



Current political affairs from OLF's perspective:

Speech delivered on the Horn Of African Solidarity Group: By Shigut Geleta (Dr) 22 May 2010, Frankfurt, Germany.

Mr. Chairman, Dear guest speakers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like, first of all, to thank the high level solidarity Committee for the Horn of Africa in Germany for organising such a timely and important seminar supposed to assess the social, political and economic situation of the Horn of Africa by the diverse participants of the conference. I feel greatly honoured for getting this opportunity to speak on the mentioned theme on behalf of the OLF.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to start my presentation with the widely quoted statement of Edward H. Carry, which runs as follows:

“The past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present; and we can fully understand the present only in the light of the past”

Carry is not alone in his history-laden perspective. Paul Henze, who was a National security staff, responsible for the Horn of Africa during the Carter administration, raised similar point of view when he once asked:

Does history matter? The answer in the Horn of Africa must be resounding “yes”.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

My intention is not to lecture you on history, but only to underpin the paramount importance of history to every genuine analysis of current socio-political situation. This is even truer as far as today's Ethiopia is concerned with all its manifold and complex economic, social and political problems.

Almost all notable scholars agree that the genesis of all fundamental problems of today's Ethiopia lies in the empire State formation of Ethiopia. Menilik put the foundation of the empire with the might of a gun. As this empire is an agglomeration of diverse nations and nationalities with different historical, socio-economic, cultural values and religious backgrounds prior to their subjugation, permanent military suppression in conjunction with both political and institutional marginalization of these annexed nations and nationalities remained the major cause of conflict and poverty in Ethiopia.

After the empire state formation, Emperor Haile Silassie only succeeded by having contained ethnic and regional threats without any attempt to resolve the fundamental structure. He rather focused on institutionalising and legitimising central authority with the help of the armed forces to suppress challenges.

The Emperor exploited the interest of the United States and took the advantage of cold war and made the Kagnew Station available, which was very vital for US global reach strategy. This served the interest of the Emperor to secure its dominance.

The Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement (MDAA) of 1953 with further agreements in 1962, 1963 and 1964, provided for additional American weapons and training to strengthen the imperial forces. The objective of this military build-up of the emperor was not because of the fear of the future foreign invasion but not to renegotiate the fundamental relationship between the imperial system and his subjects.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Thereafter, the political discrimination followed policy of the ruling regime was vehemently resisted at different places and different instances. The peaceful resistance of the Western Oromo Confederacies, Rayya and Azaboo resistance, Bale movement, the Mecha-Tulama self help Association, the role of oromo students in Ethiopian student Movement and other factors contributed to the fall of the Emperor Haile Selassie and vis-à-vis for the birth of Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in 1973/74.

OLF as a secular liberation front came into being after various peaceful and armed resistances of Oromo people.

The main objective of the OLF is to address the inalienable right of the Oromo people to the right of Self-determination. The transformation of the Oromo resistance into a liberation struggle through the formation of the OLF reinstated and popularised the Oromo people and its quest for peace and democracy.

Since it's founding, OLF went through many ups and downs of liberation struggle. The immense sacrifice paid by the Oromo people and its gallant force of Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) today has scored immense victories. Today, any stakeholder of the Horn of Africa cannot by-pass addressing the Oromo cause. However, a long lasting peace is once again overshadowed by the geo-strategic interest of major powers supporting the totalitarian government of Meles regime. But can that bring a lasting peace?

Dear my audience,

The same was true for the regime of Mengistu Hailemariam who attempted to create a socialist state. His single-minded determination to resolve the domestic political conflict by military means ultimately led to his own demise in 1991. Strikingly, at the beginning, Dergue promoted nations and nationality emancipation, denounced chauvinism, reiterated proclamations concerning the equality of gender and the right of all nationalities to self government, introduced several local languages in the literacy campaigns, acknowledged linguistic and religious diversity in the population census and the constitutional provision for autonomous regions. Though these acknowledgements remained on paper, it has contributed in sharpening the political profile of nations and nationalities.

