

A Response to Awol Allo's argument: "The OLA's decision to join the so-called Alliance for National Survival, an alliance of former adversaries with whom it shares no principle or vision of any real substance, is absolutely confounding." | By Geda Michille | October 3, 2026

The claim that national oppression ceased to exist simply because an ethnic Oromo elite assumed state power fundamentally confuses the identity of those exercising power with the character of the political order. If having an Oromo at the top of the state institutions means the Oromo are no longer subject to national oppression, then the Oromo struggle against Meles Zenawi would have to be reduced to opposition to his being Tigrayan rather than opposition to the political system, policies, and practices of EPRDF.

The Oromo fought for emancipation from all forms of oppression. Some forms of oppression explicitly targeted Oromos as Oromos; others operated through the control and exploitation of Oromo land, resources, labour, and political institutions. Much of the cultural and political domination itself was not an end by itself. It served to facilitate that economic exploitation. The identity of the people occupying state offices does not, by itself, resolve any of our main questions.

Awol also makes no effort to not conflate regime with the Oromo people. Big mistake. Atrocities Abiy and co committed across Ethiopia belong only to the clique, not the Oromo.

As for the alliance, it's clearly tactical. A tactical alliance does not require strategic or ideological convergence. Former adversaries can cooperate around limited, immediate objectives while retaining fundamentally different visions of the future. The relevant question is therefore not whether the parties share a comprehensive political philosophy, but what they have actually agreed to, what they have not agreed to, and how that cooperation develops in practice.

The very not Awol-like argument and a deeper mistake here, is reducing political analysis to ethnic identity. Oromo emancipation was never simply about replacing one ethnic group of rulers with another; it was about agency, collective rights, control over resources, political freedom and accountable government. Those questions do not disappear because some of those exercising state power are Oromo.