



THE PEOPLE OF ETHIOPIA CONDEMN THE STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED BY THE TPLF: IT IS A SELF-SERVING TACTIC TO PROLONG THEIR OPPRESSIVE RULE OVER THE PEOPLE

Press Release.
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On October 9, 2016, Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of the TPLF-controlled regime of Ethiopia, declared a state of emergency in Ethiopia, to be put into effect immediately and last for six months.

The people of Ethiopia have questions. What is the state of emergency meant to do? The prime minister claimed in a televised address, that the primary reason it was done was for the people. He said, “*We put our citizens’ safety first. Besides, we want to put an end to the damage that is being carried out against infrastructure projects, education institutions, health centers, administration and justice buildings.*”

We in the Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia (SMNE) strongly challenge the sincerity of the prime minister’s claim; *believing the state of emergency would never have been necessary had this regime put the safety of its citizens first and not so severely violated every human and civil right of the people of Ethiopia.*

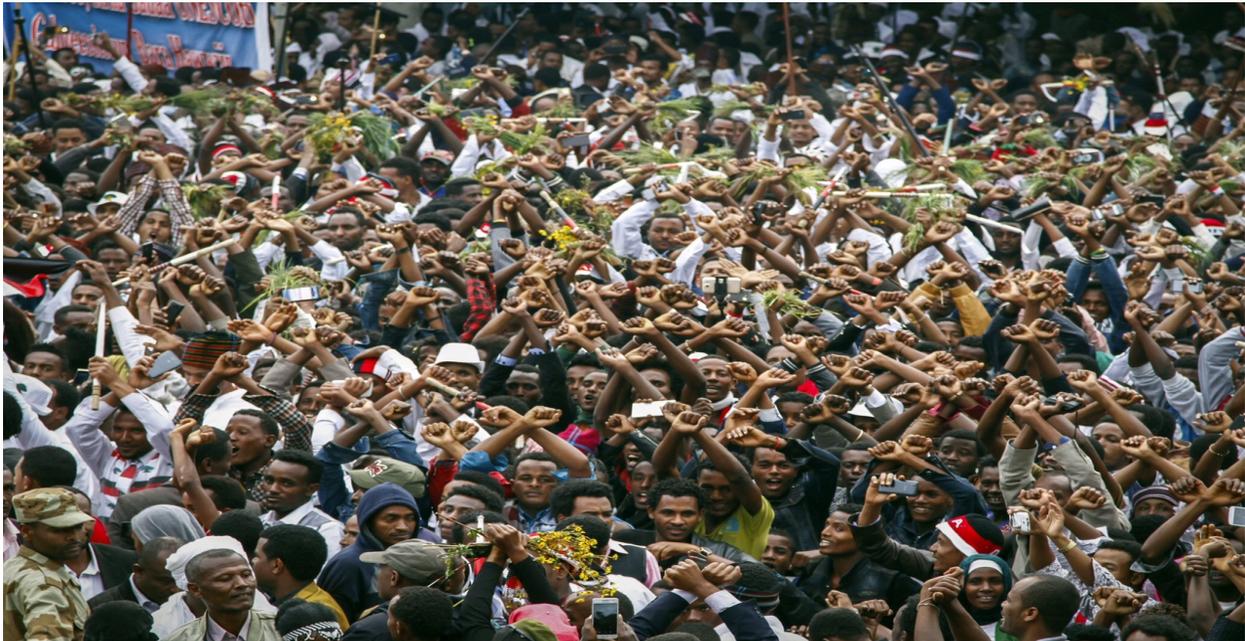


There is righteous anger against evil and deep injustice, the killing of unarmed civilians, the imprisonment of journalists, activists and democratic voices, the closure of any political space, the shut down of the Internet, social media, and mobile phone communication and the wide scale robbery of land, resources and lives. However, we should not become like the one’s we condemn, namely the ethnic apartheid regime of the TPLF/EPRDF. Instead, we call on any who are involved in any violence or destruction of any property to stop; and those who are considering doing so, to not.

We call for calm, wisdom, patience and restraint. More violence and destruction is not the answer, but could ignite a cycle of bloodshed we would all regret. The destruction of businesses, manufacturing companies, vehicles, equipment, and other infrastructure in a rampage of anger is wrong and it will make recovery all the more difficult.

For example, the sixty or more regime vehicles destroyed in one day do not belong to the TPLF, but to the people of Ethiopia. The businesses may never recover; and in the future, our economy, which is critically important to our future, will be seriously set back. If these businesses were established due to cooperation with the TPLF and the wrongful misappropriation of land and resources; that can and should be settled in a just court of law in the future. Keep in mind: it is easier to destroy than to rebuild.

