

The Concept of Building Democratic state in Eritrea

By Fesseha Nair

What is a State? ሃገር ማለት እንታይ ማለት ኢዩ

A **state** is an independent political entity with clearly defined geographic boundaries, population, resources and wealth, the so called physical basis of the state. (Max Weber's definition)

What is a Nation? ብሄር ማለት እንታይ ማለት ኢዩ

Nation is a large body of people united by common origin, history, culture, ethnicity, or language. What the Tograni-tigrini/Tigrini / Agazian wishes to establish in this area inhabited by various people.

What is the difference between a State and Nation? አብ ሙንጎ ሃገርን ብሄርን ዘሎ ፍልልይ

The main **difference** between **state and nation** is that **state** is a political and legal entity whereas **nation** is a socio-cultural entity like that of the so called, " tigrini-tigrini," Or, " Agazian"

Eritrea became independent and has gotten international recognition ኣህጉራዊ ተፈላጥነት in 1993 but has not developed internal sovereignty- ውሽጣዊ ሉዑላውነት ግን የብላን the criteria of state. These criteria are the state's **physical basis**,ኣካላዊ/ መረታዊ መሰረት the **institutions of the state** ሃገራዊ ትካላት and the **idea of state** ሃገራዊ ሰነ-ሓሳብ.

According to Buzan, "a state contains three inter-linked components.

1. **The physical basis of the state** include defined territory ውሱን ዶብ, population,ሕዝቢ resources and wealth. ምንጭታትን ሃብትን ሃገር።

Why did the EPLF/PFDJ not declare the boundaries of Eritrea? Is Eritrea only Tigrinya-speaking christian nation?

2. **The institutions of state** comprise the whole machinery of government, including its executive, legislative, administrative, and judicial bodies as well as the laws, procedures and norms by which they operate." Why did the EPLF/ PFDJ against institution building?

3. **The Idea of state:** the idea of state is the most vital component of the state, essential to its coherence and purpose, as it provides the mechanism for persuading citizens to subordinate themselves to the state's authority, strong and vividly held ideas to unite the state into an entity and provide the necessary socio-political cohesion, which gives legitimacy to the state entity.

The two main sources for the idea of the state ውሕደት ሕዝብታት ኤርትራ are to be found in the idea of the people's peaceful coexistence by organizing the ideologies of the state by the consensus of all citizens of the state politically, economically, socially, culturally and religiously. If the state fails to fulfil this idea or oppose this idea – as we now are experiencing in today's Eritrea, then such states stand on fragile political foundations. ኤርትራ ሎሚ ኣብ ክፈርስ ዝኸለል ፖሊቲካዊ ሰረት ኢያ ዘላ።

States where all the three components are clearly defined, well articulated and interconnected to sustain and support each other, are thus stronger than states with the opposite

characteristics. Weak or strong state by the Eritrean definition is the opposite, for them is a state with military and security forces oppressing their citizens.

Most Eritreans for democracy discuss about how they can achieve democratic system of governance in Eritrea after the fall of the one-man rule in Eritrea. But, are the forces for democratic change in Eritrea that Eritrea has only international recognition but still has not developed the internal sovereignty.

The Eritrean Forces for freedom and change must focus on the internal sovereignty and come with constructive ideas to build a state including all nationalities in Eritrea. Internal sovereignty must not be superimposed by those who call themselves majorities, this attitude of arrogance and supremacy has failed in all African countries and its consequences has been authoritarianism and state disintegration.

Democracy is a political system where public decision-making is subject to popular control and where all citizens have an equal right to participate in this process.

What do we need to build democratic state ?

This article will try to highlight the obstacles and opportunities in building democratic state in Eritrea. Eritrea is a country emerging from armed conflicts and has no history of peace since its nationhood. At this time of struggle from dictatorship to democracy our struggle has been in social media but not on the ground.

The social media has been abused by Eritreans to defame and reject one another. These defamation and reject one another is the main obstacle challenging the Eritrean opposition in Diaspora. Let us discuss on this issues:

1. State Characteristics, International recognition versus Internal Sovereignty- Reconstructing Eritrea.
2. Critical role of legitimacy
3. Civil Society and participation in state building
4. The process of democratic transition
5. Ethnification of politics in Eritrea- PFDJ's modus operandi
6. The Eritrean Political Organizations in Diaspora
7. The role of the military and security in Eritrea
8. Constitutional engineering and conflict management

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