

ኤርትራዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ኪዳን



التحالف الديمقراطي الأرتري

ERITREAN DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE

Our ref.No. _____

Date _____

Your ref.No. _____

Important Statement of Major EDA Member Organizations

The Eritrean Democratic Alliance (EDA) announced to all Eritreans and their friends that its Second Congress was successfully conducted between 15 and 20 February 2007.

The issues of Sheria and the question of nationalities, which in the past five years caused hard feelings among organizations, required putting a lot of struggle, but at the end seemed to have been given a durable solution. The programme of the Alliance thus emerged out of the Congress as one that can embrace all forces of the opposition with interest for promoting peace, democracy and inviolable human rights. Needless to say, there was urgent need for the Alliance to register changes within itself and thus come out with an effective leadership that can implement the new programme.

The expectations were that the EDA Congress that scored success in its programme should necessarily score similar success at electing a leadership that can cope with the situation and set clear plans that can remove on time the dictatorship in Eritrea. But it is with regret and sadness that we are forced to announce that certain EDA member organizations have, on 25 February 2007, taken illegal and irresponsible steps that may hamper the implementation of new Charter and plan of action.

The crisis into which the EDA plunged itself after the successful congress that witnessed historic compromises is indeed very sad. As a result of those compromises, the long-standing call for a relatively fair proportional representation of the organizations on the basis of their roles and size was shelved for the time being [pending studies] and an understanding was reached to give equal representation to small and large organizations. This situation created a positive atmosphere and [a short-lived] euphoria.

At the first meeting of the Central Council [that started on 22 February], a call was made to introduce changes in the EDA Executive Committee. Outgoing chairman Hussein Khalifa and a group that he appeared to be leading opposed change and insisted that Hussein Khelifa would remain at the head of the EDA. Arguments over the need for change and those opposed to it led to the emergence of two blocs.

We [the representatives of EDP, ELF-RC and ENSF] exerted efforts to resolve the four-day impasse but to no avail.

Finally, the bloc led by Hussein Khalifa claimed that it possessed simple majority in the 22-person Central Council and that it had decided to elect the chairman in rejection of the compromise solutions proposed by our side. We warned that they were splitting the Alliance and that this split would contain its dangers. On their part, Hussein Khelifa and group stated in unequivocal terms that they will be responsible for what they were doing on the basis of simple majority [in an Alliance of 11 organizations].

After this dangerous announcement, we in ELF-RC, ENSF and EDP reminded them that they cannot take any legal decision as they were because Central Council decisions require three-fourth vote or agreement of member organizations. Thus, instead of taking an illegal action based on simple majority [which is non-existent provision in the EDA statutes], we proposed that we all take time and try to manage the crisis through all possible means. We thus proposed as follows:

1. Resolve the crisis by accepting Hassan Assad from their bloc as chairman of the executive body.
2. If this is not acceptable, then to agree to form a Central Council Secretariat chaired by someone from their side [or a neutral person] and with members from both blocs without any objection from either side to the appointees to the Secretariat. The Secretariat would be mandated to execute operations and lead the EDA to an extraordinary general meeting or congress. The two blocs would have their respective spokesmen for coordination of work of two blocs.

This realistic and responsible proposal was also rejected by the Hussein Khalifa group which clearly exposed its intention to go ahead completing the split. At this point, the Alnahda Party expressed their disappointment with the developments and declared that they were freezing their membership in the Alliance until the crisis is resolved.

The Hussein Khalifa group asked to be left alone to meet and decide on its intentions although it did not even possess the required two-thirds of EDA CC members to hold a legal meeting. In addition to that, they did not possess the constitutionally required three-fourth to pass decisions. On top of that, the CC as a whole did not yet manage to elect a chairman that can chair its meetings. Thus, all legal channels were not fulfilled for the splitting group to hold a meeting or take decisions. However, it was determined to go ahead saying “come what may”.

As we now see it, the programme that we launched at the congress after relentless past struggle to straighten the Alliance and start a take-off for victorious common march of all opposition forces, is obviously facing problems. We can think of no alternative other than reshaping the struggle and going ahead with or without those who are planting obstacles for a successful re-start. At the same time, we deem it necessary to inform our people that those forces bent at taking illegal and irresponsible measures at the level of EDA will not in anyway serve the interests of our people.

Steadfast Struggle until Victory!

Eritrean Democratic Party (EDP)
Eritrean Liberation Front – Revolutionary Council (ELF-RC)
Eritrean National Salvation Front (ENSF)
25 February 2007