We in the SMNE challenge PM Hailemariam's claim to care about the people of Ethiopia. We all know he is the spokesman for the TPLF in a public lie, which has no evidence to support it on the ground. Instead, ***it is a stalling tactic by an increasingly vulnerable regime that fear the growing push back from Ethiopians who can no longer tolerate the two decades of oppression. Additionally, with the shut down of nearly all means of communication, we fear the TPLF is looking for darkness to cover up plans for a punishing crack down on the people. They hope to stop the protests by crushing dissenters; however, the people of Ethiopia have been living in a state of emergency ever since the TPLF came to power, especially in more recent years.***



If you need witnesses, ask the people of Ethiopia, like the Sidamo, the Oromo, the Somali Ethiopian, the Amhara, the Afar, the people of Benishangul-Gumuz, the Harere, the people of Southern Nations, the dissenters from Tigray or the people of Gambella. Then look at documented reports from Genocide Watch, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Oakland Institute, Freedom House, the Committee for the Protection of Journalists, the US State Department's Human Rights Report and more recently, the UN.

Ask the political prisoners and thousands of Ethiopians in refugee camps and who have sought asylum in countries all over the world. Ask the tens of thousands displaced from their homes. Ask them whether or not the state of emergency is for the people or for the regrouping of power by the regime. Observe whether a new wave of refugees attempt to enter Europe or other destinations.

PM Hailemariam asserts: *“The state of emergency will not breach basic human rights enshrined under the Ethiopian constitution and won’t also affect diplomatic rights listed under the Vienna Convention.”*

Really? Since when has the TPLF followed the Ethiopian constitution or upheld international human rights laws? Instead, the TPLF have threatened, intimidated and imprisoned those who publicly point out their flaws and inconsistencies. They have brutally beaten, tortured and killed citizens, especially leaders, who objected to the eviction of people from their homes and land. They have closed everything down that makes a society function in a healthy, free, just and democratic way.



In terms of resources; the TPLF have given everything to themselves; leaving the people with little, but the will to resist. As the TPLF witness the strengthening will of the people, they are panicking. The state of emergency is for themselves. They need stalling time to find a means to prolong their rule. They also will use it as a ruse to convince investors and donors that they are looking out for them; presenting themselves as the protectors of the interests of these investors instead of admitting the problem is of their own making and the result of years of TPLF oppression.

The regime also want to do public damage control due to recent international condemnation of the TPLF killing of nearly two thousand peaceful protestors in the last eleven months in the regions of Oromia, Amhara and beyond. Only a week ago, on October 2, nearly 700 persons who were celebrating the Irreecha thanksgiving festival in Bishoptu, were either killed or so threatened by tear gas, gunfire, helicopters and tanks, that it ignited a deadly stampede as people raced for safety. Many of the casualties are said to be victims of suffocation when bodies fell in ditches, suffocating as others fell on top of each other. Yet, in a typical pattern of lies, this regime claims the number was in the dozens and blames the people.

As a result of closing down communication lines, including the social media, the TPLF are hoping to block efforts of the people to organize peaceful protests as well as to block information from coming out to the world that would make the regime more accountable for their own criminal actions. Under this cloak, the TPLF has been known to incite violence or to even foment killing between ethnicities to achieve various economic, political and control objectives.

We want to warn the public and international community to exercise caution regarding all information provided originating from the TPLF; particularly, the possible scenario where the TPLF would self-appoint themselves as the necessary peacekeepers so they can claim to be needed. We can see them taking the position that without them, the people would destroy each other and the country will fall into genocide, chaos and disintegration that will affect the whole Horn of Africa. We can also see them claim there is no viable alternative; that the opposition is too divided and that only they, the TPLF, can maintain the stability that will protect the interests of donor countries and other stakeholders. We strongly disagree; instead, prolonging the TPLF is prolonging the suppression of Ethiopians, something that will deepen the opposition to their continued rule.

TPLF options are dwindling and their current hard-nosed actions could create more unity and resolve among the people rather than give the TPLF the return to the former status-quo they seem to want—a false hope on their part. Refusing to listen to the public will lead them to their downfall, just like the previous autocratic regime who refused to come to their senses.

In the past, groups made demands on the TPLF regime, but they did not listen. For example, two years ago, Ethiopian Muslims peacefully protested against regime interference in their religious affairs—a direct violation of the Ethiopian constitution. The TPLF did not want to hear of it; instead, they imprisoned the leaders and only recently released some of them.

In November 2015, the Oromo rose up with a ten-point list of demands. One of these demands was their rejection of the Addis Ababa Master plan that confiscated land in Addis Ababa and displaced 30,000 Ethiopians from their homes. They stopped the plan only after everyone was evicted from their homes and land.