When Mengistu declared the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) in April 1976, it was recognised that the problem of nations and nationalities can only be resolved through the principle of the right of self-determination. However, Dergue soon began to down-play the issue by stressing a new ideological postulate based on the principles of "*scientific socialism*" and "*proletarian internationalism*", which held that ethnicity is not an objective attribute and therefore, not a legitimate condition for classifying and organising peoples. The regime's deviation from the initial promise and omission of the fundamental factors was the main factor that contributed to the

seventeen years of war that ravaged both human and material resource that could have saved starved millions.

In 1987, the Dergue introduced a constitution, which was partly based on the proposals of the Institute of Nationalities and divided the country into different regions. Recognising the Unavoidability of the National problem, it established five autonomous regions (Eritrea, Assab, Tigray, Ogaden and Dire Dawa) and 25 administrative regions. It rather divided Oromia into more administrative regions than before.

History thought us the attempt of the British in Canada. The colonial conspiracy that stripped the Quebecois their unity, so that they cannot form a majority in any province, never hampered the quest of Quebecois. Nimeiri's scheme of dividing south Sudan region into three "regions" in 1981 and even more by al-Bashir in 1994 never stopped the quest south Sudanese for self-determination. Likewise, Dergue's futile attempt to solve the central problem by creating the so-called autonomous regions, which were totally subordinated to the national government, never saved it from demise. The Oromo were even denied the fake right Mengistu's decree recognised as regional autonomy.

In sum, military rule, guided by revolutionary socialism, was unable to address the root causes of the national conflict. Consequently, liberation movements including OLF toppled the Dergue regime.

Dear Honourables!

After the fall of Dergue, OLF as the third strongest Liberation Front played a key role in advocating peace and democracy. It drafted the Transitional Charter with the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) and others. The Transitional Charter was the first of its kind in Ethiopian history by having encompassed fundamental international covenants. However, out of sheer fear for OLF's very fastly developing popularity, the TPLF led Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) soon started to overtly campaign against the OLF and begun to threaten the OLF as its worst enemy. We all know how the OLF was eventually forced to withdraw from the Transitional Charter and became forced to resume the armed struggle.

Since the withdrawal of OLF, EPRDF conducted three national elections (1995, 2000, and 2005) and one constituent assembly election. The international observer community witnessed that none of them were free and fair.

After the charter agreement was derailed by the TPLF, OLF repeatedly showed its willingness to solve the problem through dialogue for the benefit of all the people in the empire. However, all attempts failed because of lack of willingness on the side TPLF.

TPLF has several times declared that it has eliminated and swiped-off the OLF from Ethiopia. And yet we have been observing the TPLF regime issuing public statements frequently accusing the OLF for having been the major factor for instability in the country. It also often calls the OLF for negotiation. But it does so only for Media consumption, since it always decline every sincere negotiation with the OLF.

Further, TPLF always attempt to orchestrate isolating the Oromo people from their beloved political leadership, OLF. But all its attempts in this respect are to no avail, thanks to the deeply rooted national self consciousness of the Oromo people.

The OLF is still with its political objective to struggle for the right of Self-determination. The right to freely exercise the options ultimately belongs to the Oromo people and to them alone. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) shall explicitly keep the option open based on its basic principle of giving the freedom of choice to the Oromo people. Distortions by the Meles regime and other elements opposed to the Oromo cause cannot hide the track records evidencing the political intention of the OLF.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has always been OLF's conviction that liberation from all sorts of national oppression paves a way for the peoples in the country and beyond to join hands to form a political union on the basis of equality and voluntary association. This ushers a process of negotiation of a constitutional order that determines a form of state acceptable to free peoples seeking to establish a political union among themselves. The OLF has always shown its political will to pay for a reasonable, mutual, and all inclusive solutions in forging a constitutional order based on the free will of peoples. But like all its predecessors, Meles Zenawi's government showed no real courage to take a remedial step towards solving the basic problem that kept the country in tragic

economic, political, and social mire. Consequently, the World community had to live with tragic media reports revealing more of man made sustained famine.

