**Ethiopian Somali region, in defence of the multinational federalism**

*(Ahmed Deeq Hussein) 11-22-16*

Ethiopian Somali region is either 1st or 2nd largest region, constitutes 1/3 of the country, and 3rd largest ethnic group with an estimated total population of 5 million. The region has more 3000 sq km international border with neighboring countries: Somalia, Djibouti and Kenya. The region has strategic importance for peace and security for the country and the horn of Africa, which is known to be the most volatile region in Africa.

Ethio-Somali region has plenty of natural resources including natural gas and many other minerals like gold and salt. Further; it has four rivers with fertile soil which is more appropriate for agricultural irrigation and cultivation. In the recent the region is working to avail its water resources through investing in irrigation projects to advance agricultural productivity. Hence the regional state has prioritized agriculture as a backbone of livelihood and socioeconomic development of the region. The Somali region is also a gateway for import and export of Ethiopia. In the meantime, the main conduit to reach sea port is through Ethio-Somali region.

![Photo – President Abdi Mohamoud Omar, Jigjiga stadium, September 27, 2016](image)

Although for the past one & half decade the region had specific internal problems in terms of security related threats due to armed anti-peace extremists called ONLF (UBBO) and Al Eithad.
They were backed by external foreign countries to fulfill the interests of these countries such as Eritrea, Egypt & other Arab countries with aim of impairing the region’s development and economic growth of the country. Such security hurdles had impeded the region’s progress for long time. However, the region has recently tackled its own problems and fully stabilized the peace & security related concerns using the region’s own special force (Liyu Police) together with national defence force. The people have recognized the region’s long standing peace & security challenges that were exogenously imported.

As a matter of fact, now Ethiopian Somali region is one of the most peaceful region and currently ONLF (UBBO) is uprooted from the region. Its recent years when the region resolved its peace related constrains it resulted enabling the national government initiate the processing of Ogaden Natural Gas (Kalub) and an oil Pipeline installation project to Djibouti sea port. To take such progressive step was unthinkable for Ethiopia Government before several years as the security risk was deterring. Thus, Ethio-Somali region has witnessed tremendous economic and societal transformation based on country’s broader developmental goals, policies, and strategies.

However, after the demise of anti-peace armed groups, terror groups and Derg remnants residing in the west have tried illegal attempts to destabilize peace and stability of Ethiopia through social media, satellite and international media outlets disseminating hateful baseless propaganda against the current system. With intention to induce destructive violence in several occasions through organizing unconstitutional protests against multicultural Federalism and national constitution of Ethiopia, people of Ethiopian Somali region around world have exceptionally reacted against such groundless demands of particular groups; who felt superiority than other citizens.

In this regard, the Ethiopian Somali diaspora communities around the world have strongly denounced the chauvinism, racism, anti-peace and terrorist elements that rallied against economic development, coexistence, peace, stability and solidarity of Ethiopian nations and nationalities that established the multicultural federalism and constitution. Particularly, the diaspora in North America, UK, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Australia, and African and Arab countries rallied in defence of the multicultural federalism.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of Jig-jiga residents had gathered at Jig-jiga stadium and around high ways of the city, as of September 27, 2016. The aim of the peaceful demonstration was to denounce the attempts of chauvinism, racists and terror groups such as Oromo Liberation Front, Ginbot 7 and Derg remnants based in western world, and loudly speak out in these words: Diversity is our beauty, Ethnic based federalism is our solidarity, 1995 national constitution of Ethiopia is our integrity and co-existence, Article 39 of constitution is our bond & trust, yesterday is not today, and today will never be tomorrow and Ethiopia can be Ethiopia one nation only with respect of current ethnic based federal system and 1995 constitution of Federal Democrat Republic Of Ethiopian etc.
During the demonstration at stadium, the Ethiopian Somali region’s president Mr. Abdi Mohamoud Omar addressed few points and precisely underlined the only means that Ethiopia can be sustained is to respect the current multicultural federalism and act per the national constitution. He strongly denounced illegal protests carried out around Bahir Dar, and Gondar cities of Amhara Region and some parts of Oromo region that chauvinism and narrow-minded groups are inspired to interfere and wreck the multicultural federal constitutional system; in order to resurrect the old unitary system of the Derg Junta and the like, which is unacceptable. The president of regional state, at the event, declared that the people will never accept Derg or those with some attitudes or ideologies or anything else that look like it, to return and rule Ethiopian Somali state again. And that no ethnic will rule over other ethnic too. Principally, he insisted the Ethio-Somali state, “including the president”, will fight and defend any attempt to hamper article 39 of the constitution, according ESTV news.

Similarly, community elders also denounced illegal protests in some part of the country, and the acts displacement of innocent Tigrai people in some part of Amhara region and other regions. Without any hesitation they clearly put into words the people of Ethio-Somali will defend ethnic federal system & constitution as well as protect the solidarity of Ethiopia without prerequisite to negotiate with chauvinists and terrorists based in western cities. The Jigjiga resident’s demonstration was to reflect people’s desire and political expression to show they want, agree with and support with the current multicultural federalism and the constitution of Ethiopia. It is also to express their political right that they aggressively disagree what OLF, Ginbot 7, and UBBO and Derg remnants are demanding and the hateful messages that they are disseminating through social media to destabilize peace & stability of the country.
The final message from the people of Ethio-Somali and regional state is to defend the current multicultural federal system, the constitution and to stand in solidarity with all Ethiopians. The people of Tigray should not deserve to be offended rather to be respected because they are the people who sacrificed a lot to ensure equal rights of all Ethiopian nations irrespective of being a majority or a minority.

Many intellectuals believe and admit that Ethiopian Somali state has succeeded in strengthening people-to-people relations and community dialogue of its people (diaspora and the local people). Hence the Ethiopian Somali state, the sitting President Abdi Mohamoud Omar and his administration have achieved to organize, mobilize and integrate his people around world and led them into an avenue of peace and development oriented society, created and strengthened the structure for diaspora community and then connections with Ethiopian embassies of respective countries in the world. People found a convenient route to have a common goal and interest. This is what other region’s leaders were lacking in organizing and leading their people both the local and the diaspora communities. Because of the leadership of Ethiopian Somali state specifically, the president, is highly accepted by the people.

Therefore, Ethiopian Somali state is safeguarding the multinational federalism and the Constitution of Ethiopia.

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