

**Declaration of Unity between
EPP and the Eritrean Democratic
Resistance Movement of Gash-Setit
May 25, 2009**

Our Steadfast Eritrean People!

The Eritrean Revolution was started spearheaded by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) whose first units were led by our hero martyr Hamid Idris Awate for the lofty causes of national liberation, justice, and equality. And for a State that would build, protect, and advance the rights; and the wellbeing, as well as the dignity of its citizens who eventually paid heavy price in the struggle that required the participation of the entire nation to overcome the internal fragmentations caused by a chain of alien rulers, including Ethiopia.

As a result of the heavy sacrifices, the Eritrean people could reclaim a lost sovereign territory and national identity. However, the PFDJ regime in Eritrea, which denied the role and the sacrifices of others, established a repressive system that turned the initial national euphoria to unhappiness in Eritrea that became an earthly hell that failed to be a welcome place to its own citizens. In an environment of intolerance where fear reigns supreme; where dissent and freedom of thought and the voice of others are stifled; where the labour and the intellect of others is only there for exploitation; where political action is taken as crime, the outcome cannot be anything else but an absolute one-man repression supported by a small clique. It is this absolute domination by one man using institutions of one party that gave birth to a selfish bureaucratic force in independent Eritrea. This unaccounted bureaucratic force could use the mandate of the state for illegal practices and the amassing of wealth for its clique whose interests have little relation with the interests of the common people. As a result, our country Eritrea has become a big prison-like state where the rights and the fundamental values of the individual and the community are trampled upon; where landowners are easily evicted from their farmlands; where citizens are forcibly conscripted to the military; where the youth are denied schooling in order to serve in an open-ended forced labour and where the entire nation lost hope and started to take escape from home as the bitter choice. On top of this, the regime's meaningless armed conflicts with Eritrea's neighbours have exposed our people to endless disruption, suffering and death.

Our Struggling People!

The Eritrean Democratic Resistance Movement/Gash-Setit has taken the initiative of merging with the Eritrean People's Party (EPP) after openly welcoming the earlier call for the formation of a mass party with a broad national base of forces with similar programs and visions so that combined national energies could create a new momentum that would remove the destructive regime and its policies.

Springing from this background, the dialogue of the two sides conducted between 16 and 24 May 2009 studied in depth the adverse effects of the fragmentation in the politics of the opposition, and outlined the following important developments:

1. Within a short time after liberation of our country, the transitional force in Eritrea exposed itself bent at monopolizing state power when it declared that other voices will not be heard in new Eritrea. This fact led to the further proliferation of political groups, which were maintained or created just as angry reaction to what was happening in independent Eritrea, and not as a response to a need for multiparty politics.
2. The presence of a large number of political groups in the Eritrean opposition camp is not an outcome based on reality nor is it a response to a requirement. This multiplicity is not even a reflection of a mature political alignment.
3. The fragmentation in the Eritrean opposition camp is a clear manifestation of whimsical responses of personal quarrels, divisive reactions and individual egos, all based on lingering bitter feelings and animosity caused by events of the long past.
4. Multiparty system is required to keep sound political diversity alive. The closeness and similarity in vision and program of parties should be a factor for narrowing down political fragmentation. Meaningless fragmentation cannot give a clear choice to a people; instead, it adversely affects the capacities of the political actors on one hand and weakens the participation of the general population to support fragmented political groupings on the other. This is one of the factors providing a lease of life to the PFDJ regime in Eritrea today.

Our dialogue committee, after conducting extended but fruitful, serious and responsible exchange of views with candor and wish to succeed, has reached full agreement on the political, organizational and administrative issues put in their agenda. The agreement shall be effective from the date of its signature by the two sides and shall be fully implemented within three months so that the Eritrean People's Party will be able to carry on effectively its responsibilities in the other unity process with the Eritrean Democratic Party (EDP).

Therefore, we in Eritrean Democratic Resistance Movement/Gash-Setit and the Eritrean People's Party are hereby declaring to our Eritrean people and the world at large this complete unity between the two parties for the sake of the lofty objectives mentioned above. This political and physical merger being declared today is a reflection of the convictions of the members of EPP and the Gash-Setit Movement. It is in response to the public call for unity by narrowing down political fragmentation in the opposition. This merger is a worthy reward to our fallen heroes/heroines, and disabled veterans of the liberation struggle who made independence happen 18 years ago. It indeed is a step forward in our people's preparedness to respond to the challenges and urgent developments ahead in laying down the pre-conditions for change. Only to repeat, the EPP and the Gash-Setit Democratic Movement have taken this step for merger to strengthen the national pillars that ensure the establishment and continued existence of a democratic state in which the freedom and the dignity of the citizen is fully respected, as well as to encourage our people to break out of the current bondage and play an effective role in building their bright future in a harmonious and prosperous Eritrea.

Our Indomitable People!

We, in the EPP and Eritrean Democratic Resistance Movement/Gahs-Setit, once again condemn in the strongest terms possible the land evictions and continued resettlement of the Isayas regime. We also once more affirm that land taken from its rightful owners shall be returned to the people after the removal of the dictatorial regime.

At this moment of declaring the merger of our two organizations, we call upon all Eritreans in general, and members of the EPP and the Gash-Setit Democratic Resistance Movement in particular, to give full support and continue strengthening this unity. Likewise, we call upon other political organizations with similar programs to take steps towards unifying their ranks and thus strengthen themselves for effective political action against the dictatorial regime. Needless to say, all Eritrean political organizations, civil society members and media establishments are urged to upgrade their cooperation and work relations in the struggle for change and democratization.

Victory to the Democratic Struggle of Our People!

Victory to the Unity of the Eritrean People!

Glory and Eternal Memory to Eritrean Martyrs!

Shame and Downfall to the Dictatorial Regime!

Woldeyesus Ammar, Chairman
Eritrean People's Party (EPP)



Ismail Nada, Chairman,
Eritrean Democratic Resistance
Movement/ Gash-Setit