As a primary step along the derive for collective solution the OLF met, on April 20th 2000, with some political forces (Benishangul People's Liberation Movements (BPLM), Ethiopian Democratic Forces United Front (EDFUF), Ethiopian Patriotic Democratic Movement (EPDM), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), Sidama Liberation Front (SLF) and Some individuals and other organisations as observer) across the North-South, East-West without any sense of exclusion and arrived at a joint agreement to work towards eradicating the root causes of the endemic tyranny, national oppression famine and arrested development that bedevils the Oromo and other peoples in Ethiopia. As an extension of the April 2000 agreement, it formed an alliance in May 2006 named an Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (AFD) despite so much unfavourable political and organizational conditions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As far as the current situation is concerned, it will be wise to touch four different points: -

1. Regional Security and stability

The Horn of Africa is currently known to the world Medias because of three main conflict zones: Darfur, Ethio-Eritrea border conflict, and the situation in Somalia. The major, but the undeclared civil war also is the state of the Ethiopian state. The lack of direct violence in relationship may mask a profound sense of latent conflict that may be awaiting an opportunity to come to the surface.

Ethiopia, which is geographically at the centre of the security complex of the Horn and which shares the most part of the mentioned hottest conflict is sitting on such time-awaiting deep-rooted conflict. The tensions inherent in the composition of Ethiopia itself could easily spill over into relations with its neighbours; neighbours with their own intractable problems.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The US intervention in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait has renewed the Geo-strategic interest of US across the western side of the Arabian Peninsula. This interest has become vital after the civil war in Somalia in 1994 and after the terrorist bomb attack

on the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Such situations and others like September 11 forced the U.S. to set up forces in Djibouti. This headquarters and its intelligence unit are responsible for the U.S. military activities in Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Yemen, Somali and Kenya.

The identification of Somalia by the US since 9/11, as an area of state collapse conducive to support for al-Qaeda, the presence of US force in Djibouti and the Islamist agendas of some of the local factions have enabled Ethiopia to link its own hidden interests in the region to the “Global war on terror”. Consequently, since Zenawi asserts that he is cooperating with the U.S in the war against terrorism, the overwhelming focus on terrorism is overshadowing US initiatives to resolve conflicts and promote good governance in Ethiopia like elsewhere in conflict zones. As a result, today, the TPLF government is in the phase of building a totalitarian hegemony.

2. Socio-economic situation of Ethiopia

Today, almost half of Ethiopia’s population live in absolute poverty. Each year millions face serious food insecurity. Commodity price shocks. Exacerbated chronic food insecurity caused by policy related failures that include dependence on subsistence farming, land tenure, weak markets, poor infrastructure and reliance on external food aid.

Ethiopia relies on development assistance for 40% of its public sector spending and is likely to remain heavily dependent for many years to come. Ethiopia’s long-term Debt sustainability is extremely fragile. The country’s ratio of exports to GDP is very low, and exports are concentrated in coffee, a commodity whose price was near its 20-year low in 2003. Per-capita spending on health is about one sixth the sub-Saharan averages. Safe drinking water is available to just 15 percent of the rural population; HIV/AIDS is a growing threat.

Oromos are not only deprived of their right and resource but also the steady grabbing of natural resources of oromia itself is becoming the major threat endangering the lives of Oromos. To indicate some of these:-

a) Horticultural chemicals used for Flower farm

Studies from the Addis Ababa University, Science Faculty, noted that out of one hundred and twenty chemicals that are used in Ethiopia’s floriculture industry of zewayi, oromia, fifteen of which are classified as carcinogenic according to the World

Health Organization. These chemicals can cause lasting damage to brain cells and the immune system and have been known to bring about miscarriages in pregnant women

b) Disposal of waste and obsolete pesticide Stocks

According to the recent study of FAO Ethiopia are the third countries next to Botswana and Mali having large known obsolete pesticide stocks with total tones of 3401 tonnes from Africa and Middle East countries. The typical examples of obsolete pesticide stock that are threatening the life of near by communities and environment are the site at Arjo, in western Oromia and the site in Addis Ababa are to be mentioned. Obsolete pesticides not only causing serious health risks but also they threaten food security by contaminating groundwater and soil, the most important resources for food production. There are no safe incinerators in Ethiopia or other African countries. Consequently obsolete pesticides have to be shipped to elsewhere where the disposal company runs high-temperature hazardous waste incinerators. It is illusion to expect from Meles regime that it will expedite foreign currency for the safety of the environment.

