



Dear Mr. Chairman,

Dear Honorable representatives of People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and beloved Oromo, ogadenian and Eritrean community as a whole!! It is a great privilege and honor for me to be among you today representing the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). First of all, I would like to my deepest gratitude to the organizing Committee for having organized such a timely and important conference supposed to assess the social, political and economic situation of the Horn of Africa with special emphasis on Ethiopian empire.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Oromo-Ogaden and Eritrean Solidarity, such as we see today here in Frankfurt, did not emanate overnight or out of naught. It has rather had its own history and *raison d'être* in our distant history of struggle for freedom against the oppression and subjugation we commonly have suffered and been suffering still under the Ethiopian empire. Indeed, I believe that the

Oromo-Ogaden-Eritrean solidarity is deeply rooted in the hearts of our respective peoples who continually aspire through their struggle to restore their inalienable right to the right of self-determination. No doubt, each people has its own separate history and social identity in accordance to which it articulates the specificity of its problems and hence propose their solutions accordingly. However, those specificities can never override the common experience of colonial oppression and therefore the necessity of solidarity among freedom seeking different peoples. Freedom for each is pre-determined by freedom for all and vice-versa. Such mutuality and reciprocity lies at the core principle of the type of solidarity I am talking about.

Though the Eritrean people have already counted two decades of freedom and sovereignty, it is precisely because of this basic principle that the Eritrean people and government still remain in solidarity with the Oromos, Ogadenians and other oppressed nations and nationalities. Its freedom will not be a full-fledged one without the freedom of other oppressed peoples of the region, because the security and political stability in Eritrea are unthinkable without peace and justice in the region as a whole. Therefore, the urge and strive for peoples' freedom would remain to be the ultimate explanation for the relentless support the Eritrean state have been giving to the Oromo liberation struggle. The Oromo, Ogaden and Eritrean solidarity is a matter of categorical imperative to the political will of the region and the Horn of Africa in general - not just an accidental phenomena that lies in the whim of their respective politicians.

Honorable representatives and all participants of the conference,

Our common march to freedom, equality and justice is just like traveling on a big ship which sails on the vast open ocean to a common destiny. Not only do we need to ascertain where we are traveling to but also the conditions of the ship and the possible obstructions it may face, be it natural or technical, so that the ship not only arrive at the point of its original and final destination safely but also smoothly and punctually. This is an analogy that best describes for me the common march of the Oromo-Ogden and other

oppressed peoples in Ethiopian empire to freedom as they are progressing in their endeavor to build and shape a more stable, democratic and prosperous society. As much as the sailing journey is dependent on many unforeseeable natural calamities, human and technical failures, our common march to freedom can never be smooth, calculable or guaranteed against all odds. As experience has repetitively shown us, our journey has always been with many ups and downs which would often result with forth and backward movements in our struggle.

Betrayal in the course of Ethiopian politics has been observed several times in our protracted struggle. In 1991, for example, the mediating international community promised solidarity with our struggle as it heralded the famous motto “No democracy, No support”. But sooner than the ink, with which the transitional charter was written, dried, the western world turned, as you all know deaf ear and blind eye to the catastrophic aftermath of the failure of the transitional agreement. The so called international community was not alone in such a betrayal. Even our neighboring countries such as Kenya, Sudan and Djibouti did the same by having subsequently handed over our veterans to the EPRDF government. In due course of time, we were even betrayed by our own members as the balance of force kept tilting to the side of the TPLF/EPRDF.

Despite all the **odds** and **the calamities** we had to be through, our determination and resilience to struggle for freedom have been gathering its momentum through the immense sacrifices the Oromo Liberation Army and the Oromo youth have been paying back at home. By contrast, we Oromos in Diaspora need to critically asses ourselves in respect to minimum national duties we are expected to fulfill on our part. We need to be reflective as to whether we do all what we can do in protecting and safeguarding, at least, the achievements of those sacrifices. We need to learn from our past mistakes not to repeat history. Today, we need, more than ever, to resolutely work and endeavor to be the master of our own destiny rather than simply waiting and hoping some one else to accomplish our own duty. Today, our peoples are in a period of transition. It is a transition from self-awareness as a nation towards self-realizing as a social agent of change

towards achieving more stable, prosperous and democratic system for the entire region without relinquishing one's own ideals and national identity. As history taught us, a period like this is indeed full of sensitive and critical problems, which often can result in a setback and the deterioration of the nation's living conditions. It is in this situation that social instability would result and would further precipitate chaotic and disorderly behaviors even amongst freedom seeking nations themselves. Such a period could even be more dangerous when the stronger or superior sides are forcing their own will by repressive mechanisms. Accordingly, today our nations are challenged with varied, complex and multifaceted problems in the areas of politics, economy, social affairs, and security and Environmental conservations.

