

NEW NEWSLETTER ETHIOPIA

"CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY"

This phrase was coined by a South African Author to sound an alarm relating to the crimes of Apartheid by capturing the imagination of his countrymen and the rest of humanity. The intention here is not to draw parallels between today's Ethiopia and the inhuman and ruthless system of Apartheid of the then South Africa. At this critical juncture in the history of Ethiopia we found the phrase most relevant and appropriate in light of the prevalent lust for Peace and National Reconciliation.

For the last three decades the peoples of Ethiopia have been mercilessly subjected to gross mistreatment and untold suffering by those who happened to preside over the institutions of management of societal life. Arrogance and lack of vision approximating complete stupidity that have been the hallmark of the Country's rulers have forced Ethiopians to live under a situation of perpetual threat full of anxieties and uncertainties. Not surprisingly, with their memory of a tottering Emperor who greedily clung to power even after having celebrated his 80th birthday only to be dragged out of office by his soldiers and the recklessness and utter folly of Mengistu who presided over the physical destruction of hundreds of thousands of citizens still fresh in their minds, Ethiopians have a justifiable ground to question and suspect the "democratic" credentials and high sounding promises of the current incumbents.

The so called July Conference, the 1992 farce local elections and most of the Transitional Government's policies and practices witnessed in the last couple of years have provided ample grounds for legitimate concerns. Among others, the

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ALL ETHIOPIA SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (ME'ISONE)

conducting of the last regional and local elections described even by foreign observers as:

"Democracy suspended in the air",

"Few choices at the polls",

"Widespread hanky-panky",

"Regional elections turned into fiasco"...etc.

have made the Ethiopian people to strongly doubt the genuinity of the "free and fair" nature of the up-coming EPRDF-sponsored national election. Indeed, Ethiopians have every reason to lose faith in the on-going preparation for the conducting of a fragile, bogus and pseudo-democratic exercise.

In all seriousness, if there is the authentic political will to save the Country from going through another cycle of comprehensive catastrophe, which could, undoubtedly, be nurtured by lack of vision and commitment on the part of the powers that be, the suggestions included in the E.C.A. sponsored Study within a wider African framework need to be heeded without delay:

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A unique opportunity has now emerged to learn from past errors to strengthen the fragile democratic movements and encourage the establishment of enduring political systems which respect civil and human rights; allow citizen participation; maintain responsive and accountable governance; permit free and fair political competition...

These lofty principles can materialise if and only if all actors in the political arena come together for deliberation on the future of the Country through compromise that could lead to the forging of a commendable consensus. It is with this in mind that MEISON is determined to do everything in its power by contributing its share for the realisation of the anticipated Conference On Peace and National Reconciliation.

We call upon all Ethiopia political forces to shoulder the responsibility of saving the Country and reciprocate to this end in both intent and tangible action!

We call upon all friends of Ethiopia to join us in our struggle for Peace and National Reconciliation!

THE FORCES OF PEACE AND DEMOCRACY SHALL TRIUMPH!!!

December 10, 1993

Addis Ababa