

## Blackmailing Won't Hinder our Unity

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EDP/EPP  
November 8, 2009

Unity has been a central objective for Eritrean people. The chronicle of Eritrean unity and the effort to achieve it extends back to the early 1940s. Here, it is not hard to get the picture that unity has always been strength in our history - as the saying goes 'unity achieves strength while division represents weakness.'

This also holds true that the diversity of our cultures, languages, religion, identity, nationality...etc is not a threat to Eritrea's unity. Rather our diversity has a positive and multiplying force, as well as a great value on the strength of unity – provided that we manage it better and steer it right.

What threatens the unity of Eritrean people is a political system that depends and survives on injustices, divisive politics, and subjugation of the people. Again, what is obvious is that the threat to our unity has never been our diversity, but the type of political system we have. It is in this regard that we believe the government of Isayas and its misguided policies pose a real danger both to the unity and the diversity of our people. This is the reason why we struggle to remove the dictatorial regime and replace it with a democratic system of governance that honors diversity and unity of our people.

Our objective is a genuine call on Eritrean people to rise and stand in unison in fighting against their common enemy, the PFDJ regime. Furthermore and equally compelling for realizing a formidable and united opposition against the repressive regime is by going beyond the politics of ELF vs. EPLF, fighter vs. non fighter, highlander vs. lowlander, Warsai vs. Yikalo and the rest of the demagoguery and divisive intricacies that are being sponsored by some to hold onto their entrenched narrow agenda.

Our effort is to be a unifying body. We do not subscribe to the campaign of religious wars and ethnic conflicts; we do not play Eritrean nationalities against one another; and we do not create a condition for one region to rise against another region.

We are proponents of change. But our fundamental objectives will remain trivial and inconsequential without adequate action plan and strong organization that must promote and actualize those objectives. And it is this conviction that has been always a central driving force for us to seek a common approach for unifying the shared vision among the Eritrean political parties and organizations. An essential basis to enable this vision to take solid shape, we needed and proposed two track strategy for organizing the Eritrean political organizations: one is to bring those political organizations and parties that hold the same principles and vision under one entity; and second to establish an umbrella organization for those whose principles and visions are not in agreement, but have a convergent interest in defeating their common enemy. This is the basic principle of our strategy to realize unity and establish a formidable opposition against the repressive regime in our country. Here, four Eritrean political parties: the Eritrean Democratic Movement for Gash/Setit, the Eritrean People's Movement (EPM), the Eritrean Democratic Party (EDP), and the Eritrean People's Party (EPP) fell into the first category. As a result, they are on the process of forming one political party. This uniting and merging strategy is a living process: any organization that espouses the same vision with the four organizations can join the process.

On the subject of the campaign against the four uniting parties, so much effort and energy have been directed at belittling and undermining the process that those who are engaged in the scheme have forgotten that sustaining such campaign would not help Eritrean people. The four uniting political parties knew where they came from, and they know where they are heading. They are perfectly aware of the pulse of the Eritrean people, and they won't succumb to temptations of conflicts and confrontations fuelled by past histories, which do not have tails and heads. We are determined to move forward to realize the aspirations of our people who need a common unifying approach.

We are determined to change the nonstop enigma. The people or groups who are going by different colors (opposition members, supporters of PFDJ and other individuals) are unable to face the truth that the era of obsolete ways of leading the Eritrean opposition and the continuity of the past are long over. But still they cannot see it; at every level in every detail, we must find them in continuous touch with barrage of accusations against the four uniting political parties: one time they accuse us of being advocates of Christians, in another time we are supporters of PFDJ, and sometimes we belong to the extreme left. There are also others who took the accusation one step further and stated that the PFDJ regime would hold election in 2011 and that we might be invited to participate.

We are not the face of the status quo, conflicts, or fear. But we are staunch callers for change and real unity. And yet, the same individuals and groups claim fear of domination and hegemony of the four uniting political parties. But how could a purposeful, productive change, democratic and forward-looking endeavor accounts for domination and hegemony? This is not true fear, but true weakness. This behavior is characteristic of less successful individuals and political leaders, and worn out political groups who believe they should come up with anything, but not real and visionary action, to appease their members and sympathizers on one hand, and stir fear among the gullible ones on the other. But basking on such ideas is not sustainable and is inconsequential in the long run; it won't benefit Eritrean people, nor will it deter the progress of the unity because we are operating on the real aspiration of our people and not on perceived change.

We are not playing divisive politics. We are working for unity. We are exploring every avenue at every level to solve the suffering and injustices of our people like many Eritreans. Such actions deserve encouragement and not condemnation. Like many Eritreans, we earnestly believe we have an obligation to discharge our vision, the vision of unity and change, which we strongly believe is common and shared by our people. Again, this is the underlying reason why the four political parties concluded an agreement to converge into one body.

A quick review of the current situation demonstrates that despite many groups in the opposition the lack of vision and adamant adventure into our past conflicts and confrontations not only have ruined our ability to measure the political thermometer of our country, but also gave our people a reason to distrust the opposition. We are determined to reverse this trend by spreading the ethos of change and by solidifying the unity in progress. We cannot continue distancing from our people that have an overwhelming power to change the situation in our country. Yes, this time around the change on the making and the unity of the four political organizations won't be hindered from achieving its objectives. No amount of blackmailing will distract the process because change and unity is in the interest of the Eritrean people. But also change and unity is needed now more than anything else

because of the prevailing suffering, injustices, and the unspeakable atrocities that exist in our country.