

# ADDA BILISUMMAA OROMOO

OROMO LIBERATION FRONT



جبهة تحرير أوروامو

Gaafa: 15-11-2008  
Date:

تاريخ

Lakk.: stm25/abo/2008  
No.:

رقم

## To Set the Record Straight

### Statement of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) Regarding VOA Interview on Negotiations with the TPLF Regime

In an interview with the Voice of America Amharic Service, and also reported by the Afaan Oromoo Service, on November 14, 2008, Rev. Ittafaa Goobanaa, as Representative of the Oromo Elders, stated, among others, that the OLF has accepted, in principle, the TPLF/EPRDF (Ethiopian) Government's Constitution, to negotiate a peaceful resolution of "the political differences" between the two. The OLF is compelled to respond to the issues raised in this interview to set the record straight.

To begin with the OLF has a clear and standing policy regarding negotiations with the TPLF regime. It is true that in January 2008, the OLF delegation met with the Oromo Elders group, in the presence of a third party observer and facilitator, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The OLF Delegation went into the discussion with these elders respecting the traditional position of elders in our society without questioning the motive, the identity or the feasibility of their project. All the OLF Leadership's contacts with the Oromo elders were conducted in the presence of a third party facilitator. The OLF delegation has made clear to the elders the OLF's long standing policy of negotiation with the TPLF regime (Ethiopian Government) among which is that no precondition should be attached to it.

It is also true that the Oromo Elders Group presented to the OLF delegation their proposal to the OLF and the Ethiopian Government to enter into negotiation. The presented proposal requires the OLF, among others, to "Accept, in principle, the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia." After an extensive discussion, the OLF Leadership delegation agreed, despite clear contravention of the earlier understanding and its policy, to present the proposal to the OLF Executive Committee (EC) and communicate its decision to the Oromo Elders Group, via the facilitator, in two weeks. This was the only promise that the OLF leadership delegation made to the Oromo Elders Group.

Accordingly, the Elders' proposal was presented to the OLF EC. On February 26, 2008, the OLF EC communicated, via the facilitator, its decision to the Oromo Elders Group that the OLF will not accept any precondition to enter into negotiation with the TPLF regime, as this will contravene its policy. The OLF EC's decision, communicated to the OLF Elders Group stated that, "*this latest Elders' proposal asking the OLF 'to accept the Ethiopian Constitution' is once again in contrary and contradiction to the above mentioned understanding within which the OLF entered into discussion with you.*" Furthermore, the OLF EC restated the long standing policy of the OLF pertinent to the peace negotiation with Ethiopian Government and informed the Oromo Elders Group that, "*The OLF-EC, therefore, reiterates its commitment to dialogue without precondition in the presence of third party.*"

On March 7, 2008, the Oromo Eluders Group Representative sent a letter to the Chairman of the OLF and confirmed the receipt of the above mentioned letter of February 26, 2008, and re-

quested for “a face-to- face meeting” between the Elders Group and the OLF Leadership. The requested “face-to-face meeting” did not take place to date, as it was not necessary to enter into discussion on the OLF’s position with the elders. The above is the whole truth.

The interview on the VOA seems to convey that the OLF delegation agreed to the pre-condition and, also fails to inform the audience that the OLF EC has accordingly responded to the proposal on time. We implore our elders to adhere to the established tradition of Oromo elders and safeguard the reputation of that respected institution.

Victory to the Oromo People!

Oromo Liberation Front

November 15, 2008