

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Introduction

For the most part, it has been a while since Ethiopia entered the era of modern ideological discourse. It became apparent through the political history of divergent movements of the Derg, EDU, CUD, OLF, EPRP/A, ELF, EPLF, TPLF, and EPRDF. Modern ideological discourse is a bustling mélange of ideas in which scores of ideologies contend with each other. These ideological discourses often appear incongruent with vociferous accents, vying for support from the many people they intend to lead into the future. During the initial and infantile period of these contending ideologies what we saw was a fierce contest, acute differences rather than tolerant attitudes towards differences. In spite of the culture of non-tolerance, Ethiopia emerged and has now opened the democratic forum. Today there is a platform for those who possess a divergent view of economic, political, and social program to make their point and win the hearts and minds of the many people of Ethiopia.

There is however, one exception to Ethiopia's era of modern ideological discourse, and this exception is manifest in how the nature of the ideological discourse is demonstrated between the Ethiopian Diaspora. This discourse mimics the medieval era of handling differences and contention. It is lagging behind, totally lacking the quality that is essential for aspiring and fledgling democracy such as ours in Ethiopia. Its premises come from a flawed attitude of "I am Ethiopian and you're not" paradigm of reasoning. Hence, it deprives itself the very quality of modern ideological civil discourse and counter discourse. Furthermore, civil debate between numerous competing political programs within the Ethiopian Diaspora is literally non-existent so much so that one becomes a suspect and then an enemy for merely challenging a social, economic, or a political point in regards to Ethiopia.

With this in mind, EPRDF-SF is making this introduction available. It is also followed by answers to frequently asked questions, to initiate and engage all Ethiopians to be part and parcel of Ethiopia's modern ideological discourse and counter discourse. It is our hope this will initiate discussion and dialogue to help each one of us understand and create a better civil service to the many people of Ethiopia in manners congruent with the modern world and specifically to serve the objective reality in Ethiopia.

### 1. WHAT IS EPRDF-SF?

The Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front- Support Forum (EPRDF-SF) is a grass-roots association of like-minded Ethiopian Diaspora in North America, Canada, Europe, and Australia. It was initially organized via the Internet to constructively support the current Ethiopian government in its day-to-day affairs of leading the Ethiopian people into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. However, due to the great enthusiasm and initiative of individuals that are eager to contribute to their country's development EPRDF-SF chapters are being created in the various regions of Australia, Europe, Canada and the US.

### 2. WHAT IS EPRDF?

EPRDF- Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, the current ruling party of Ethiopia, is the coalition of Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization, Tigrean Peoples' Liberation Front, Amara National Democratic Movement, and South Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Front. EPRDF espouses what can be termed as a "Social Democratic" agenda. It is a reformed form of capitalism managed through state regulations. It is creating state

sponsored programs and organizations to better the lives of millions of Ethiopians. To this end, EPRDF is executing an Agriculture Development Led Industrialization, which has now registered a double-digit economic growth for some time now. EPRDF is also known for its boldest recognition of the right of peoples, people, nations, and nationalities of Ethiopia to self-govern.

### **3. IS THERE ANY POLITICAL IDEOLOGY BEING ESPOUSED BY EPRDF-SF?**

EPRDF-SF has no given political ideology. EPRDF-SF believes that there is no singular political ideology that is standing out to resolve the intricate economic, political, and social problems of the Ethiopian society. Some political ideologies may suit a given society to some degree of comfort while others create havoc and disarray. It is hard to think of an American society living under the political ideology of the Chinese communist party, as it is hard to think of an Ethiopian society living under a free market economy, in its classical sense, where the creation and accumulation of wealth is suggested to be done with no regulation what so ever. Consequently, to claim or to seek for a static or stationary political ideology in a fluid world of overabundance and deprivation, dictated by intricate conflicting international interest is as perverse as it is naive.

