

National Conference in accelerating Move
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The internal conflict between the Eritrean political elites and their organizations is not new but began since the birth of Eritrean nationalism in late 40th during the British Military administration and passed down through generations from the disposal of Eritrea after the end of Italian colonialism and still is alive with the contemporary politics of Eritrea. This trend is /was a part of religious and ethnic, it was about the people of Eritrea asserting that they are different and have different cross border affiliations.

While the Unionist party was more inclined to unite with Ethiopia under the Emperor of Ethiopia, ML/ Moslem League and other parties were reluctant to union with Ethiopia because they were aware that they can loose the rights they have gained during the British period. The unionist party was established the same date when Emperor Haile Sellasie returned to Ethiopia in 1941, the same date a demonstration was held in Asmara calling the unification of Eritrea with the motherland Ethiopia. The other ethnic groups were doubtful and will remain some years under the trust of the United Nations because they have been suffering by the reoccurring banditry of Ethiopian rulers before the advent of Italians. It was at this time that the Eritreans were divided by religious and cultural relations and not economical interests. Eritreans either they were Moslems or Christians either highlanders or lowlanders by their living standard are all poor as farmers or lowly paid labourers or soldiers of the Italian colony.

We have 60 years' form of history of failed political initiatives since the birth of Eritrean nationalism. Federation with Ethiopia was a compromise solution when the unionists and independent bloc claiming independence were equal. Federation has not lived long because Eritreans were not united to govern themselves as autonomous Eritrea. Federation was dissolved not because Ethiopian intervention but because of disunity between Eritrean political elites. Both during the political struggle and armed liberation period short lived agreements and armed conflicts where more than 4000 people died is our part of failed conflict resolution. The peace initiatives organized during the building of Independence bloc and later the conference for peace between the UP and ML after the federal act later the trend of such unity efforts were practised during the armed struggle at Weki Zager bringing together the two main streams political organizations/ ELF and EPLF was our people's wish and will but this failed because of incompetent leaders of that time.

The formation of the Eritrean National Forces in 1999 by the opposition political organizations was also a peace initiative between the various political organizations

This has developed to and established an umbrella organization called Eritrean Democratic Alliance. Maintaining this alliance is the responsibility of all member organizations. The objective of convening national conference for democratic change is to include the civil society organizations and individuals concerned and

involved in the struggle against the dictator and work for democracy. This conference's main goal is to test if we in the opposition have the calibre to hold together and win the dictator and bring peace to our people suffering under harsh and killing policies of the dictator.

National Conference for democratic change is a public forum at which representatives from key political and civic society organizations are invited to discuss and develop a plan for the future of Eritrean people preferably by the agreement of the majority who believe in the removal of the tyranny in Eritrea and build a multi-ethnic democracy in Eritrea. This conference's objectives are to identify who is for the salvation of suffering Eritrean people and who is for political power. It is a conference of the oppressed and marginalised people in Eritrea.

The preparations for national conference starting from 2008 has gone through the procedures and guidelines of the EDA leadership. According to these guidelines, the branches of EDA in cooperation with the civil society organizations have conducted workshops in each resident country. Purpose of these workshops was to lay basic discussion issues for the upcoming conference. After the separate workshops were completed a joint workshop was conducted on July 4-8/7 2009 in Addis – Abeba. The joint workshops' recommendations and resolutions on different issues were publicised on the internet at this time both in Tigrinya and Arabic.

All these activities were done by the recognition of the EDA/ EC leadership. Based on these recommendations, EDA/ EC leadership has met and discussed the recommendations of the joint workshop and passed a resolution to assess on the civil society who are qualified for the preparation of the upcoming conference. A group from the EDA/ EC were assigned to assess those civil society organizations who believe in democratic change and support the EDA as an opposition political organizations.

When the assessment was finished, the EDA / EC called a meeting and decided the civil societies who are qualified for participation in the election of preparatory committee of the conference. Eight civil society organizations were selected to be represented in the meeting where the preparatory committee will be elected. All except one has accepted the invitation to send their representatives to the meeting. A meeting composed of all representatives of the EDA and the seven representatives convened a meeting and selected a preparatory committee consisting of 18 members which seven of them were from civil society organizations.

When the organizing process reached this stage, some EDA member organization leaders showed their rejections by casting different blames and accusations. Some accusing that it was not legitimate and others accusing that some of the members of the preparatory committee from the civil society organizations are not appropriate or not independent. The writer of this article would ask the

following questions to those who accuse the EDA both the Central and Executive Committee.

Where were this people when all these activities were running?

Why were they silent when the workshops were conducted?

Why at this time, when most of the preparations were done?

What can one gain from delaying or not organizing such national platform where all opposition can come together and discuss the critical situation of our people in Eritrea?

Why are the EDA member organizations in conflict in a work plan they themselves have signed?

This article is a reminder to those who at this time write that on its preparation and organization. The EDA has taken the responsibility to organize the conference. It has done what it can by organizing workshops and had laid the ground work of the conference. Those who write articles should first collect the information from the EDA before they write articles that have no evidences. Most internet writers simply write articles for the sake of writing but such articles harm than benefit the readership Eritrea.