

EPLF, ELF Sign an Important Agreement on National Unity

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On October 19, 1977, EPLF and ELF signed an important agreement on national unity. The joint statement issued by EPLF and ELF states that "the two organizations ascertain their conviction on the necessity of forming a single national democratic front in the Eritrean field." The two organizations agreed "to form a joint political leadership and joint committees in the following areas: military, information, foreign relations, economic and social affairs." The joint statement points out that "the joint political leadership will be responsible for the preparation of a unification congress in accordance with the common procedures agreed upon by leaderships of both organizations." The two organizations agreed "to convene a wider meeting on November 20, 1977 to implement the principles stated in the joint statement." In addition, the joint statement states "The two organizations call on the rank and file of the so-called 'Popular Liberation Forces' (Osman Sabbe clique -- ed.) to join either of the two fronts in the Eritrean field."

This EPLF-ELF agreement on national unity is a major step in the long path towards national unity. Both organizations have agreed on the necessity of a single national democratic front in Eritrea. Until this is realized, they agreed on forming joint political leadership and joint committees while retaining their political and organizational independence. The formation of a joint political leadership and joint committees, which will work on the basis of mutually agreed upon program, will facilitate the intensification of the armed struggle and advance the struggle of the broad masses and democratic forces for the building of genuine and principled national unity. Once the political and ideological obstacles to the formation of a single national democratic front have been eliminated through unity and

struggle, a unification congress will be called and a single national democratic organization established.

One of the important victories achieved at the EPLF-ELF joint meeting is the isolation of the counter-revolutionary Osman Sabbe clique. Ever since the EPLF denounced and expelled the opportunist Sabbe clique, various reactionary forces have tried to prop it up in an effort to organize a "third force". The consistent and principled struggle of the EPLF in exposing and denouncing the counter-revolutionary Sabbe clique, gained the wholehearted support of the broad masses and all patriotic fighters. The EPLF-ELF joint meeting and statement dealt a death blow to the Sabbe clique when it demanded the dissolution of the organization that Sabbe had attempted to put together by exploiting backward religious and tribal sentiments among Eritrean refugees in the Sudan. The joint statement correctly called on the ordinary people who had been manipulated into the so-called "Third Force" to side with the revolution and join either of the two fronts -- EPLF or ELF.

The EPLF-ELF joint statement is a heavy blow against the concerted efforts of the imperialists and reactionary forces to split and weaken the Eritrean revolution. This is why the imperialist press, reactionaries and opportunists of all hues have joined hands to distort and slander the joint statement issued by EPLF and ELF. In an attempt to discredit the Eritrean revolution and in particular the EPLF, they have distorted the essence of the joint statement by circulating malicious lies that the two fronts have "announced a political and military merger."

As clearly pointed out above, the joint statement does not announce the political and military merger of EPLF and ELF but states the general principles that will lead towards the establishment of a national democratic front in Eritrea. EPLF has also consistently made its line on the path towards national unity clear.

Genuine and principled national unity cannot be achieved simply through a declaration of a political and military merger. The path towards forming a national democratic front is a protracted step by step process, the result of a protracted joint struggle in the course of which unity on fundamental political and ideological lines are achieved.

The imperialists and their agents have also been propagating that the "political and military merger" was a "result of pressures from Arab countries". This slanderous lie actually reflects their own wishful thinking. However, their attempt to defame the Eritrean revolution and the EPLF in particular is futile. The EPLF-ELF agreement was the outcome of the protracted and steadfast struggle by the Eritrean masses and all patriotic fighters and the EPLF's correct political line.

AESNA hails the important EPLF-ELF agreement. We are convinced that the struggle for principled and genuine unity of all democratic and patriotic forces which is a strategic principle of the revolution and an unshakable demand of the Eritrean masses will be crowned with victory. End.