

THE WAY FORWARD: STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY AND JUSTICE

With WaEla N'HaGrawi WaEla



For the very reason that we do not have another alternative, we are bound to instruct the leadership of "kidan" to bring its act together and begin to listen to the critics of citizens. One aspect of leadership is about listening the heart beat of fellow citizens and be guided by it. This piece deals with the issue of 'HaGeraWi WaEla for Democratic change', which its English version is 'National Congress for Democratic Change'.

The National Congress for Democratic Change, as it stands now, cannot be moved an inch forward. From the outset, its name is misleading and its composition failed to be inclusive within the reality of Eritrean Diasporas. The entire process is erroneous and the Preparatory Committee (PC) lacks the capacity and ability to be responsive to the needs and demands of the people in the Diasporas. Some paltalk craps have also been being heard saying the name is not and should not be an issue, which adds insult to the injury. They are dead wrong. The entire issue about the 'HagreraWi Waela for Democratic Change' is surrounding its name.

First, it is not the agenda alone that determines the name. A group of people discussing on a national affair of Eritrea, does not make it 'HaGraWi WaEla'. "WaEla" that represents the Eritrean Diasporas can take place; it is, however, cannot be called 'HaGerawi WaEla'. Both the agenda and the composition of the participants must determine the name. For that very reason, 'HaGerawi WaEla' cannot be undertaken in Diaspora as it cannot be reflective of the diversity or make up representatives of our people at large. The right name that fits to the task that is to be undertaken outside Eritrea can correctly be named after "WaEla for HaGerawi WaEla". That is, there could be multiples of "WaElas" outside Eritrea with intent to conduct a real one inside Eritrea. "WaElas" outside Eritrea with a national agenda should only be perceived as a process that paves the way to an eventually a well organized and thought through "HaGraWi WaEla" that is to be held inside Eritrea. Thus, the name "WaEla for HaGrawi WaEla" fits it well. Nobody in his right mind should be bought into the clone one.

Second, the entire process of the "WaEla" as it is now is unconstructive. Members of the Preparatory Committee (Ato Beshir YsihaQ and Ato Amiha Domnirik) in their interview with Assena.com proved to us that they had no clear mandate. It was clear to me that they did not know what they were up to and what their responsibilities were. For that very reason, during the interview they resorted to denial, arrogance, defensiveness and rationalization. They were walking in the dark.

"WaEla" as it stands now is hopeless. It is, however, never late, and never will be to take a corrective step that makes the "WaEla" effective. Without which it is doomed to fail. It is up to "Kidan" in general to take the corrective action to make the "WaEla" a success story. It was also up to "Kidan's" Executives in particular to outline a mandate for the Preparatory

Committee with a room for improvement when the mandate is actualized on the ground. When "Kidan" failed to do what is expected of it, as alternative, the Preparatory Committee was supposed to articulate its own mandate before it came out to the public. This, however, did not happen. The whole episode is a testimony to the fact that one is not better than the other.

Third, the dictator in Asmara is partly our own creation; and definitely did not become so over night. He became a dictator via an illegitimate process. Thus, we have to watch the process towards the "WaEla". Being a blind follower has to be stopped. Standing against an incorrect and illegitimate process is every citizen's responsibility. A correct and a legitimate process is the only guarantee that we have for making Eritrea democratic. That is, we must be more interested in the process to "WaEla" than the "WaEla" itself.

Fourth, "Kidan" is an expression of the political organizations it represents. In other words, it is a yardstick how these political organizations are set up to function. Thus, the non participation of women in the leadership of "Kidan" should raise concern within "Kidan" itself as it should on these political organizations it represents. The non participation of women in the Preparatory Committee is not different.

Fifth, what makes a house to stand still in the midst of a hurricane is its foundation. The foundation of "Kidan" is the sum of its willingness to listen to the critics, its inclusiveness, the process that it has been following in accomplishing some of the tasks, the level of democratization from within, and its openness to fellow citizens; more so, its willingness and readiness to take a corrective action without delay. The issue of the establishment of the Preparatory Committee should be seen in that regard. The process should not be given as a gift or a better yet an imposition from above. It has to be debated, discussed, and expert opinion sought and received. It has to be agreed upon. That is a democratic process and is a scientific approach to such a social/political issue of "WaEla".

The reaction that we have witnessed from fellow citizens with regard to the 'HaGeraWi WaEla for Democratic Change' is encouraging. That is the way forward to become a vibrant society. And when we notice things that are not right we must not be negligent. We have to tell it like it is; we have to focus on making it right rather than rationalizing the wrong or try to make a cover for it. At the same time, "Kidan" should take notice of the citizens' needs and demands and be responsive in a manner that meets the expectations.

WaEla for HaGeraWi WaEla is the way forward in the struggle for Democracy and Justice, and "Kidan" should take a note of it.

Machoman

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