



Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia (SMNE)
-The United Kingdom Branch of the SMNE
Presents a Conference on:
**“Land Grabs, Human Rights Violations and the
Repression of Political Rights in Ethiopia”**
Agenda

28 – 29th October 2010 RISC, Reading, UK – a two day conference

28 October 2010

10:00 Registration –Coffee & Tea

10:30

Welcome

Consortium 2010

10:35 **Introduction and & objectives for attending this workshop**

- a. A few words stating what are your interests in the workshop
- b. What would like to find out from the workshop today?

10:50 **Human rights in Ethiopia, problems and solution – participant perspective**

This is an opportunity to gather everyone’s opinion rather than hear from politicians and experts perspective only. It is strongly suggested all stakeholders to come prepared and ready to share their experiences and understand each others view point to find solution for our common problem.

Number of stakeholders within the consortium2010 and outside of it believes that during previous regimes in Ethiopia, individuals and community groups were oppressed and treated differently, but the current regime is worst because it oppresses all regardless of ethnic and regional origin. As a result we all are united in suffering, and this magnitude of suffering alone should suffice for united problem solution for this common problem.

People’s land is taken away for sale to foreign interests and benefiting the minority groups within the regime. This must be stopped by common struggle and approach. This is an opportunity for any stakeholder on Ethiopia, to air their beliefs, views and be heard and share their experiences.

The consortium believes that there are myths and legends that existed in Ethiopian politics and these need detangling, revealing and making them clearer and tangible. Therefore, the time has come for you to come and play your role! The door is open!

How can we work to protect all Ethiopian interest? How can we define Ethiopia as being the home for all its citizens and provide equal opportunity for all. How can we make our resources work for us than work against us? Come and do some thing useful!!

12:00 Lunch - Coffee/Tea

Please bring your lunch, but coffee and tea will be provided

There is also Ethiopian food served in a global coffee – TUT’s Ethiopian Table and it is relatively cheap

13:30 Is foreign aid complicit in human right abuse in Ethiopia?

Discussion

Foreign aid is being used to oppress the people and particularly development projects deprive communities inhabiting the project area. No sustainable compensation and support are provided to the communities affected. For example development projects in the west are viewed as developments to local economy, full employment to a local community, training and development to individuals and communities; even it induces other service industries to mushroom and creates active and dynamic economic and cultural developments to the area concerned. Whereas in Ethiopia, development means land and resource grabbing, bring migrant personnel, cordon the area and outcome from the local community and migrate the resource somewhere else. No viable infrastructure development and provide privileges and rights to foreigners and new comers at the expense of local citizens.

In Ethiopia:

Development = human right abuse. Foreigners are complicit in human right abuses in Ethiopia. How could we stop this or mitigate its impact?

14:10 UN millennium Development goal and its impact in Ethiopia – does it work for all or is it being used to show case achievements using soft targets:

Presented by Dr Martin Kennedy – Development consultant with over 20 years experience. Come and hear this evidence based paper from one of the well versed scholars in the development field

14:35 Group¹ discussion session and report

To capture key actions and outcomes from all the discussions and experiences shared

15: 05 Group discussion teams’ representatives report to all delegates

15:30 Summary of the workshop and notification of 28 October 2010 Event

15:50 End of the day

29 October 2010

11:00 Registration –Coffee & Tea

11:30 Welcome Consortium 2010

**11:35 TPLF’s Role in Leaving the Opposition in Disarray,
By Windimu Mekonnin, Buckingham University**

The Tigray people’s Liberation Front (TPLF) is a force that one should never ever underestimate. It is the only element in the so called Ethiopian Peoples’ Democratic force (EPRDF) that rolls the motor of governing Ethiopia with an iron fist. It is a dictatorial apartheid regime in a black skin. All the 60 or so EPRDF affiliate parties have been artificially created to serve the aims and objectives of the TPLF and not their constituency. In fact, they are the agents of TPLF to keep the people under subjugation. The TPLF has the military power.

