

# **Roadmap for Hadiya Statehood**

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## **1. Context**

Ethiopia's fundamental political, economic, and social problem emanates from the central government's contempt to treat over 80% of the Ethiopian population equally. Ethiopia's political crisis is rooted in a long-standing conflict between attempts to build a centrist authoritarian state and nations, and nationalities who want to build a modern Ethiopian republic that equally treats all peoples politically, economically, and socially. Different ethnic groups and communities in Ethiopia have had fundamental differences in the foundational principle of the Ethiopian nation-state itself. Ever since the formation of contemporary Ethiopia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the political landscape in Ethiopia is divided between unitarist Ethiopian political elites who want to maintain assimilationist imperial nation-state building project under the banner of 'one culture, one language, and one religion' of the past and most Ethiopian nations who define Ethiopia as a federation of nations where each nation retain certain level of autonomy while ceding some power to the center. These fundamentally different political visions have not been redressed, although the imperial era ended in 1974 and a constitution centered on a multinational federal system was adopted in 1995. The Hadiya nation constitutes one of the indigenous ethno-linguistic and cultural peoples in the Horn of Africa with collective consciousness, unique culture, language (Hadiyyisa), traditions, way of life, and nationhood. Hadiya people are descendants of Highland East Cushitic family. Hadiya people and people of Hadiya descent should secure their rights by creating political and cultural organizations that serve their interests. This roadmap emphasizes Hadiya self-reliance and self-determination, as opposed to empty expectation of reforming assimilationist Ethiopian empire.

## **2. Goal of the political struggle for Hadiya statehood**

### **Purpose of the roadmap**

This roadmap aims to create clarity on the political position of the Hadiya nation. This roadmap is meant to empower Hadiya people to take ownership of political, economic, social, and cultural future of Hadiya nation. This short roadmap is intended to enhance the consciousness of Hadiya nation towards broader changes in both material and social conditions of larger masses of Hadiya people.

## **2.1. Goal of Hadiya statehood**

The future political, economic, and social destiny of the Hadiya people lies in Hadiya's ability to govern its own affairs. Therefore, the goals of Hadiya statehood struggle include:

- Primary goal of Hadiya political struggle is achieving full recognition, protection, and implementation of self-government right of Hadiya nation and to ensure fair political representation of Hadiya in the central government.
- Protecting and advancing freedom to use language, culture, and resources in Hadiya region.
- Enhancing economic and social well-being and protecting the unity and integrity of Hadiya people

The goal of Hadiya statehood is to reclaim the centuries-old right to self-determination of the Hadiya nation. Hadiya statehood question is not synonymous with competition over different political ideologies. Hadiya statehood demand is primarily about the right of the Hadiya people to self-government, and Hadiya's quest to fulfill its responsibilities with a fair representation in the central government. Hadiya statehood demands is meant to redress the legacies of ethno-culturally unjust and discriminatory nation-building policies of Ethiopian empire. One principal shift required is to remove the conditionality on federally provided block grants to enable regions to choose how to priorities what they should be spent on. Sharing a fair political representation in the central government includes the Legislative Council and the main political offices, the Cabinet, the Civil Service, the courts, the Defense Force, the Electoral Council, educational institutions, and various administrative institutions.

The rational for Hadiya statehood include:

- 1) One- size-fits all federal policies often work poorly in a very diverse and ideologically polarized nation. Ethiopians of all nations and nationalities have much to gain from stricter enforcement of constitutional limits on federal authority.
- 2) Giving more power to regions and localities can make it easier for political adversaries to coexist in relative peace.
- 3) Another rationale is that a federalist approach can encourage the local sourcing of ideas and partnerships with nongovernmental actors. Local pilots and experimentation allow for innovation and fast pivots, enabling rapid closure of approaches that don't work and scaling up those that do.

4) The fourth rationale is that it can enable a more transparent and accountable delivery of programs and services, bolstering citizen trust in government institutions and elected officials.

## ***2.2. The basic principles of Hadiya political struggle***

- Committed to Hadiya virtue of self-respect (Wolabano and Hadiyooma)
- Focuses mainly on the benefit of the Hadiya people
- Committed to fundamental human rights, freedom of speech, due process, diversity, equality, inclusion, protecting the most vulnerable, sanctuary to those in need, and worth of the human person
- Committed to the right of nations to self-determination
- Committed to ideals of democratic federalist Ethiopian republic made up of federation of self-governing nations and nationalities
- Committed to partnership with nations and the people in the Horn of Africa who believe in democratic federalism.

## ***2.3. Benefits of Hadiya Statehood***

### Political benefits

- Statehood enables Hadiya nation to exercise decision-making rights in its jurisdiction and equitably share of power at the federal government based on population and contributions. For example, Hadiya will be sufficiently represented in the House of Federation, and the number of executive members will increase.
- Statehood safeguards from the undue interference of the federal government in Hadiya's internal affairs.
- Statehood gives the right to make political decisions, to establish its own courts and police;
- Statehood delivers Hadiya people from apostates of the stooges who had no other role than looting.
- Statehood allows direct communication with the federal government and allows timely response to any public inquiry

### Economic benefits

- Statehood gives the right to collect taxes and raise additional budget by directly collaborating with development agencies
- Statehood encourages Hadiya migrant workers to come home and invest their wealth without bureaucratic delays
- Statehood nurtures entrepreneurship to generate wealth
- Statehood increases production and productivity by making it easier for farmers to access inputs without traveling long distances and spending a lot of money.
- Statehood encourages healthy competition with other regions and communities
- Statehood allows the right to demand a fair budget allocation based on population, development initiative, and income
- Statehood expands access and access to water, electricity, roads, and other infrastructure
- Statehood expands employment opportunities by creating new organizations from state to districts

#### Social benefits

- Hadiyyisa will become the region's working language and contribute significantly to the social, political, and economic development of Hadiya by strengthening the identity, culture, history, and social values of the Hadiya people.
- Statehood strengthens Hadiya self-respect and social bonds with other Ethiopian nations and peoples.
- Statehood provides opportunities for social and development relations with development organizations and increases tourist flow.