Lake Koka is located 75 kilometres southeast of Addis Ababa (Finfinne) in the Oromia State of Ethiopia. It is on the headwaters of the Awash River. Lake Koka serves as source of drinking water for about 20, 000 people and their domestic animals, while the Awash River is used by millions downstream in Oromia, Afar and Somali States.² Now both Lake Koka and Awash River are severely poisoned with toxic chemical waste that flows into the lake mainly from the Pittards Plc., run by Ethiopia Tannery Share Company. A scientist from the University of Durham, U.K., has analysed water sample from Lake Koka and came to a conclusive result that the lake is severely polluted with "... some of the most toxic molecules known to man." The scientist further declared that the condition of Lake Koka as "... one of the worst he had seen anywhere in the world." (Al Jazeera aired on Saturday, February 21, 2009. This episode of People & Power).³

c) Deforestation

Since TPLF came to power a huge areas of virgin forests in various parts of Oromia have been set on fire intermittently. The worst has happened in the year 2000 and stayed for a period of two months. Although the TPLF government always blamed and

prosecuted farmers for starting the fire, there are ample evidences that the fires were deliberately set by squads of the Tigrean regime with the wicked pretext that the forest is an obstacle to the efficiency of its force against guerrilla fighters of liberation struggle.

d) Exposure of toxic chemicals from mining area

At Laga Dambi primary gold is exploited by Medroc Company. The utilisation of Potassium cyanide by the company to dissociate the primary gold from its mother rock, severely, affecting the life of the local people by creating toxic chemical complex.

e) Improper use of fertilizer

On its May 31st, 2009 issue, Addis Fortune, an English-language Weekly newspaper in Ethiopia, reported that some Flower Companies had provided wrong advices on the type of fertilizers and seeds used for its 8-hectare flower farm in Holleta, Oromia. Good and bad fertilizer means special meaning for the ecosystem. Good fertilizers replenish soil depleted of essential elements needed for plant growth; application of “bad” fertilizers or too many fertilizers can cause severe problems to plants or soil microbes. With increased soluble salt content in the soil, the ability of the roots to absorb water and nutrients is reduced, and the plants will wilt and die due to dehydration

f) Disruption of ecosystem which ultimately resulted in diseases like malaria. The Oromos are traditionally pastoralist and they have developed complex systems of agriculture and intensive soil, water, vegetation and wild life management that have survived the test of time and the vagaries of the environment. The dislocation and resettlement of peoples in to the Oromo areas, with out the deficit knowledge of indigenous environment philosophy, is also another main factor for the disruption of the Oromia ecosystem.

g) The land grabbing system

Today TPLF leased and sold land mainly to foreign investors as a government or individuals by evicting peasants from their land holdings. In Ethiopia where 85 % of the population is dependent on agriculture, where the population growth is high,

where labour is abundant and no alternative employment, eviction of peasants not only result in undesired rural- urban migration but also for evicted individuals losing the land is like a loss of air to breath, sunshine and water to survive. Since Towns in Ethiopia have no jobs to offer for a rapid influx of unskilled workers ultimately urban unemployment, criminality and all associated problems of hygiene, epidemics and human misery are the major social situation in today's Addis Ababa and other Towns, elsewhere.

3. Human rights

Ethiopia is the signatory and state party of most conventions and covenants regarding the respect of human rights. However it remained an open secret that Ethiopia bid itself to its ratified covenants and to the constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE).

