

A Response to Tsegaye Ararssa's Argument: "*Spare Us the False Choice, Please: For the Oromo, PP and Fano Are One and the Same*"

By Akako Akako

The pain, frustration, and anger expressed in the article are sentiments that many Oromos can understand. For decades, the Oromo people have struggled against political marginalization, cultural suppression, economic exclusion, and repeated waves of violence. Countless Oromo lives have been lost, communities have been displaced, and aspirations for genuine self-determination have often been frustrated. These experiences have understandably created deep mistrust toward political actors who are perceived to threaten Oromo rights and Oromia's constitutional status. However, it is precisely because the Oromo struggle is so important that it must be guided by careful political judgment rather than grabbing conclusions.

The claim that Prosperity Party (PP) and Fano are simply "one and the same" may be emotionally appealing to some, but it fails to explain the complexity of the political realities confronting Ethiopia today. Politics cannot be reduced to slogans. While Oromos may legitimately criticize both PP and Fano for actions, rhetoric, or policies they perceive as harmful, it does not necessarily follow that the two are identical in objectives, structure, or strategy. If every actor with whom the Oromo have disagreements is grouped into one category, meaningful political analysis becomes impossible. Serious political challenges require serious political thinking.

More importantly, the Oromo national struggle was never merely about opposing particular groups. At its core, it has always been a struggle for dignity, equality, justice, self-governance, and respect for human rights. The strength of the Oromo cause has historically come from its moral foundation. It drew support because it articulated principles of freedom and equality, not because it promoted permanent hostility toward other peoples. When political discourse becomes dominated by the language of collective blame and unending confrontation, there is a danger that the focus shifts from building the future to reliving grievances of the past.

The Oromo people today face challenges far greater than identifying enemies. Millions of Oromo youth seek employment and educational opportunities. Farmers seek security and access to markets. Families seek peace and stability. Communities seek functioning institutions and accountable governance. These are the issues that will ultimately determine the future of Oromia. Endless cycles of conflict may generate political mobilization, but they do not build roads, create jobs, strengthen schools, improve healthcare, or secure lasting self-government. No nation advances through conflict alone.

There is also a danger in portraying the Oromo people as a nation permanently surrounded by enemies. The Oromo are one of the largest and most influential peoples in Africa. They possess a vibrant language, rich culture, strong historical traditions, and enormous human and economic potential. The Gadaa system itself reflects a political philosophy grounded in consultation, consensus-building, accountability, and peaceful conflict resolution. A people with such a heritage

should approach political challenges with confidence and strategic wisdom rather than fear and isolation. The future of the Oromo cannot be secured through perpetual warfare; it must be secured through political strength, institutional development, and democratic engagement.

Furthermore, the interests of the Oromo people are best protected when they remain consistent in their commitment to justice. If Oromos demand accountability for crimes committed against Oromo civilians, that same principle should apply to all civilians regardless of ethnicity, religion, or region. Justice loses its moral force when it becomes selective. The Oromo struggle gained legitimacy because it spoke the language of universal human dignity. That legacy should be preserved and strengthened rather than narrowed into a politics of exclusive victimhood.

It is also important to recognize that Oromo society itself is politically diverse. Not all Oromos share the same views regarding alliances, armed struggle, federalism, constitutional reform, or Ethiopia's future. Such diversity is natural in any large and politically conscious society. No individual, organization, or movement can legitimately claim exclusive authority to define what all Oromos think or want. The strength of Oromo politics should come from open debate and democratic participation, not from declaring alternative views illegitimate.

Ultimately, the question before the Oromo people is not whether one actor is better or worse than another. The real question is what political path best secures the long-term interests of Oromia and the Oromo nation. That future will be built on constitutional guarantees, democratic institutions, economic development, peace, cultural empowerment, and respect for the rights of all peoples. The Oromo cause is too significant, too historic, and too valuable to be reduced to a choice between competing enemies. It deserves a positive vision that inspires hope, builds institutions, and secures freedom for future generations. The Oromo struggle has never been merely a struggle against others. At its best, it has been a struggle for something greater: dignity, justice, equality, and the right of a people to determine their own destiny. That vision should remain its guiding star. However, the article risks narrowing the Oromo cause into a politics of resentment rather than a politics of liberation. The real question is not whether PP and Fano are identical, but rather what kind of political future will best protect and advance Oromo interests.

Lastly, the article also raises serious allegations regarding individuals within the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). These accusations involve questions of legitimacy, leadership, accountability, internal democracy, and organizational discipline. Because these matters are contested and involve competing claims among members of the same movement, they should be addressed through transparent internal processes, congresses, consultations, and democratic mechanisms rather than public denunciations or otherwise. The strength of any liberation movement ultimately depends on its ability to tolerate internal debate, manage disagreements, and maintain accountability to the people in whose name it claims to act.

Conclusion

The suffering of the Oromo people is real. The suffering of the Amhara people is real. The suffering of the Tigrayan people is real. The suffering experienced by many other communities throughout Ethiopia is equally real. The challenge facing Ethiopia today is not merely to identify enemies, but to create conditions in which communities can coexist without fear, domination, or exclusion. Political disagreements are inevitable. However, lasting peace requires moving beyond narratives that portray entire groups or movements as inherently irredeemable. Such narratives may mobilize supporters in the short term, but they rarely create the foundation necessary for reconciliation, justice, and democratic coexistence. Instead of forcing citizens to choose between competing armed actors, Ethiopia needs a political vision centered on constitutionalism, accountability, equality, peace, and genuine dialogue among all its peoples.

Respectfully,

Response for constructive political dialogue