### **4. WHAT EXACTLY WERE THE CONCERNS THAT FACILITATED FOR THESE LIKE-MINDED ETHIOPIAN DIASPORA TO COME IN UNISON TO CREATE EPRDF-SF?**

- The fact that the few eccentric opponents of EPRDF are organized in ways that undermines the sovereignty of Ethiopia - a country that has stood in history as one of the pillars of independence.
- The fact that the few but vocal opponents are openly showing the tenacity and eagerness to deprive the Ethiopian people of any political and economic interest that may come in a support form either from the US or any other European country.
- The willingness that these few but vocal opponents are manifesting to create an alliance with any entity that has a stake or interest to bring havoc and instability in Ethiopia
- The creation of AFD (Alliance for Freedom and Democracy) from aggregate destructive forces of OLF, ONLF, CUD, SLF, and SPLF, who are hell bent and very willing to scrap the very name Ethiopia from the lexicon of sovereign nations of the world, with the full support and guidance of a rogue Eritrean dictatorial state.
- The ganging up of these and other forces in the United States of America to solicit the passage of a legislative initiative to curtail and impede the working symbiotic US-Ethio relationship, in order to bring about economic and political hardship and then instability, with the pretext of vying for democracy and accountability.

### **5. WHO STARTED EPRDF-SF?**

EPRDF-SF is the brainchild of a concerned Ethiopian. The concerned Ethiopian was compelled to convey his message of what should be done through AIGA FORUM, in order to counter what he believed to be a destructive role played by the opponents of EPRDF. AIGA FORUM is an Internet forum dedicated to enhance the lives of the many people of Ethiopia. Readers of the article inundated AIGA for some action, and AIGA facilitated in line with what the concerned Ethiopian and the readers of the article had in mind; the creation of an Internet forum dedicated to counteract the forces of negative political and social dispensation while supporting EPRDF with critical, cordial, and civil eyed manner.

### **6. WHY DOES EPRDF-SF SUPPORT EPRDF INSTEAD OF ANY OTHER POLITICAL**

## ORGANIZATIONS?

EPRDF-SF supports EPRDF instead of any other Ethiopian political party or organization for the following reasons:

- EPRDF is prompt, experienced, disciplined, and able enough to safeguard the intricate national security interest of Ethiopia and its many diverse people.
- EPRDF has pioneered, and is in a perpetual state of engaging itself and the many peoples, people, nation, and nationalities of Ethiopia, for the establishment of a democratic political system based on equality.
- EPRDF is working strenuously in tandem with all peoples of Ethiopia to solve the cumbersome socioeconomic problems, by implementing an economic policy (Agriculture Development Led Industrialization), which continues to register a double-digit economic growth for some time now.
- EPRDF has brought strength to Ethiopia's unity, by abolishing a coercive system of administration and replacing it with a friendly Federal Government, to facilitate and transfer all the power that is to peoples, people, nation, and nationalities of Ethiopia to self-govern.
- At this juncture, where instability is surrounding Ethiopia, the existence of an adept, tested, crafty, and superior Ethiopian Defense Force, and a party that can guide this superior Ethiopian Defense Force to an inevitable victory is a must. In this respect, no other political organization or party except EPRDF possesses the experience and the military know how. It is EPRDF that is equipped to reciprocate the multi directed impending threat from the villain state of Eritrea, and the aggregate enemies, who are at pause and willing to splinter from Somalia.

### 7. What is the outlook of EPRDF-SF on the questions of nationalism, unity, and the Eritrean question?

**Nationalism** shouldn't be something more than a shared sense of dignified endeavor to love, protect, and better the lives of the many diverse peoples of Ethiopia. Although unfortunate at times, there may be an instance where a given people from a **nation** may choose to be left alone on their own, with or without having a convincing reason. Under such circumstance, democratic procedures rather than warring gestures should prevail.

Nationalism of the desirable kind is achieved if and only if all of our unity inducing political and social engagements toward all people concerned is based on respect and fairness. The question of fragmentation is out of the picture because our democratic endeavor that promotes self-governance will make the question of cessation obsolete. National unity based on democratic principles will inevitably breed positive contribution beyond Ethiopia's borders. It will foster peace and make our volatile and instability ridden region a livable place. Therefore, the unwarranted idealization of superiority in relation to any other people within or out of the boundaries of our country is undesirable. Arrogance and disrespect foments resentment. Resentment in turn helps tensions to flare up, leading some to coerce others, and others to resist, hence propelling the achieved unity into disarray.

