

The Quest for Regional Autonomy Continues:- Sidama Businessmen arrested in Awassa

Our Reporter from Awassa, November 9, 2005

The Sidama people resistance movement that is increasingly continued by claiming regional autonomy is taking its shape according to our sources from Awassa. This peaceful struggle is progressing despite the enormity of military in the region to suppress such a move. Since the people celebrated their New Year (Fichee) on the 31st of October 2005 by 'Qeexaala' [public gathering as a means of communication and celebration of New Year as well as any public holidays]; the Sidamas became adamant with their quest. As we have mentioned on this media on November 1st, the regional autonomy quest fire is flaming in various districts until yesterday by relentless Qeexaala. Chanting in Sidama language;

**'Xa'mo garaaho ewa garaaho
Qoolee qoqowo Sidaamaha'**

Literally, 'Sidamas quest for regional autonomy is justifiable,
Return the administrative power to the owner'.

The Sidamas chanted with similar chorus all over the districts; re-iterating their determination to struggle until their issues are addressed accordingly despite continued torture, arrest and killings. The Qeexaala echoed all over the Sidama towns and farmers associations with the same conviction and discipline. In one of the districts called 'Malga' where people gathered on 5/11/05 conducting Qeexaala, PDO's went to the event thinking that they can exploit the opportunity by making persuasive speech. However, the tactic proved wrong; people aggressively shouted at them and their plan failed. The PDO's returned embarrassed while the Sidamas remained proud of their objectives. In Arbegona, Aroressa, and Bensa districts the resistance is progressing to all segment of society. In particular, in Arbegona district, women turned up on the street chanting the same chorus with their men counterparts and asking for urgent action on their regional quest from the central government. Women's taking part in such resistance according to the Sidama culture signifies an end for Sidamas patience.

Meanwhile, Sidama business man called 'Tadesse Sermissa' has been arrested on 4/11/05 in Awassa city and taken to unknown location by Meles's security forces. Tadesse's where about remains elusive. In another development, the crisis of Ethiopian authoritarian regime remains unchanged. International community started to react to the massacre. Ana Gomes, May 15, Ethiopian election's observer on behalf of EU reacted promptly to the bloody acts of Ethiopian regime disregarding humanity and international order. The Norwegian foreign Minister also emphatically condemned Meles's regime's act towards armless, about 42 civilians who lost their lives since the 1st of November 2005 while they were claiming the basic rights in a peaceful and constitutional manner. International community is putting pressure on Meles's regime to release prisoners who are indiscriminately arrested. The discontent continues while all opposition parties' members are in prison; most regions and Universities under profound tensions.

Sidama Nation Online, November 9, 2005