



Organization of Eritrean-Americans

OEA Spotlight

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The Proof of Peace Agreements is in their Implementation

The 2002 'final and binding' Eritrea-Ethiopia boundary ruling shows what happens when they are not

On Saturday, October 14, the Government of the Sudan and the Eastern Front of Sudan (a group that has been fighting the marginalization of Eastern Sudan) signed a peace agreement in Asmara, Eritrea in front of four presidents, scores of diplomats and hundreds of dignitaries as well as millions of people who were following the live TV broadcast from Eritrea and the

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Sudan. The OEA congratulates the parties for this positive step towards peace and it is its sincere hope that the remaining conflict in the Sudan, the one in Darfur, will also get a similar organic and home-grown resolution. We also believe, if implemented in good faith, the agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Eastern Front of Sudan could give the Sudan, a country that has not seen much peace since its independence in 1956 (except for the 11 years between 1972 and 1983) a much desired momentum towards peace and harmony.

The parties to this peace agreement have pledged to start afresh, work together and in the process give their back to a decade old conflict. We salute them for this courageous move. Through their June 23, 2006 "Declaration of Principles for the Resolution of the Conflict in Eastern Sudan" the parties have declared to the world "that Sudan can prosper and flourish in peace only when it ensures equitable participation and development of its people throughout the country", "Unity with recognition of and respect for diversity, protection of the fundamental freedoms and rights of citizens, ... and equitable distribution of national wealth are essential foundations for a united, peaceful, just

and prosperous Sudan" and that "Political, economic, social and cultural marginalization constitutes the core problem of Eastern Sudan."

These are lofty ideals and honest admission of the problems and we wish them the best as they begin the hard path of implementation. President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who led the high-level delegation to the signing ceremony, has pledged that his government is "totally committed to implement this according to the letter and the spirit of the agreement." This statement from the Sudanese president is significant particularly when we realize that the Horn of Africa is full of many broken promises and unimplemented agreements. Ethiopia's refusal to abide by the final and binding decision of the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) is a prime example of how signing a peace is not what matters, but mustering the courage to implement it. On December 12, 2000 Ethiopia and Eritrea had signed the Algiers Peace Agreement declaring to the world that they will abide by and accept a future delimitation and demarcation of their common border as final and binding. However, when the moment of truth and test of integrity came and Ethiopia rejected the Decision the witnesses/guarantors of Algiers where no where to shoulder their legal and moral obligation.

Taking this into account we hope the Government of Sudan gets the courage to keep its promise for the proof of any serious peace agreement is not in its colorful signing ceremony and in the well-crafted acceptance speeches but in the faithful implementation to its letter and spirit. The Sudanese Government should also get the political courage to faithfully implement the Naviasha Protocol of 26 May 2004 and the Nairobi Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 9 January 2005 that it signed between itself and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). As the critical year of 2011 approaches fast the Government

should be ready to accept and abide by whatever the outcome of the planned referendum for the self-determination of the people of South Sudan is.

"Peace agreements should not be signed if one or both parties have no intention of implementing them."

Of course it should also try to solve the crisis in its Darfur region organically as it did with the East. By doing this it can deny the architects of conflict the reason to impose their will on the people of the Sudan. How these outsiders tried to coerce an Agreement in Abuja, Nigeria, is a case in point. What happened in Abuja five months ago is also typical of what is at the heart of why many conflicts are not resolved according to "conflict resolution" text books of the west. A May 9, 2006, Washington Post article quotes a witness who saw Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo bullying Abdel Wahid al Nur of Sudan by thrusting "his fist in the face of Nur, yelling .. and then grab him by the collar and drag him into another room for a tongue-lashing." The article also made it clear that the representatives of US government present at the Abuja negotiations did equally worse.

One of the key lessons here is that peace agreements should not be signed if one or both parties have no intention of implementing them or if one or both parties or their enablers are likely to use such agreements as a continuation of the war by other means. The minority regime ruling Ethiopia never stopped fighting the war against Eritrea, though by other means. It saw the 2000 Algiers Agreement as another opportunity to destabilize Eritrea and undermine its sovereignty.

Previous Issue (Volume I Issue 1)

The Price of Ethiopia's Lawlessness

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