

ARDUF

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Afar Revolutionary Democratic
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Freedom, Justice, Democracy

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Press Release

The Resistance of Afars and Sinister Machinations of TPLF to Quell it

The stiff resistance of the Afars against their eviction from their ancestral lands on the banks of Awash River in order to make a way for two vast Sugar Plantations in Tandaho and Kessem has forced the TPLF regime to design a host of ploys to crush it in collusion with other forces. Those sinister machinations include among other designs;

1. Instigating Issa-Somali Militias from Kilil 5 to engage the Afars in a bloody armed confrontation in the name of securing an entitlement to a Zone for them in the Afar Region. This is an area occupied by sheer force in a wanton aggression for years. It is to remembered that demarcating Awash River as the Ethio-Somali border was the ultimate wish of all Somali irredentist regimes in Mogadishu;
2. Encouraging Tigrigna speaking workers who have been living and working in **Abaala** district of zone 2 of the Afar Region to request a special Zone for them in Afar region;
3. Instructed the Afar Regional Officials to annex some areas of **Barahle** Woreda with mineral potentials into the neighbouring **Afxeera** district in order to instigate conflict between local clans who claim the area as their traditional cattle grazing land. The local elected officials who refused to carry those instructions were suspended from their "elected" positions by a simple directive by a zonal leader. The foreign companies prospecting for Potash, Oil and Gold in the area are alarmed by the absence of local government officials on whose protection they account upon.

The TPLF regime threatened the Afar Regional officials that their region will be put under the jurisdiction of Federal Government by declaring State of Emergency in accordance with Article 93 of the Ethiopian Constitution in the name of breakdown of "Law and Order" if they cannot manage to put their house in order. This was told to them by none but, by the notorious **Debtara Tsagay Berhe**, the Security Adviser to the Prime Minister when the local stooges were summoned to the capital for this purpose.

This week's wanton killing of the Afar herdsmen in the middle Awash area of Ammih-Baxa district (zone 3) in the Afar Region is part and parcel in this sinister designs carried out in connivance with of Ethiopian Federal government in its war against the Afars who resist eviction from their ancestral land. When completed the two Sugar Plantations will be a home for more than **500,000** new settlers mostly from Tigray who will come as skilled labourers, engineers. This will is supposed to change the demography of the region completely. ARDUF will fight this danger that threatens our very existence as people together with all the democratic forces and peace loving people of Ethiopia until the final demise of TPLF and its stooges.

Finally, ARDUF calls on International Community to pressure on the Government of Ethiopia to recognize and respect Indigenous People' s right to their land and territories according the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and provide support mechanisms for those who are already displaced by the project;

ARDUF calls once again on International Community to put pressure on Ethiopian regime to halt this Project, due to irresponsible chemical uses poses threats to human well-being, to the sustainability of the environment, to the human health and to reduces the ability of Afar pastoralists to care for themselves and, especially, for children. Since the beginning of this project in 2006, the Afar pastoralists have been facing severe climate change, environmental damage, land degradation and water contamination. Cases of unknown sickness and diseases are frequently reported in the communities.

ARDUF calls further on International Human Rights Organizations and the UN Indigenous People's Council to put further pressure on the Government of Ethiopia to respect and promote human rights and to stop violating our human rights, intimidation, arrests, rape and extrajudicial killings against Afar civilians. Afar will continue to oppose the so call "Sugar Project in their traditional grazing land, where they have been depending on their livelihoods for their survival for many centuries. ARDUF will take the necessary action against the Government of Ethiopia and Foreign Companies, which are threatening our existence and survival.

VICTORY FOR ARDUF/ UGUUGUMO

Information Desk

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