Therefore, taking this opportunity I would like to extend our call again to stand shoulder to shoulder in the face of the larger common goal of eradicating the horrendous oppressive system of Ethiopian empire and to ascertain freedom, liberty, justice, and Peace for our peoples and the Horn as well. Needless to stress the fact that only people's freedom and liberation can guarantee for peace and stability in the region.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

In what follows, I would like to shed a light on how the TPLF led EPRDF ruled with iron fist for the last 22 years. It created in the 1990s a form of “indirect rule” based on official definition of ethnicity. Organizationally, the TPLF managed full control over the EPRDF. It systematically pushed out viable opposition forces out of legal political playing field. Key positions in National defense force and security were overwhelmingly occupied by Tigreans. Finally, they managed to build one of the strongest army in Africa not only to smash down any opposition force in the country but also to keep and guard "security and stability" in other African states such as the ones it sent to Rwanda, Liberia, Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan in the name of "peace-keeping force". In having done so, it used the opportunity in portraying itself as the best partner of the West in fighting international terrorism. Mind you!! Its achievements are two fold at a stroke. While it is consolidating its military power and dominance in the region on the one hand, it is simultaneously using this very act as a source of securing international financial support and legitimacy, on the other. By the same token, it puts all IGAD member countries under its influence either by across border raid or trade tie such as promoting Electric power. It higher foreign consultants in Brussels, London, Washington D.C and New York for the purpose of lobbying its repressive political system to the western governments. It sold fertile land of Oromia and the south to foreigners and used its subversive action as a diplomatic leverage. It bought and penetrated oppositions with money and trying to attract Diaspora with minor petty benefits. Despite all these, it never succeeded to defeat our liberation struggle. On the contrary, we are vigilant, resilient and determined in our struggle more than ever. Today we are progressively getting better militarily. As I already mentioned, the Oromo Liberation Army is very much visible in its consistent operations in the entire Oromia regions including the central one, directly, adjacent to the capital city Addis Ababa. General civil unrest and mass movement have been under way for quite sometime thanks to the Oromo Youth, known as **Qerro**, which is getting progressively engulf all other social sectors beyond the youth.



Ladies and gentlemen,

Finally, our struggle for democracy, freedom and self-determination stands at a historic juncture where it is gathering and consolidating its momentums in determining not only our separate destinies but also the course of history for the entire region in the future. As I have already mentioned elsewhere, as an Oromo nation and Oromo Liberation Front we believe that our alliance with all oppressed peoples, progressive democratic forces and peace seeking neighboring countries in the region is strategically important in the drive towards freedom, peace and stability for the Horn. The struggle for freedom will be concluded when the right to self-determination is realized and choice of the people is implemented and respected. In this regard we have to be cautious **not to make unforgivable failure by deciding our self the outcome of a people's choice that affects the existence of the right to make a choice.** The outcome of our people's referendum should not be a subject of a political discussion as we witness today. In respect to this

principal position of the OLF, I recommend my fellow Oromos to see not things in their mundane existence but in their interrelationships, not in their snapshot appearance but in their contextual essence as part and parcel of a larger process.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The politics of alliance demands identifying reliable partners, articulating and undertaking common objectives to be achieved and cultivating mutual trust to achieve further consolidation of unity at yet higher level. Interests based on geographic proximity, Cultural ties, Complementary economy, suffering the same fate of subjugation are all factors that make the Oromo and other oppressed peoples of the south natural allies. This shouldn't be misused by lack of skills and foresight on both sides. EPRDF is skilled in instigating ethnic conflict. The ongoing savage act of "the Somali kilil liyyuu tor" on Oromos (in the Mayyoo, Fadiis, Miidhagaa Lolaa, Cinaaksan, Baabbilee area of the east Oromia and far south at Diida of Booranaa zone) is just a case in point. Our vanguard organizations and both Oromo and Ogaden elders need to work hard to stop such bloodshed orchestrated by our common enemy, the TPLF.

I should unmistakably emphasize that we Oromos have no any animosity towards any other people in the region except we are against an oppressive and repressive system. We all know that governmental systems are temporal as a matter of historical necessity. However, peoples and their relation to one another remain eternal, in fact, often bonded by common destiny. It is based on this basic fact that we insist on the need and importance of solidarity among our peoples if they are to achieve freedom, justice, prosperity and peace in the region as a whole. An enduring and lasting peace can only be achieved through justice that confers each people with the right of self-determination - a fundamental principle of voluntarism, free choice based contractual conception of society upon which all modern democracies are established.

As a result let us stand together be unite our effort against EPRDF Regime,

support each other and work hard in collaboration, to achieve our dream for freedom.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

let me conclude my speech with a reminding announcement to my Oromo fellows and of course Oromo friends:

As I suppose you all know, January first is a multifaceted anniversary for the OLF members, supporters and Oromo people at large. It has been decided as a date of anniversary for Oromo liberation army in 1979 and first celebrated in 1980. Since then it has always been celebrated by all freedom loving Oromos around the world. The historical background to this choice is shortly as follows: In November 1973 J/Elemo Qilxuu and his comrades took Chercher as gorilla base to fight against colonial yoke and in September 1974 began to combat against the emperor army but the armed struggle terminated for a while and again started in 1976. It was endangered in 1978 and recovered in 1979. As a result of such hazardous situation encountered by the OLA, January 1<sup>st</sup> was selected to be the anniversary day of OLA. Since 1980 January first is celebrated as the day of OLA and New Year. Once again I congratulate you for the day of OLA and wishing you happy New Year.

Thank you for your attention,

Long live OLA!

Freedom and justice shall prevail!

The struggle for freedom shall continue until victory!

**Honor and glory for the fallen heroines!**

Thank you,

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