The regime masked its real nature behind these rhetoric democratic white papers, which are solely designed to attract the good will of and necessary support from Western Powers. In deed the true picture of the Tigris People Liberation Front (TPLF)-led Ethiopian government is different. Since it came to power its conducts regarding human rights violations is characterised by mass massacre, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, displacement and forced conscription of the productive forces to non-ending wars on political opponents.

The main agony is directed against the Oromo Nation. This notching record has been/is reported by various human rights organisations, reports from individuals, witnesses from victims and defectors. The former Defence Minister Siye Abreha and some individuals from the government authorities testified the atrocities. Mr. Siye told the world that "the Ethiopian prisons speak Afaan Oromo". But our belief is that not only people in the cells and detention camps, but that the country itself is becoming a bigger prison.

Among many others, the right of speech, the right of press and the right of free association count to the principal human rights universally documented as a yardstick for a democratic system. None of these rights is practical in Ethiopia. On top of imprisoning and banning sovereign journalists, the incumbent minority government in Ethiopia jams radios and blocks global Internet access. The recent self

declared jamming of the VOA by the Prime Minister Meles Zenawi himself is a case in point.

The influential and articulate in Oromo Society, in Particular middle class traders, Professionals, educated urban elites and small scale private owners have been targeted. To mention some:-

Oromo cultural leaders (elders):- Gada leader, Abba Gadaa Boruu Guyyoo, in March 1994, Mr. Dararaa Kafane in September 1994, Hajii Kamal Musa in March 1995, and etc,

Oromo political figures: Mr. Gamachis Dhaaba and Mr. Mulis Abba Gadaa OLF Executive committee Members, Mr Jatani Ali and Mr. Ali Yusuf OLF representatives in Transitional Government, Mr.Adane elected Parliament member of ONC, Bayinsa Dhaaba candidate of OFC and etc

Mr. Lamessa Boruu and Mr. Yosef Ayele Baati prominent OLF political figures who were imprisoned by pervious regimes were never seen since 1992

Oromo intellectuals: Mr Waqo Tola, Dr.Feleka Boji'aa, Dr. Mokonnen Bay'uu, numerous Oromo students from university, Collages, High School and Elementary schools

Oromo artists:-Ebbisa Adunya was killed in August 1996, Jireenya Ayana is not known where his about and Usmayo Musaa died after the effect of the maltreatment he faced during his detention. Most of them forced to flee from the country.

Mass massacre: Watar, Harageh on March 25, 1992, August 1993 Jarso district near Harar, on 28 of April 1995 at Babo Gambel village, Jarso, Wollega, 10 February 1995 in Surre and kiyoo Dadar area of eastern Oromia, April 1995 Sigimo Iluababor, 1998-2000 in Ethio-Eritrean war oromo peasants were forced to serve as mine sweepers, in 2002 Shiko-Mazangir Massacare, 24 May 2002, Loke Massacre in Awasa, December 2004, Anuak Massacre in Gambela region, 192 peaceful demonstrators killed in Addis Ababa after stalemate of 2005 national election, Massacre of oromos at Gara sufi in January 2007, November 2007 Massacre in Ogaden, on 5th of February in 2008 massacre of Oromo refugees in Bosasso, and etc

Currently, it has been come customary for TPLF's kangaroo court to hand down death and life imprisonment to many. Will this stop the Oromo struggle? **I assure you NO!!**

The situation of Human right abuse is not limited to the territory of Ethiopia. It even extends over trans-national borders to almost all neighbouring countries. Since there is no peace in Ethiopia, the Oromos and other nationals who flee from their country to escape atrocity of the Ethiopian government also face unparalleled atrocities either by hosting governments or by the cross-border raids undertaken by the Ethiopian government.

4. Nature of TPLF Governance (the so called devolution of power)

Iron feasted rule, ethno-centricism and ever growing power monopoly under a single individual best characterize the system of governance in Ethiopia. The Prime Minister is the Commander-in chief of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces. The Minister of Defence is a civilian and has no operational duties. Two of the three commanders of three Regional Zones are Ethnic-Tigrians. Out of the existing Divisions, except one, all commanders are Tigrians; and the heads of the nine Departments in the Ministry of Defence are all Tigrayns.

