



Time to mobilize forces to sustain the Democratization process in Ethiopia.

KIC Statement - December 14, 2007

On Tahisas 1, 2000 (12/12/2007) Engineer Hailu Shawel, President of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (Kinjit), issued a landmark statement articulating clearly and precisely, the reasons for the temporary 'suspension of five members' of the political leadership of the party until such time that the Kinjit leadership Council investigates their actions, behaviors and intentions concerning their continued commitment to the organization. It is, of course, regrettable, that the internal feud that has been brewing for some time had come to this.

However, this resolve on the part of the President of Kinjit is not only correct, welcomed, appropriate and timely, but signals to the Ethiopian people and to supporters in the Diaspora that the time for compromising and subverting the vision, principles, internal party procedures, organizational and leadership unity, integrity and accountability of the 'spirit' that moved an entire nation is over. Ultimately, history and the Ethiopian people at home will be the best judges. The art of leadership is to take the right decision at the right time for the right reasons no matter what the cost.

As stated in the statement, Kinjit stood out as a new and compelling political force because of the commitment of the leadership and the unwavering support of the Ethiopian people to the principles of peace, national reconciliation, the rule of law, multiparty democracy, freedom, dialogue and negotiation to settle political differences and, the creation of the foundation and institutional framework to pursue a better and more promising future for this and the coming generation of all Ethiopians. Through sacrifices, the Ethiopian people have, irrespective of nationality, religion, age profile and political tendencies, made Kinjit their own institution. It is their political institution and, no one has the right to dismantle or to destroy it. It is they who will ultimately sustain and preserve it. Our role is not to shape their future, but to give them critical support.

The acrimony, name calling, partisanship, brinkmanship and other dysfunctional behaviors and actions in North America and now in Ethiopia under the guise of leading and serving Kinjit serve no one, but the ruling party and self serving individuals with

hidden motives. Certainly, these do not serve the Ethiopian people and their aspirations for peace, the rule of law, freedom and multiparty democracy. In fact, the bigger picture that resides in these and other fundamental principles requires the capacity, readiness and willingness to embrace all those that stand firmly and unreservedly on the side of the Ethiopian people no matter the sacrifice and, no matter how long this may take.

We therefore believe that this turning point in Ethiopian political history requires that each and every one of us in the Diaspora recognize this event as a golden opportunity to close ranks, regroup and embrace the Kinjit spirit without further delay. We believe that Kinjit support groups and individuals abroad can and must seize the chance to reach out to one another and, create new stronger alliances with freedom and democracy leaning organizations, groups and individuals to strengthen and solidify the democratic movement. To do other wise will only serve the ruling party and not the Ethiopian people. What is needed is the will to turn problems into solutions, unfortunate events into opportunities for transformation and for regrouping.

Given the clarity of positions, Kinjit support groups and individuals must see the latest development as a starting point to transform the political landscape abroad in support of the Ethiopian people and, the Kinjit political leadership at home. The Ethiopian people have never wavered in their determination to usher in a new era of democracy and freedom and the foundation for social and economic transformation for all. On our part, the least we can do is to break loose from the mindset of narrow partisanship and name calling to that of contributing our best for our country's democratic transformation by utilizing the best in our culture and history.