

The Eruption of Civil War (Part II)

Written by Winta Weldeyesus

Mejlis A'Sewri replaced "Qeyada Al-Ama" and the moment the new leadership came to power, it tried to manipulate the fighters to join the movement through a council of elders. Once the ploy failed, Mejlis A'Sewri passed a resolution on February 24, 1972 to destroy any kind of opposition. The first attempt was on Obel on February 29, 1972: where leaders of Obel were ambushed and surrendered without firing a single bullet, deceiving many fighters. Until March 3, 1972 members of the opposition movement were assassinated, surrendered or fled in exile to Sudan, and Obel was completely destroyed.

A week after Obel was destroyed; Mejlis A'Sewri attacked People's Liberation Forces-1 around Mai-Ule. It killed members of the unit scattered in the villages working in a propaganda campaign. These latter attacks on the unit led to the eruption of a civil war. Leaders of Mejlis A'Sewri tried to manipulate the attention of other units that the assassination campaign was only against the People's Liberation Forces -1. Despite their efforts, People's Liberation Forces-2 and other units of People's Liberation Front moved to Northern Sahel to defend themselves from safe grounds. These units in Sahel defended against the attacks from Mejlis A'Sewri and also gained the support from the public and former members of ELF, which enabled the movement to grow in number.

The Development of the People's Liberation Forces and the Assassination Attempts

The Eritrean People's Liberation Forces moved to the Northern Sahel and settled in a place called Geregr, in Sudan. In April 1972, the movement officially stated its stance on the civil war. The statement declared that the People's Liberation Forces is against the civil war ignited by the ELF, and stated the only problem that is going to be solved through armed struggle is the one with the colonizers and any differences among the national movements can be solved peacefully. But the leadership in ELF did not accept the statement.

During the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces's stay in Geregr, members of Obel fled to Sudan from the assassination and attacks of the ELF leadership joined the movement. They began to join the front to continue their struggle against the ELF leadership. They joined the ELF-1 but with time, they started requesting for their own separate leadership within the front until an official declaration of the unification of the two movements. Considering that unity comes with good will and united efforts, the leadership of the People's Liberation Front allowed them to have the leadership they requested.

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The front had three administrative units and a unification meeting was held from 16 to 28 October 1972, and passed the following resolutions:

1. The Political Issues in the Field

- To oppose the idea of civil war and try to solve the difference among the movements peacefully

- To introduce political education to raise the awareness and knowledge of the fighters and reduce illiteracy

- To have a mouth piece, a magazine, called "Fitwerari" in the name of the united force

2. The Military Situation in the Field

- To unite the structure and military rules of the three units.

- In addition to defending against assassination and attacks, the front mainly should focus on the struggle against enemy forces.

To be Continued