



August 10, 2016

AN URGENT CALL TO THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE:

DEAR ETHIOPIANS:

I commend you, especially those in Oromia and Amhara regional states! **You have demonstrated great courage, perseverance, self-control and regard for the human lives of others as you have peacefully risen up in increasing numbers to demand a free Ethiopia.**

You have endured much despite the TPLF/EPRDF killing, violence and intimidation; yet, you have not ceased your call for change; neither have you descended into wanton violence. **If we are to break the cycle of violence, dictatorship and the selfish use of power to serve oneself rather than the people; you are shining examples of a new generation of change-makers.**

I urge you to continue your exemplary conduct in this noble pursuit of freedom, justice and democratic rights. I strongly urge you to make it a struggle for not only one ethnic group, but for all the people of Ethiopia, trusting in God to guide and protect our country from disintegrating into chaos, massive killing and destruction.

Actions taken at critical times of history shape the future. Within every movement for lofty and worthy goals, there are also those who seek to destroy without building up. We are no different. **The dangers of our own actions may be equal to the dangers imposed by the TPLF/EPRDF. The challenge of building up a country after its destruction is much more difficult than one can fathom or understand in the heat of anger or rage over injustice and wrongdoing.**

Who will we be—builders or destroyers? Who will we become—people out to advance ourselves and our own self-interests or people willing to work for the common good of all Ethiopians?

If we fall into violence like in the case of the genocide in Rwanda or in the disaster in Syria leading to multitudes of internally and globally displaced people with no place to go; is that what we want?

Do we want to deepen the current crisis of hunger and starvation already taking lives in Ethiopia like is happening today in South Sudan due to the civil strife?

Do we want to carry the shame and guilt of bloodshed to the next generation of children—including our own descendants?

Do we want to set the country back by decades by damage to our limited infrastructure—later repairing and replacing what was destroyed?

The choices we now make can open up better opportunities to flourish in the future or so deeply wound the fabric of our society that we do not recover.

I caution you with the greatest urgency, to act with honor and restraint, not allowing emotions to rule over wisdom. If we recklessly and ruthlessly harm our fellow Ethiopians, including Tigrayans and members of the TPLF/EPRDF, we are participating in a cycle of violence that will backfire on the innocent as well as the guilty.

As we see graphic images of the dead, laying in pools of their own blood, do we not want to stop this? Do not allow yourself to become numb to the loss of these lives; yet, do not allow anger, hate and seeds of revenge to take root.

Choose leaders with principles, self-control, wisdom and boldness who will take a stand for what will be good for the long term, not just making rash, emotional decisions for the moment that we later regret.

Continue on the higher, principle-based road and we will be working on your behalf among key decision makers outside of Ethiopia; hopefully leading to changes on the inside.

We in the SMNE acutely realize the urgent need to support you, the people and find a satisfactory resolution to this crisis. **We will not succeed without your participation and strategic partnership in a principle-based approach. This includes calling an action team of all Ethiopians to form a plan within a short period of time.**

We caution you: if Ethiopia explodes into mass violence and destruction, some of the best options will be greatly threatened.

Do we have your support? You have ours! Let us work together for such a time as this!

May God soften your hearts towards each other in order for you to see you are brothers and sisters and always will be. **May God reward you as you stand firm with the humility, love, respect and wisdom that will help restore life to a darkened land!**

Respectfully your brother in this struggle to help bring truth, justice, reconciliation, healing and peace to our beautiful people and land,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Obang Metho', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Obang Metho,
Executive Director SMNE
910- 17th St. NW, Suite 419.
Washington, DC 20006 USA
Email: obang@solidaritymovement.org
Website: www.solidaritymovement.org