage between the Oromo and the Sidama societies.

SNLF strongly denounces such divisive lies and deceits of the regime and its Sidama messengers and demands to stop it unconditionally. We remind the Sidama nation to be vigilant of the malicious act of TPLF's regime and its vile allegations.

Moreover, the SNLF strongly advises those Sidama persons, who have previously been engaged in advocating for the rights of the Sidama nation yet currently involved in sabotaging the struggle of the nation to unconditionally stop their alliance with the regime that is dehumanizing our nation and the other nations and peoples of Ethiopia. The Sidama nation will not tolerate such quislings and warn the enemy within to refrain from their heinous acts. This will be the Sidama nation's last and unequivocal warning for those in Sidama and abroad who support the dehumanization of own nation to unconditionally refrain from their reckless, irresponsible and immoral actions.

Finally, we call upon the Sidama nation to further cement its unity with its neighboring Cushitic cousins, the Oromo, and all the rest of Ethiopian peoples to push with our struggle for freedom, justice, the rule of law and genuine self-determination. We also call upon all peoples of Ethiopia to be united to fight the regime collectively brutalizing us all. Equally, we call upon the regime in power to unconditionally refrain from resorting to answering all issues with live bullet and further urge it to unconditionally relinquish power to all peoples of Ethiopia for possible and urgent transitional arrangements. We also urge the international community, in particular Western countries to stop their support and alliance with the regime that massacres and terrorizes its own citizens for demanding their basic human and democratic rights, the core values of western democracy. The indiscriminate massacre of unarmed civilians and divide-and-rule games of TPLF/EPRDF's ruthless regime never resolve deep seated crisis of the country but will only worsen it.

May the souls of all martyrs of the Oromo, Ogadenia, Gambella, Sidama, Amhara, Konso and the rest remain in peace whilst the peoples of Ethiopia stride towards asserting the causes for which you have paid ultimate sacrifices with your precious lives.

The Sidama National Liberation Front (SNLF)

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