

THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE
FOR
THE NATIONAL PEACE AND RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE IN ETHIOPIA
PRESS STATEMENT
ON PRESIDENT MELES ZENAWI'S PRESS CONFERENCE OF MARCH 29

Mr Meles Zenawi, president of the EPRDEF/TPLF and the Transitional Government, held a press conference in Addis Abeba, on march 29, during which he not only rejected and condemned the Paris Conference of seven Ethiopian Organizations (March 11-13) but also accused the signatories of being "chauvinist" and "anti-Charter".

It is regrettable that Mr Meles Zenawi has chosen to uphold the birthmark of arrogance and extremism that has for long stained the TPLF/EPRDF. It is disquieting and alarming that he, and the EPRDF, have chosen the path of strife and war by rejecting the peaceful way out charted by the Paris Peace Conference.

The Paris Peace Conference, attended by seven organizations (the EPRDF refused to attend and even hindered the delegates of the All-Amhara Peoples' Organization from attending by denying them exit visas), passed a resolution calling for peace and reconciliation, for the convening of a National Conference in which all forces (the EPRDF included) would participate in the joint search for peace and reconciliation.

The Conference participants (the OLF, ARDU, COEDF, SEPDC, Medhin, MECP, TTE) have affirmed their recognition of the right of peoples to self-determination and their commitment to peace.

Official EPRDF propaganda notwithstanding, it is very clear that Ethiopia is sliding dangerously into the pit of civil strife and war.

The last possible chance for Ethiopians to avoid armed conflicts is undoubtedly through the path indicated by the Paris Peace Conference.

Mr Meles Zenawi's rejection of this option and the reliance on force that continues to be manifested by the EPRDF do not augur well for our country.

As for being "anti-Charter", even if this was true, freedom of thought and expression including the right to oppose the Charter is included in the Charter itself. Suffice it to add that the Charter adopted by participants in the July 1991 Addis Abeba Conference which excluded some significant political forces in the country is, in practice, being repeatedly violated by the EPRDF itself.

We have had no illusion that the EPRDF will easily accept the peace and reconciliation option adopted by the Paris Conference. However, in the interest of our people and in order to avert the danger of a catastrophic war our efforts will continue. We call upon all peace loving forces to help us in our noble endeavours.

31 march 1993.

Le Monde Mardi 6 Avril

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□ ÉTHIOPIE : cinq partis d'opposition menacés d'exclusion du Parlement. – Cinq partis d'opposition seront exclus du Parlement s'ils ne rejettent pas, dans la semaine, les résolutions de la conférence de Paris de mars dernier, qui avait critiqué le gouvernement provisoire de Meles Zenawi et appelé à l'installation d'un nouveau gouvernement de transition, a annoncé, samedi 3 avril, la radio nationale. L'exclusion de ces partis, éléments de la « Coalition des peuples du Sud », pourrait entraîner la démission de deux vice-ministres. La conférence de Paris avait réuni des opposants au Front démocratique révolutionnaire du peuple éthiopien (EPRDF), au pouvoir depuis le renversement, en mai 1991, de l'ancien président Mengistu Hailé Mariam. – (AFP.)