

Let's put democracy into practice-Bring back our demonstration rights

Zone 9 is an informal group of collective bloggers and activists who are working to promote free and independent discourse on the sociopolitical issues of Ethiopia. Our aim is to contribute our share to cultivate and develop a culture of civil discussion for the emergence of ideas and citizens who care to proactively engage for the betterment of the country.

Dear Honorable residents of Zone-9, the third online campaign out of the four online campaigns we planned for the year 2013 will be held from Wednesday May 7, 2013 to May-10, 2013, under the title of *Let's put democracy into practice-Bring back our demonstration rights.*

The purpose of this campaign is to call for the unreserved respect of article 30 of the EFDRE Constitution that states the rights of Assembly, Demonstration and petition.

The rights of peaceful demonstration, assembly and petition is among the pillars of the constitutional provisions that stipulates the rights of the people to gather, assemble and demonstrate their cause with people of the same intent and cause.

It is to be recalled that the prime minister of Ethiopia has abruptly made executive decision as state of emergency that bans any public demonstrations following the April 29 and 30 public demonstrations that were held as part of the closing campaign activities for the 2005 national election. Since then there were only few public demonstrations that were held in Ethiopia. Most of them were government sponsored and initiated public demonstrations leaving almost no room for opposition voices and dissident causes. The only exception after the May 5 opposition demonstration in Addis Ababa was held to ask for the immediate release of Birtukan Mideksa that were only attended by only 250 people. The main reason for the reduced number of demonstrators were because the party members were asked to assume full responsibility for any unwanted consequence of the event.

It has become very difficult to call for and organize any meetings and public discussions for political agendas labeled as opposition by the government. The opposition political parties and their constituencies are under the tight grip of the invisible bureaucratic and procedural sanctions that weakened their ability to reach more people to disseminate and promote their ideas peacefully. Hence the supreme objective of this campaign is to call for the immediate withdraw of both the official and unwritten sanctions on the constitutional rights of assembly, demonstration and petition.

The campaign will be held using Facebook and twitter as the medium. All campaigners are requested to use [#Assembly4Every1](#) and [#Demonstration4Every1](#) as the common hashtags. We will also be releasing exclusive articles related with this campaign on zone-9 blog and our Facebook pages. Moreover, all campaigners are kindly requested to change their profile and cover pictures with the banners prepared for the campaign.

We Blog because we care!

Zone9