

CUD's Letter of Apology ushers a new era.

By Mekonnen Kassa

The letter of apology sent by CUD leaders to the office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia is may be one of the single most significant developments in the contemporary political history of Ethiopia: the supremacy of the rule of law has prevailed in Ethiopia.

This is also a momentous development as it sets precedence. The whole process of allowing the legal process to take its course, involving indigenous elders to mediate conflicts, and most importantly, for the stubborn and self righteous Opposition leaders to realize that they too are fallible and have made mistakes helps the infant democratization process to grow and secures the future continuous survival of a united Ethiopia.

This letter of admission of guilt and asking for forgiveness serve as a reality check to the extremist Opposition supporters as well. Those who have considered the Opposition leaders spiritual beings, claimed to us that they have a "mandate from heaven to rule Ethiopia" should be scratching their head and wonder what happened? True to their nature, some even suspect that this may be another "woyane" trick to defame their precious "true Ethiopian" leaders.

I am not clear how the court's decision barring them from holding public office is going to play out when the pardon board makes its recommendation. I hope the board will make a clear and unambiguous decision and forward a recommendation be it a full and complete pardon, a commute of only the prison term, or a rejection of their request for pardon all together.

Assuming that the board recommends a full and complete pardon and the Parliament approves it, this is also a second chance for the Opposition leaders to create order out of the Opposition in disarray and give the Ethiopian people a viable alternative. I hope they have learned a valuable lesson and are ready to take their seats in Parliament and take over the administration of Addis Ababa without any preconditions.

From day one, even while publishing my commentaries under a pen name, I have been a strong advocate of respecting legal institutions and working through the legal system, no matter how unfair our impression. Yes, our legal system leaves much to be desired. But we ALL have to recognize the legitimacy and authority of our legal institutions and work within the system to improve the process and guarantee its independence. That is the only sure way for a long lasting peace and stability.

As the result of this new development, Ethiopians are at the dawn of a new political era where differences of opinion are resolved through discussion, public policies are crafted through consensus, and political power is peacefully transferred through fair and free elections. A new and exciting time where no one will fight another person's war or die rioting on the streets as long as ALL politicians respect the rule of law and abide by the decisions rendered by legal authorities.