

Former TPLF's Cadres Cannot Spearhead the Sidama National Struggle for Self-Determination.

Press Release

By Sidama National Liberation Front (SNLF)

30 October 2016

Ever since the Sidama nation was forcefully annexed into the Ethiopian empire by the invading army of King Minelik II 125 years ago, our society relentlessly resisted political subjugation and wanton economic exploitation by the successive regimes. The Sidama society rejected serfdom that reduced our farmers into landless tenants in various forms some of which involved guerrilla warfare against the brutal feudal system. In this regard, the guerrilla warfare led by the Sidama patriot, Takilu Yota in northern Sidama in 1960s unsettled not only the barbaric system of serfdom, but also the very tenet of imperial expansion and annexation. The heroic national resistance led by Takilu Yota was preceded by an equally ferocious armed struggle by Sidama patriots including Lanqamo Naare, Yetera Boolle, Hushula Xaadisso and many others who resisted the return of the imperial land lords after Italy was driven out of the country by the Allied Forces of WWII in 1941.

In the early 1970s, these armed resistance movements hitherto scattered across the Sidama nation were reorganized under a unified political structure, which in late 1970s evolved into the Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM). The Sidama Liberation Movement mobilized the Sidama people in the scale hitherto unknown in the history of the nation and waged overt armed struggle against the military regime for over 7 years liberating three highland districts. The struggle for self-determination by the gallant Sidama heroes and heroines cost the Sidama society over 10,000 lives. The Sidama people made enormous contributions in Ethiopia's struggle to overthrow the socialist/military dictatorship and therefore had high hopes that their age old demand for regional self-determination would be addressed when revolutionary forces finally overthrew the military regime in 1991. Nonetheless, the brutal TPLF regime systemically eliminated all political forces that were fighting against the successive oppressive regimes on its side after it controlled the country. The gallant ethno-national liberation movements such as the Oromo Liberation Front, the Sidama Liberation Movement, the Ogaden National Liberation Front and many others were ejected from the Transitional Government in 1992. In 1995 it promulgated a "liberal" constitution, which on paper guaranteed the right for self-determination including secession for all nations. Nonetheless, the TPLF then created its own puppet ethno-national parties and effectively centralised the political power in its hands in the past 25 years rendering the constitution fruitless.

Any demand by any nation for the respect of constitutional rights, democracy, freedom and rule of law in the past 25 years were met by brutal forces. Thousands were massacred in broad daylight by the TPLF's killing squad, the Agazi forces, in Sidama, Oromia, Ogaden, Gambela, and other regions of the country. Since November 2015, the gallant Oromo nation rejected the TPLF political marginalisation and wanton economic exploitation through peaceful rallies across the vast Oromia region. Instead of answering the demand of the Oromo people, the TPLF regime unleashed its killing squad, the Agazi forces massacring over 1500 Oromo civilians and jailing over 50,000 in the past one year

alone. In recent months, hundreds of Amhara civilians who demanded political freedom and respect for democratic rights were also massacred in a broad light.

The Sidama National Liberation Front, that encompasses all Sidama political forces that are committed to self-determination for the Sidama nation has been spearheading the national struggle for freedom, democracy and justice. In 2015, it has joined forces with the likeminded sisterly political organisations and created the Peoples' Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (PAFD) which is championing the struggle of the oppressed nations of Oromia, Ogaden, Gambella, Benshangul-Gumuz, and Sidama for freedom.

At the historical time, when the Sidama nation has forged unshakable alliance with oppressed nations that represent 65% of the land area and the population of the country, former Sidama TPLF's cadres are conspiring to derail our age-old struggle for national self-determination. The TPLF's regime has used these agents to divide and rule the Sidama society for the past 25 years. We learnt that these very agents are currently entering pretentious alliance with other opposition Ethiopian forces on behalf of the Sidama nation. These former TPLF's agents and their naïve allies and political novices have no moral and legal legitimacy to enter into any alliances with Ethiopian opposition parties on behalf of the Sidama nation. The Sidama National Liberation Front and the Sidama society unequivocally condemn such feckless alliance entered in the name of the Sidama people.

In our Press Release of 4 April 2014, issued by the transitional United Sidama Parties for Freedom and Justice, (<http://sidamaliberation-front.org/USPF-PR-65.pdf>) we warned that the proliferation of political organisations does not answer the Sidama national question and that the individuals who embarked on such acts should desist from entering any alliances with unitarist political forces using the name of the Sidama nation and desist from working to undermine the quest for self-determination by the Sidama nation. Our prediction has come true and we will not view this lightly.

We reiterate unequivocally once again that such inept alliance in the name of the Sidama nation with unitarist political parties will not derail the Sidama national quest for self-determination. The Sidama nation will forge ahead its struggle for freedom and democracy with like-minded oppressed nations and will not be distracted by acts of political treachery by a handful individuals.

Victory for the oppressed nations!!

The Sidama National Liberation Organisation, SNLF