It is with the premise of this kind of democratic principle that we shall deal with the Eritrean question. It is evident that the diverse people of Eritrea share the greater part of our history and are indeed related to us in every imaginable sphere of life. Our similarity shrinks our assumed differences. Thus, instead of harboring resentment based on jingoistic nationalist tendency, a democratic gesture of allowing the Eritrean people live according to what is appropriate for them becomes acceptable. The recognition of their democratic right indeed helps narrow the gap of our differences. It will in fact enhance the prospect of a co-operation that may one day lead to a stronger relationship and ultimately towards a REUNION.

In regards to the current Eritrean government, EPRDF-SF believes that today there is:

- An Eritrean dictatorial war-mongered state that went into conflict with all of its neighbors- Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen, and Sudan
- An Eritrean state that sponsors and backs terrorist organizations, especially those who are eager to see the demise of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia - a nation that is growing strong by the day both in terms of economic development and in its ability to defend itself from all of its enemies.
- An Eritrean government that works with unflinching determination to create instability in Ethiopia. Its hope is to fracture Ethiopia into miniature warring states. This vicious attitude emanates from the mind of Eritrea's one-man rule, which fears and shivers with the idea of a united Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as next-door neighbor.

## 8. WHAT IS THE OUTLOOK OF EPRDF-SF ON SOMALIA?

EPRDF-SF believes that the crisis in Somalia is mostly being propagated by outside forces that have issues with Ethiopia, including the Eritrean dictatorial state. Ethiopia has shown restraint, respecting the wishes of the Somali people despite ICU's proclamation of Jihad. When ICU made it abundantly clear that it has a plan to "liberate" part of the Ethiopian territory in the name of creating the "Greater Somalia," the Ethiopian government was content until the impending threat of ICU materialized in Baidoa, with all the intension of engulfing the Ogaden region of Ethiopia into a war torn territory. Ethiopia demonstrated its right to defend its territory and to also exercise its right to support an internationally recognized Transitional Government of Somalia at its behest.

EPRDF-SF believes that the mission of the Ethiopian Defense Forces to use force will be justified until,

- ICU and any of its supporting factions drop their terrorist actions and threats, and confine to do what ever they wish within the internationally recognized boundary of Somalia.
- ICU and any of its supporting factions drop the claim of "Greater Somalia" that is standing to garnish part of the internationally recognized Ogaden region of Ethiopia.
- ICU and any of its supporting factions stop concocting terrorists and destabilizing missions, with the Eritrean dictatorial state, ONLF, OLF, and all of the entities that have issues with Ethiopia.
- ICU and any of its supporting factions stop aiding, encouraging, and facilitating ONLF, OLF, and any other terrorist organization who are campaigning to kill as many innocent Ethiopians as they can with the hope of creating havoc and instability.

## 9. WHAT IS THE OUTLOOK OF EPRDF-SF ON KILIL?

KILIL is one of the issues that can easily be demagogic to mean the dismembering of Ethiopia into ethnic miniature states. Those who oppose it would not budge to claim a patriotic upper hand over those who advocate for it. Nonetheless, the principle that should guide our discourse on KILIL has to be the following: **There should always be a healthy competition in improving our way of life. However, one should never be denigrated and his Ethiopian citizenship questioned when one challenges the status quo.**

The fourteen provinces were a historical arrangement by the previous regimes. However, it does not necessarily

mean we should not question the arrangement. The same is true about KILIL. KILIL today is just another changeable political arrangement that is being used to fairly and squarely distribute political rights, economic interests, and social benefits among the many people of Ethiopia for today's condition.

Those who are standing to lose from such a political arrangement in which power, privilege, duties, and rights are distributed are arguing in essence for immutable order of things. The traditional and historical edifice of Ethiopia stood on the premise of royal and aristocratic privileges, and this coercive edifice was imposed on fourteen political provinces. The edifice also was justified through ecclesiastical authority in order to shore and give it the appearance of immutability. Those who dared to challenge the royal and aristocratic living arrangements within the fourteen provinces of Ethiopia were dealt mercilessly. The continuing coercive arrangement under royal and aristocratic administration brew local resistance and nationalist movements in many parts of the fourteen provinces of Ethiopia paving the path for the emergence of the EPRDF.

KILIL is a political choice that resulted from decades of an Ethiopian struggle for justice, equality, and the right to self-govern oneself locally. It is a political arrangement representing the pacts and agreements that the EPRDF made with the peoples of Ethiopia as stipulated in the Constitution, emancipating and empowering the many people of Ethiopia from the previous imposing and oppressing monolithic central governments.

