The current political crisis in Ethiopia and the challenges ahead

Background

Ethiopia has a population of, estimated, 105 million. About 70% of the population are under 30 years of age. At the moment the country is facing with multi-dimensional problems. Since 1991, Ethiopia is ruled by a coalition of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The ruling coalition was composed of four political parties delineated along ethnic lines: the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Oromo Peoples’ Democratic Organisation (OPDO), the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (SEPDM). The TPLF is the dominant group within the ruling coalition. In recent years, there has been no political space for opposition parties, freedom of assembly and association and press.

Since 2014, protests were taking place in the two main regions of Ethiopia, namely the Oromia and the Amhara regions. In October 2016, the government declared the state of emergency which ended in August 2017. On 16 February, 2018, once again the state of emergency was declared in Ethiopia. This happened a day after the Prime Minister of the country resigned amid social unrest. The root cause of Ethiopia’s ongoing political crisis is the steady loss of legitimacy by the ruling Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition. However, neither the ruling party nor its detractors are seriously talking about the root causes of the growing crisis in the country.

The Ethiopian State at the Crossroads

On the 14th of April 2018, Africa Day, Gurmuu Foundation is organizing in collaboration with the Foundation Max van der Stoel (FMS) a lecture and two panel discussions. A lecture will be held by a veteran Oromo politician and author Mr. Leenco Lata. The theme of his speech is: the challenge of fitting societies into a model state type with a focus on the experience of the countries of the Horn of Africa. The nation-state model in Africa is challenged by the failure to accommodate the diversity and peculiarities that are a reality of most non-western societies. The result has been the growing phenomenon of, intrastate and interstate conflicts, political instability and state collapse. This phenomenon made its debut in the Horn of Africa when Somalia descended into chaos and is spreading elsewhere in the region as demonstrated in the case of South Sudan, the DRC and other countries in the Great Lakes region. On the same day, April 14, 2018, two panels will be organized. The first workshop deals with - “The Oromo protest in Ethiopia, from 2014 — to date. The second panel discussion deals with “the Ethiopian State at the Crossroads”.

Theme of the forum discussion: The current political crisis in Ethiopia and the challenges ahead

Given the above background, Gurmuu Foundation in collaboration with International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University in The Hague is jointly organizing an afternoon discussion forum for students, ISS staff interested in the region, policy makers and diasporas from the Horn of Africa, we can have an exchange with our panellists on the current political crisis in Ethiopia, the challenge of Democratic Transition and the Regional stability.
Venue: Kortenaerkade 12, 2518 AX The Hague, Room: Aula B
Date: 17. April 2018
Time: 16:00 – 17:30 hours (Afterwards: drinks and interaction with panellists)

Panellists:
Ms. Meinke Lignac: Senior Policy Officer for the Horn of Africa, department of Sub-Sahara Africa (DAF), at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Leenco Lata: President of the Oromo Democratic Front (ODF)
Prof. Dr. Wil Hout: Professor of Governance and International Political Economy International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) | Erasmus University Rotterdam

Facilitators:
Dr. Kees Biekart Associate Professor in Political Sociology at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University in The Hague.
Antony Otieno Ong’ayo is a Postdoctoral Researcher, Political Scientist at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University in The Hague.

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