With regard to the very recent military promotion undertaken, four of the six generals promoted to the rank of major general, and ten of the seventeen colonels promoted to brigadier general ranks are Tigrayans. The Ethiopian Army Chief of Staff, Samora Yunis is also a Tigrayan and he was promoted to the rank of general even though he has not even had the required minimum military training. 400 officers in the Northern Command are overwhelmingly Tigrians. The promotion of over proportional ethnic Tigray is believed to strengthen the control of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi by means of maintaining the dominance the TPLF already has on the armed forces.

The Prime Minister is overwhelmed his monopolistic position both at the regional and Federal level tasks. He chairs some key positions of Civic Service like the Investment Board and the Ethiopian Social and Rehabilitation Development Fund. There are a number of examples of such types. The situation is strikingly reminiscent of the military rule of Mengistu Hailemariam. Meles is a Commander-in chief of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, a head of the government as a Prime Minister, a chairman of the TPLF/EPRDF etc in exactly the way Mengistu was two decades ago. These all testify that the all key positions of civic, defence and security sort are the monopoly of the TPLF. Can one speak of a democratic Ethiopia?

For its current Sham election TPLF government is using all possible means to cling on power. It even uses such means as distribution of land, fertilizer and humanitarian aid as main instruments to get vote from the peasants. Its military and security forces are continuously intimidating the opponents on various orchestrated reasons.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To sum up, Meles has clung to power by cleverly manipulating four key and interrelated levers.

The first lever is regional security and stability. He presented himself as the primary guardian of the stability of the region. He further gives the impression that Ethiopia with out him and his army would become just another African war zone.

The second lever relates closely to the first. Somewhere, he figured out exactly how to allow just enough superficial reforms to attract the Western Embassies while at the same time reminding them that Ethiopia for all its faults was still an anchor of stability in a pretty turbulent neighbourhood. By having done so, he sold his politics and met several goals simultaneously.

- Primarily, he secured uncritical support from the United States.
- Secondly, he tried to divert the attention of some donor states by claiming he was fighting terrorism in Somalia.
- Finally, he fulfilled his ethnocentric politics to suppress the other nations and nationalities in Ethiopia.

Third lever, Money and power: Meles promotes corruption through buying many politicians who opposed him. He even affords to buy lobbyists to promote his agenda in Washington, Brussels (EU) and London (UK). Record showed that Meles' government is the best client of some lobbyist firms such as Burson-Mastellers, DLA piper, Dewey and Leboeuf and Mark Saylor co. with estimated annual coast of five million dollars per year.

Fourth lever, Empty promise accompanied with fear of politics. Meles's regime is perceived as unique in Africa in that the constitution accepts the right of each of its constituents, nations and nationalities and peoples to secede and form separate

states of their own. It is true that regional and ethnic interests could be openly expressed in a way that was until recently completely impermissible.

Nowadays any dissenting voice is automatically identified with rebellion or even treason. Local administrations have in practice been even denied the autonomy formally granted to them by the Federal Constitution. The policy that Meles pursues in this regard is unfortunately the policy that was based closely on Stalin's theory of nationalities, applied in the Soviet Union under which each nationality would have only a nominal right to internal self-government, with secession as an ultimate resort.

In fact the policy has a dangerous mismatch between the development of social and political forces on the one hand, and the opportunities for these to be incorporated into the political structure on the other.

As far as Oromo and Oromo land is concerned Meles and his predecessors have similar standing strategy in that all want to use the oromos as a footstep to ascend to their power. Once they realised the consolidation of their Power, they set on depriving the minimum human rights of the Oromo and perpetuate the exploitation of Oromo resources for themselves and finally enhance the profit of their exploitation by the involvement of foreign investors (as Government or private Companies). Typical examples are Chilaaloo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU), Walayitaa Agricultural development Unit (WADU) of Hailesilassee era, BP, AMOCO, IPC, Ethio-Libiya projects of Dergues and Today's Indian, Saudi, Egypt and china firms.