More recently in the Amhara region, the people stood up against a plan to take over indigenous Amhara land and claim it as part of the Tigray region. The Amhara region's demand was to respect their territorial claim to that land. The TPLF did not listen, once again.



Now, all of these groups have one demand in common and it resonates loudly and strongly with all the people in the country. That demand is for this regime to step down. TPLF autocratic rule has not worked for the majority of the people of Ethiopia; only for the few in power, and it must go. The peoples' demand is for the establishment of a caretaker government that is inclusive and democratic.



Until the regime answers to the people, nothing will work, including declaring a state of emergency. It is a bandage and a stalling tactic. It is not a feasible or workable solution.

We in the SMNE call on the TPLF regime to listen to the demands of the people and to not use the state of emergency or the blocks on communication as an opportunity to commit crimes and destruction behind the scenes— and then turn around to blame the people for it. If you do this, you will be held accountable.

Recommendations:

1. To the people of Ethiopia:

We call on the people of Ethiopia to be calm and to absolutely NOT commit crimes against each other or destroy any property, no matter who it belongs to. Do not listen to the regime's attempts to incite you and your fellow Ethiopians to commit ethnic-based violence or any other kind of violence against others. If you participate in violence and destruction; they will try to use it to defeat you and the rest of us— to justify themselves and to prolong their survival. They want to blame others. We must be better than they are or the people will end up as the losers, along with the victims of violence and destruction. We want a different Ethiopia than that of the past; which means, we must rise to become people who are called to a higher standard of morality. Without such people; we have no New Ethiopia.

2. To the international community, especially the donor countries:

The TPLF regime has lost the confidence of the people and it is time to strongly condemn their actions and; to instead, support the people. We call for your support in our process to establish a transitional government. Also, **we call on you to warn the regime of actions to be taken if they commit more egregious human rights crimes: the freezing of assets, travel restrictions on them and their family members and other similar consequences. We would call on you to pressure the TPLF/EPRDF regime to stop the killing, to release all the political prisoners, to open up all the means of communications, and to accept a process leading to a transitional government.**

We believe the interests of donor countries, investors and other stakeholders will be better assured, protected, and preserved by the restoration of justice and the rule of law; upholding contracts and agreements instead of changing them on a whim like the TPLF has done. Additionally, the War on Terror cannot be successful under the TPLF, only exploited, particularly while those appointed and equipped to fight terrorism are terrorizing their own people. A more transparent, accountable and reformed government could improve the outcome.

The freedom of people cannot be denied without some eventual backlash. This is what we are seeing today in Ethiopia. Without caution and a timely response, it may become unmanageable. Others agree with this premise. In a recent article by William Davison, [Ethiopia Losing Foreign-Investment Appeal as Attacks Spread](#), he quotes Jared Jeffrey, a political analyst at NKC Africa Economics, who said by e-mail:

“The issues that need to be resolved are big, and investors will be wary as to whether the current government will be able to address them,” “The longer it takes for the necessary reforms to be made the more fragile the state will become and the higher the risk to investors.”

3. To Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn:

You need to step out of this. You could play a bigger role. People know you are stuck in a role where you are being exploited. What are you really sacrificing? Is what you are getting out of it of any lasting worth?

It is said you are a Christian, believing in Jesus. What would happen if you sided, not with the TPLF, but with what Jesus taught in Scripture? God hates injustice because He cares about the people. You could make a big impact if you considered what is at stake, not only for others, but also for yourself.

Think of what Jesus said in Mark 8:36-37 (NIV): *“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Will you consider this? You could come out now and say: “I am not willing to lie or cover up for the TPLF. No longer will I agree to be used by them to exploit and brutalize the people. I will no longer help legitimize something that is so evil and wrong. The TPLF is ruling, but using you to claim that they are inclusive of others when they are not. Tell the truth!

Be on the side of the peoples’ hunger for justice. If you so chose to do so, a caretaker government could be set up to avert the possibility of greater bloodshed and destruction. It would be a game changer. Be strong and of good courage; however, if you refuse, God can raise up others.

*For this task, we believe you need God’s hand of wisdom, strength, courage, boldness and protection for you and your family. There are surely others among you in leadership among the TPLF Central Committee, among the TPLF, cronies, members of the EPRDF, members of Parliament, regional governors and leaders, members of the judicial system, ministers and their staff, members of the military, security agents, Agazi forces, and many others unmentioned, who need the same, particularly those who are sustaining this regime. **There are no winners if Ethiopia crumbles.***

May God help and guide the people of Ethiopia to also **acknowledge their own failings and responsibilities so as to boldly take a stand against the destruction of life and property and to choose righteousness, compassion and morality as the way to bring reconciliation, justice and meaningful reforms to Ethiopia.**

Please do not hesitate to email me if you have comments to: Obang@solidaritymovement.org