Today there is no Ethiopian army as such, but armies made up of ethnic groups, such as The Oromo Army, The Amara Army, The Gurage Army.... Among them The Tigre Army is the dominant army. 95% of top military leaders are Tigres. The rest of the army contingent work for the TPLF. The economy is dominated by The Endowment Fund for Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT). This group runs the entire economy of the country. It is like a Mafia. The TPLF has totally controlled the lives and livings of Ethiopians in Ethiopia right now and moving abroad with their economic muscle to destabilise and disunite the exiled opposition abroad. They are spreading aid money obtained to feed the people for such clandestine work outside the border of the country. They have exported their form of divide and strategy even to our doorsteps here in the West. They are busy, for example creating Ormos Development Organisations, Amara Development Organisation, Gurage Development Organisation, etc under the auspices of the Ethiopian Embassies everywhere. Wherever possible, they are working day and night to bring various Ethiopian communities and churches under the wings of the TPLF Embassies through their infiltrators and agents. The TPLF is also coaxing Ethiopians abroad to go home and build their own houses on the land the TPLF is going to give them as a bribe and also invest in Ethiopia. Everyone who gave their addresses to the TPLF Embassies (It is hard to call them Ethiopian Embassies any more as 90% of the officials are Tigres) are indirectly under control and would be hesitant to be seen with the opposition any more. So, the TPLF has moved in full gear abroad to scatter the opposition in exile and prevent us from uniting. How are we resisting. So far, have not succeeded in combating such malicious moves of the TPLF, but there is no other choice other than waking up to smile the coffee, understand why we are unable to deflect TPLF us onslaught on us and be smarter to create a United Front.

12:15 Lunch - Coffee/Tea and Ethiopian food provided free of charge to every attendee – all welcome

13:00 Fragmented Elite and the Ethiopian State: A Generic Impasse, by Dr. Argawi Berehe

The evolution of the “modern” Ethiopian state is marked by sever deformities, inflicted both from within and outside. The elite in general and the political elite in particular, fragmented as they are on ethnic, religious, regional etc categories, had been unable to develop the harmony of thought on desired fundamental objectives at national level. National interest, as a collective pursuit, has never been set in a sustainable order. The state was thus primarily a terrain of contest and conflict rather than an institution by which authority is disposed in the interest of the collectivity of the nation.

Political actors have placed their parochial power ambitions before and above the well-being of the nation. This discordant course has been accompanied by heinous violations of human and democratic rights as demonstrated under subsequent regimes including the EPRDF.

Concomitantly, external actors have more often been on board as agents of dissonance rather than promoters of a system of rule of law, peace and stability.

This paper argues that the lack of unity of thought among the Ethiopian elite, on whose shoulder the burden of navigating through the national aspiration rests, is at the center of Ethiopia’s predicaments. Hitherto, the elite had failed to establish a system of governance by general consent – the formation of a free state that upkeeps the liberty and basic interests of all citizens. The construction of a state based on the inalienable rights of human beings and rule of law should therefore be the prime preoccupation of all political and civic actors before they indulge in power politics and contemplate the seizure of power. It is the conscious collective effort of all national actors that could set in place a state based on the consent and aspirations of the people if the redemption of Ethiopia and the progress of its people is to be realized.

13:40 Coffee break

14:00 Human rights and reconciliation in Ethiopia OLF perspective by Dr. Shigut Geleta

14:40 Group^{1,2} discussion session and report

To capture key actions and outcomes from all the presentations and experiences shared

15: 20 Coffee break

15: 30 Groups discussing teams representatives report to all delegates

15:50 Summary of the workshop

16:00 **End of the day**

Note:

Group discussion structure to focus on two groups

Group 1 day 1: Lead by Dr. Martin Kennedy

Human rights, development, Foreign aid and Millennium Development goal benefits and impacts

Group1 day 2. Wondimu Mekonin and Dr. Aregawi Berehe

Role of TPLF in Ethiopia in disintegrating opposition parties- problem of Ethiopian state which is marked with sever deformities, inflicted both from within and outside. Problems and solutions

Group2 day 2. Mr. Achame Shana and Dr. Shigut Geleta

The Role of TPLF in selling Ethiopian land that benefits foreign interest and the regime and undermining national security in long run; the need for joint up thinking, to solve chronic human right abuse and reconciliation in Ethiopia – OLF perspective

All group: Feed back to bigger group – each representative from the three groups reports to all – Recommendations and Action plan

Closing remarks: Summary of the workshop