## **10.WHAT IS THE OUTLOOK OF EPRDF-SF ON ARTICLE 39?**

One should not read Article 39 without extrapolating it with the common and prevailing theme of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Admittedly, Article 39 is one of the boldest articles, but nonetheless its forceful and demanding phrases can only have meaning if and only if the Constitution fails in practice from continually granting the many people of Ethiopia the right to self-govern. After all, it is the deprivation of this precise right to self-govern oneself that induces the question of cessation rather than the setting aside of the right to secede for those who may be disgruntled in the future. Keep in mind that for cessation to be materialized, deprivation and disgruntlement of a people has to be found apparent beyond any doubt, and it has to be supported by those who may stand to lose from the cessation of a given people.

In its precise sense, Article 39 entails EPRDF's ideological conviction to emancipate and empower people, peoples, nation, and nationalities of Ethiopia to self govern. Article 39 is a legislated idea of an ideological conviction to be practiced if and only if the organs of political, economic, and social power that should have been bestowed to the people are absent.

## **11.WHAT IS EPRDEF-SF'S OUTLOOK ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY?**

It's self-evident that all Ethiopians are created equal, endowed with the right to pursue their lives as free and as coequal. Dignified life encompasses each and every aspect of any right that relates to any economic, political, and social benefits and interests that a given society can furnish to its citizens. EPRDF-SF thus believes that every Ethiopian has the right:

- To life, liberty, freedom of expression
- To keep one's private property
- To access justice equally

- To access education
- To work anywhere within the boundaries of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Democracy intricately embeds these notions of human rights - both the individual and the overriding communal rights of a society. Societal right is not merely the aggregate of individual right who stand to compose it. Societal right is composed of conflicting interests that of the minority and the majority. In a true democracy the minority stands to lose, and those who stand to lose are expected to be as committed as those who stand to gain, in carrying out the choices that are otherwise contrary to theirs. Hence, their future voice as part of the majority is protected reciprocally. In a way, a commitment by the minority to carry out the wishes of the majority in and of itself becomes a worthwhile strategic interest to be protected.

For this reason, a society may stand to claim superior right compared to the claim of an individual. After all, the individual is simply the single unit of a building block that we call the majority or the minority depending on the numbers of the individuals who are standing to compose it. This makes democracy a self-imposed choice, which is garnered reasonably from the many as opposed from the few, in order to enhance the human rights of an Ethiopian society.

## **12. WHAT IS EPRDF-SF OUTLOOK ON THE HOLDING OF LAND, AS ONES OWN PROPERTY?**

EPRDF-SF believes that property is a social product, and the notion of self-contained individuals creating property out of themselves for the sake and interest of owning it solely, un-indebted to the many helping hands of the greater society of Ethiopia is at minimum far fetched. Having said that, an individual is perfectly within his/her own natural right, to have his/her own resident and all of the property that may enhance his/her own way of life at his/her disposal. However, at issue here is whether an individual is entitled to hold land as his/her own property for use as he/she deems it proper.

EPRDF-SF believes that land is not a social product that one invests to create, but rather, it is simply a domicile to all those who happen to reside on it for communal use. Succinctly put, land is an absolute social property from which the complete necessities of what life demands can be produced to benefit the great many Ethiopians. To own land privately amounts to owning those whose life is dependent on it.

Consider an American multi-national corporation with trillions of dollars at its disposal for investment. This corporation hopes to purchase massive land from Ethiopia for multi-faceted purpose. In fact, the corporation had inquired last year to buy and hold the massive virgin land of Sidamo, had EPRDF agreed to its inquiry. Disappointed, the corporation is using every arsenal there is, including HR2003, to change the land policy of EPRDF. Had the corporation succeeded in its endeavor, it would have exported coffee, explored for natural resources, employed the Sidamo residents for bare minimum, and would have sold their own water back to them at a price they can barely afford-merely because it holds their land as its own property in exchange for perishable amount of dollars it handed to their government. This is the least of all the danger that the Ethiopian people will face, if land is to be sold and used privately. It's therefore to the best interest of the Ethiopian people, EPRDF-believes, that the land of Ethiopia should not be allowed and considered to be a product, saleable to the best bidder for private use.