

The Oromo Secessionism in a Broader Context of the Horn of Africa

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The region of Oromia belongs to the most important as well as the most fragile parts of the contemporary Horn of Africa. Reasons for this statement are of various kind including historical, economic, political or socio-cultural. The Oromo people are the most numerous in the Horn of Africa and the Oromo nationalism is one of the most sensitive issues of contemporary socio-political development in Ethiopia. Recently, several Oromo organizations in the diaspora, mostly via Internet, use the opportunity to call for an independent Oromia while the Ethiopian societies find themselves in a narrowing political space destructively managed by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Some of the Oromo leaders and intellectuals claim that the independence of Oromia should be a natural option comparable to the independence of Eritrea.

This paper will examine the problems and limits of the Oromo nationalism and its contribution to a decreasing political stability in Ethiopia especially in a broader comparative context including Eritrea, and/or Somaliland. As I argue, there exist a huge number of different strategies and opinions on the case of Oromia within the Oromo community in and outside Ethiopia which makes it complicated for international community to appropriately understand worsening socio-political situation in Ethiopia. The question of Oromia is, on the other hand, completely attached to the general debate concerning the so-called federal nature of contemporary Ethiopia. The paper will thus analyze and examine opinions for and against the existence of Oromia in the context of political instability in the Horn of Africa.