

Before the talks had broken dawn, peace initiatives advanced by other parties multiplied and gained wider support presenting the Dergue with a new challenge. On numerous occasions, many governments and organizations called on the Dergue to resolve the issue through peaceful means. To alley the pressure, the Dergue replied that it was already there by meeting with the EPLF, by divulging the preliminary talks which it had insisted should be kept secret and to which it paid lip service. This, in itself, was a bone of contention in the preliminary talks. Even then, the Dergue did not desist from exploiting the meetings for this purpose, while at the same time denying that it was violating the confidentiality of the talks. Internally, the Dergue which had trumpeted each of its offensive as the “final solution”, changed its tune, professed interest in peace, and used the preliminary meetings as an opportune expedient to silence the internal criticism of those who were opposed to the war and those who waited to exploit the failure of the 6th offensive. The maneuverings of the regime came to an end only when the EPLF formally disclosed that preliminary talks had taken place but had reached a dead-end as a result of the Dergue’s obduracy.

The EPLF’s enthusiasm for a just and peaceful political solution has not been dampened by the failure of the preliminary talks. The EPLF has been conducting serious and extensive campaigns for a peaceful resolution of the conflict on the international stage. At the time when the drought was worsening the misery of the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia, the EPLF pointed out that the main problem was not drought but war, and that peace would ultimately aid in the control of future natural calamities. Moreover, it reiterated its desire for a peaceful solution and called for a ceasefire and the free passage of relief goods. Although this too was rejected by the Dergue, the interest shown by governments, organizations and individuals towards a peaceful solution did not decline but has steadily increased. One example was the peace initiative undertaken by the Sudanese government and frustrated by the Dergue. Consequently, the EPLF’s peace proposal and efforts won wide support in different corners of the globe but the efforts of other parties for peace were more organized and extensive.