When it comes to the benefits of the ruling apparatus, all successive histories of the ruling regimes share one common character, namely, concede the sovereignty of the people they claim to administer to keep themselves on power.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Oromos are not only the largest group in Ethiopia but they are also the most centrally placed. This simple fact lends the Oromo issue a peculiar sensitivity. Meles and his predecessors precisely capitalise on this sensitivity for their divide and rule policy in respect to people's relation between the Oromo and the other oppressed nations and nationalities in the country.

5. OLF's activity

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Besides the organisational and armed struggle it pursues at home, the OLF has achieved immense diplomatic sympathies and supports from the international community through its foreign offices and representatives abroad.

The effort of the Oromo in Diaspora in Promoting Oromo cause in an organised form has registered appreciable scores.

As far as co-ordinating different Oromo political force, OLF has always believed that the goal of the Oromo people is one and the same. Consequently, it signed an Oromo Consensus 2000 and bid itself to ULFO constitution. However, as a result of minor disagreements emanating from tactical misunderstandings the objective of ULFO remained unpractised. To track back where it stopped the second meeting of OLF National council has made a call for ULFO members to resolve the conflict in candid and cordial manner. I say here once again to my fellow Oromo **“a House divided against it cannot stand”**.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You may ask yourself or me that OLF used to have a liberated area before 1991 and what is happening now? Yes it is sure we had liberated areas in the east, west and southeast, but by then the vast majority of our people at home and abroad were organisationally not being reached. Today our people from corner to corner across oromia and abroad are liberated in mind and **Oromummaa** is deeply inculcated in the sole and flesh of Oromo nation. I argue that the OLF has liberated more area in the way it struggles now. One has to take into consideration that the fight to restore Oromummaa has also been our protracted organisational pursued in every corner.

Not only our achievements in the areas of diplomacy and publicity, but also our achievement in penetrating civil and military officials of the enemy should also be taken into account.

In the field of diplomacy, despite the futile attempts of TPLF to portray to international community that OLF as a terrorist organisation, OLF has won the confidence of international community in addressing the genesis of the Oromo people's claim of Self-determination as a genuine cause though not receiving foreign assistance.

5. The Road ahead

Peace can only be attained when all stakeholders show willingness to resolve the conflict at hand and begin to negotiate in good faith. I have shown just a few examples to demonstrate that Meles is neither for peace, equality, and freedom nor for democracy. His regime is an unstable, paranoid that relies on nothing but force. Despite this fact, OLF keeps on calling all stakeholders in the country including the EPRDF for political dialogue to find out a comprehensive solution to the complex and dangerous problems the country is facing. The OLF firmly believes that the problem in the country can be solved through peaceful and democratic deliberations; if there will be a good political will to end the cycle of conflict and war by the major contending forces of the country.

Dear ladies and Gentlemen,

Whatever factors contributed for the single-handed Meles's party to exist on power, it will certainly fall sooner or later as a result of its own internal mismatching policy and the political reaction it entails in the public at large. Its fall will be hastened, however, if all forces opposing the tyrannical system co-operate with one another on the bases of mutual interest and equality.

History demonstrates that only the politically and culturally conscious and the determined and organised people can achieve political victory. I summon my fellow Oromos to get effectively organised for your own cause and co-ordinate your knowledge and resources with other nations and nationalities in Ethiopia. I would finally like to bring you to all to your attention that the Oromo Nation and Oromo Liberation movement are no avengers at all. Our history and culture will not permit us to indulge in such acts as can be evidenced by our past deeds.

Consequently I call on the nations and nationalities in Ethiopia as well as in the horn to realise the true nature of EPRDF and join hand in hand together to bring long lasting peace and justice to all peoples in Ethiopia as well as the Horn.

Peace shall prevail

Thank you very much!!!