

## FOCUSSING ON CORE VALUES

By a patriotic Ethiopian

Since the illegal take-over of power by the ethnic-based minority regime, TPLF, about 24 years ago, Ethiopia has been in dangerous turbulence, politically, economically and socially. This experience has been part and parcel of the day-to-day reality of the majority of the Ethiopian people, despite syndical reports of some politicians, foreign and domestic, who give a rosy picture as if everything under TPLF is well and good. This man-made chaotic situation is further exacerbated by the ever worsening policy and abusive behavior of the regime with the intent of reinforcing its grip on power. Consequently, under TPLF, Ethiopia has entered a new and extraordinary phase of dictatorial rule marinated with ethnic ideology and unpatriotic fervor. A combined effect of these and other factors has led to the proliferation of human rights abuse, undemocratic practices, ethnic division and animosity, corruption, economic hardship for the majority and social instability. The unpatriotic nature of the regime has also become a cause for Ethiopia to give away one of its northern provinces and western part of its land mass. Hard-pressed by all these conditions, the Ethiopian people all over the country have waged increased resistance against the regime for a while. However, although the regime is getting more and more isolated from time to time, as yet, no substantial achievement was made as a result of the ongoing resistance. This is less related to the level of support the regime gets from the people, but it is rather the consequence of lack of a well coordinated resistance. While the bulk of the resistance against the regime is imposed as isolated events by the opposition, in some cases, the resistance has been inconsistent in its motives and is associated with conflicting messages. The writer proposes that the major cause of failure for the opposition to put its act together against the hated regime is its lack of clarity in universally accepted core principles that should be pursued rigorously and consistently.

The following are relevant core principles that should not be compromised by any means in order to carry out a successful struggle against the evil TPLF regime.

**Territorial integrity of the country:** For people who have been living together for a long time, ie., beyond the time of recorded history, and developed organic relationships, nationhood and patriotism, issues related to preservation of the integrity of their country are vital. Since it is to the interest of the majority of the citizens to protect their country as inherited from their ancestors, given the right kind of leadership, it is predictable that they can be mobilized more readily to work together in defense of the motherland in the event of any challenges to its territorial integrity. The TPLF regime has violated this core value of the Ethiopian people; however, resistance against this illegal action of the regime has not been fully enforced.

**Human rights of citizens and the promotion of democracy:** Human rights are privileges we all have simply because we are humans. These rights are inherent to all human beings, irrespective of nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other attributes. Universal human rights are guaranteed by law in various forms, and international human rights law require every government or organization to act in certain ways or to abstain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and basic freedoms of individuals or groups. However, although these laws are expected to apply to Ethiopians as part of the international community, they have been repeatedly violated by the regime in power and by some other ethnic

political organizations. The fact that human rights continue to be abused in Ethiopia more than in most other countries of the world demonstrates the need for greater effort to be made in fighting it back. If there is the opportunity for appropriate leadership, it is clear that the Ethiopian people can be mobilized more effectively to rally around the idea of resisting the human rights abuses in the country that appear in different forms and shapes. Such an effort can also attract greater attention from the international community with the likelihood of exposing all of those entities involved (irrespective of political affiliations, philosophies and ethnicity) in the abuse of these basic rights of Ethiopians that they just only being humans.

Democracy is the extension of recognition for human rights. It is a component the constitutions of most countries of the world. However, while only a limited number of countries have genuine interest in the practice of democracy many other nations have dismal record in this regard. The violation of democratic rights of one sort or another is a common phenomenon observed in almost parts of the world, but the type and intensity of the violation varies from one country to another. Ethiopia under TPLF is among the worst in the world that consistently disrespects democratic rights of its citizens. As a result, the majority of Ethiopians are suffering from the consequences deprivation of democracy. This reality has been well documented by numerous reputable international and local organizations although there some countries tend to deny this for sheer political reasons. However, as yet, nothing seems to stop or prevent the regime from its current practice of violating the God-given basic rights of the Ethiopian people.

Beyond regimes, talking of democracy, it is also important that the implementation of this right should also be part and parcel of the routines of inner functions of individual political organizations. If this is not the case, it is less likely that members of these organizations will uphold democratic values not only within their own circles but also when interacting with others fellow citizens outside their own circles. To bring about positive changes in a society through the practice of democracy, the transformation has to start from self. This can be made possible through the concerted efforts of members of individual organizations.

For a struggle to become successful, it has to be lead by competent leaders, besides sticking to given core principles that serve as driving forces to do the right thing,. Such a leadership reflects the values of the organization it represents and, by extension, the interest of people it is meant to care for. These are important points that need to be taken seriously and followed consistently as guides in order to get needed support from the people in question and others for positive outcomes in the struggle against the criminal TPLF regime. Therefore, according to this writer the lack of principle-guided struggle strategies and inconsistencies in follow-up actions have been major factors that have contributed to failures of the opposition in Ethiopia. The following are examples of cases in point.

As briefly noted earlier, the ethnic-based minority regime in Ethiopia has been accused by nonsectarian opposition groups of committing a number of serious crimes against citizens and the nation itself, including human rights abuses, deprivation of democratic rights, economic deprivation, ethnic animosity, and the give-away of public land properties to foreign nations and investors at the expenses of needy citizens of the country. However, in an attempt to fight back these heinous crimes, some of the so called prominent members of the opposition, spearheaded by G 7, have formed unholy alias with the Eritrean regime north of Ethiopia and with the ethnic-affiliated

secessionist organization, OLF and ONLF, whose criminal records are not better than those of the TPLF bandit itself. If we take the case of Eritrea, the regime under the leadership of the infamous dictator, Issayas Afeworki, is one of the worst human rights violators and suppresser of democracy in the world. Because of this situation in the country, Eritreans are fleeing their country in masses, risking their lives on the way to unknown destinations. Issayas, in addition to being the main architecture for the creation of TPLF about 4 decades ago, he currently supports the above secessionist organizations in Ethiopia who are bent to destroy the country as we know it now. The secessionists, obsessed with ethnic ideology/religion finalism and hate, have also been directly involved in inhuman criminal acts against fellow Ethiopians, including mass killing of innocent Ethiopians (mostly thought to be Amara) simply because of their ethnicity and/or religion. What is even more worrisome is the fact that working with other pro-Ethiopia nonsectarian opposition groups, such as Shengo, (which consists of several political bodies) it is not the priority of the so called nonsectarian oppositions lead by G 7. Now the question many reasonable people may rightly pose is that how come members of the Ethiopian opposition, that include G 7 as a political party, claiming to be nonsectarian and seeking to liberate Ethiopia from the jaws of criminal regime in power, ally themselves with other criminal entities that are not by any account better than the criminal regime itself? Although their true motives are not clear at this time, it is hard to believe these oppositions entities stand for the oppressed people of Ethiopia, as they claim to be standing. In view of this conflicting and contradictory attitude and messages, no wonder why the struggle of the Ethiopian people against the TPLF regime is lagging behind what is expect of.

The above described experiences should serve as a lesson for Ethiopians who love freedom, democracy and Mother Ethiopia to conduct their struggle against the evil regime of TPLF more firmly and strongly based on core principles that are universally accepted and protected, without any messages inconsistencies. Such an approach will have broader supports from progressive groups and will result in expected positive results sooner or later.

Long live Ethiopia, the birthplace of the human race.