

The Process of Democratization in Eritrea

By Fesseha Nair

The purpose of this article to problematize the current conceptions about the process of democratization in Eritrea.

The process of democratization has two phases,

1. The first aim is removal of the dictatorship and its roots from the ground.
2. The second is to build a democratic society, thus transitional period.

Most of the Eritrean Forces for democratic change focus only to the removal but the most hard and conflict ridden is the second stage after the removal of the dictatorship.

As some findings of studies confirmed that the outcome of the wave of democratization varied from,

- genuine transformations and relative success,
- Halted transitions,
- backslides to authoritarianism,
- military coups,
- state disintegration like that of Libya and Yemen outbreak of armed conflicts after the fall of dictatorship.

The Eritrean Forces for democratic change must have a strategy avoiding intra-state conflict after the fall of dictatorship in Eritrea.

Today's most pertinent question is not only removing the dictatorship but post dictatorship-transformation and state building.

Eritrean researchers, politicians and policy- makers should focus more on this issue. In this article, I will try to address some weaknesses of the Eritrean forces for democratic change.

- Lack of skills and knowledge to build a powerful democratic opposition.
- The presence of internal conflicts (ethnic, religious and regional) personal rivalries and hostilities(agazian, Tigray-Tigrinyi politics) these opinions are disrupting the operation of the forces for freedom.
- Lack of a wise grand strategic plan for liberating the oppressed population and laying ground for durable democracy.
- Lack of creating strong civil society movements both in diaspora and at home.
- Lack of not standing upon your own determination by standing together and strengthening by uniting your efforts together.

The Eritrean opposition to win the dictatorship in Eritrea must be self-reliant force with wise strategy, disciplined and courageous looking forward towards genuine transformation that accommodates all Eritreans with different elements of identity. Eritrea is a country of diverse identities.

Democracy building requires a method of resolving societal conflicts in a non-violent manner, the route to it, that is, the process of democratization, is a revolutionary and conflict – generating process. This is because it involves dramatic changes. These changes include new methods of deciding who is to have political power, new methods for exercising political power and often, and as

consequence, new balances of power sharing. It will be very difficult to build a democratic a system after the fall of the totalitarian regime in Eritrea with the attitude of chauvinists and ethnic nationalists dominating the Eritrean opposition in diaspora.

Let us change the old-age political culture of divisions and cross border relations, like that of today's Agazian and Tigray Tigrinyi discarding the Eritrean National identity. God/ Allah save the Oppressed people of Eritrea from these chauvinists who never have peace in themselves and with others.