### **3. Strategies for political empowerment of Hadiya people**

In this section, we highlight the strategies that Hadiya must follow in order to regain the lost self-government. Here are some of the strategies relevant to regain Hadiya's lost power.

3.1. Identifying and defining the root causes of Hadiya's political, economic, cultural and social problems

3.2. Redemption and promotion of Hadiya culture, language, and Hadiya self-identity to rebuild national/ethnic self-confidence

3.3. Creating political, cultural and economic institutions that serve Hadiya interests

3.4. Promoting the political participation of Hadiya scholars

3.5. Establishing alliance and collaboration with nations, scholars, and institutions that share similar political vision

### ***3.1. Identifying and defining the root causes of Hadiya's political, economic, cultural and social problems***

Why could not the Hadiya nation rule itself and influence Ethiopian political, economic, and social affairs? Identifying and explaining the root causes of Hadiya's political, economic, and social problems is a logical prerequisite for protecting the rights and interests of the Hadiya nation. As noted above, Hadiya's multifaceted problems in Ethiopia stem from the Hadiya nation's loss of control over its affairs and decision-making power. Hadiya nation has been excluded from political decision-making and historically suffered from entrenched subjugation, discrimination, and marginalization, making it vulnerable to existential threats. When such perpetual legacies persist, meaningful equality can only be achieved by adopting multinational arrangements and regional self-government. The related problem is the weakening of the shared vision and purpose of the community because of external manipulative and divisive forces from the successive assimilative and dominant central governments. Reasserting the former shared vision and purpose that will benefit all Hadiya is necessary to unite all Hadiya sub-groups that have been divided by external divide-and-conquer influences. A nation that does not have a clearly defined shared vision and strategies cannot achieve desired goals and maintain the unity of the people. Another source of Hadiya's weaknesses, as a nation, is individuals willing to work for Hadiya's oppressors at the expense of Hadiya's noble purpose and mutual benefits. Besides fighting external oppressors, therefore, Hadiya must remove from political power Hadiya's cronies who engage in political and economic corruption to the detriment of the unity of the Hadiya people and the common good, without prejudice to family networks, clans, or patronage. Along with the struggle for Hadiya statehood, building inclusive Hadiya nationalism will be intensified in the future. Hadiya youth will be taught about the long-buried history and culture of Hadiya the people and the true purpose of Hadiya political struggle.

### ***3.2. Redemption and promotion of Hadiya culture, language, and Hadiya self-identity to rebuild national/ethnic self-confidence***

Hadiya's self-consciousness, national/ethnic self-confidence, and culture (Hadiyooma and Wolabano) are crucial to overcoming Hadiya's political, social, and economic problems. Building Hadiya's self-consciousness, national/ethnic self-confidence and culture are prerequisites to regain Hadiya's lost

power. Human beings can have a meaningful life only if they are conscious of their identity in this world. A person with a higher self-awareness guides others, not ruled by others. Therefore, Hadiya inclusive nationalism is the pillar of Hadiya's political struggle. We need to re-discover our self-identity, and use our self-consciousness as the primary tool to regain lost power. Hadiya nation is not just a society that is Hadiya proper who predominantly speak Hadiyyisa. Any person living in Hadiya is an integral part of Hadiya nation regardless of their race, ethnicity, sex, gender, religion, or place of birth. Despite enormous assimilation pressures, the Hadiya proper has maintained Hadiya identity, languages, and traditions from time immemorial to the present. Hadiya nation is defined by a shared devotion to the principles of collective consciousness, culture, traditions, way of life, freedom, equality, tolerance, individual rights, and multiculturalism, and the government built on those principles. Every person has equal access to nationhood without being blocked by exclusive categories like ethnicity or religion. If the Hadiya nation regains its self-determination, Hadiya has tremendous potential and ample opportunities to develop.

Here are quick list of tasks Hadiya people could use to develop their identity and Hadiya self-consciousness.

- Use Hadiyyisa language in all aspects of life
- Reinstate Hadiyyisa as the working language in the offices and social service institutions of the region;
- Hold meetings in the region in Hadiyyisa
- Identify the names of newborns and infants to reflect the culture of Hadiya
- Make billboards, sign-posts, and posters in Hadiyyisa, English, and Amharic in the region.
- Encourage and help children to study Hadiyyisa
- Teach children the history and culture of Hadiya starting from primary school
- Build Hadiya heritage centers to preserve and display textual and electronic records, photographs, moving images, audio recordings, archives, and artifacts about Hadiya nation.

### ***3.3. Creating political, cultural, and economic institutions that serve Hadiya interests***

We do not have progressive federalist political parties representing Hadiya at the local and national levels. We cannot succeed in Hadiya's political struggle unless we have Hadiya-based progressive federalist political party, which relentlessly champions Hadiya statehood status and power devolution, and represents Hadiya at local and national legislations, budget allocation, and power-sharing

debates. Therefore, the formation of Hadiya-based progressive federalist political party is a matter of survival. Ignoring this crucial institution will dearly cost Hadiya people. Furthermore, true power must nest in the ownership of corporations, foundations, media, interest groups, banking and foreign investment wherever Hadiya people dwell. Building strong Hadiya institutions such as churches, media, think tanks; industry; investment clubs and credit associations are critical.

### ***3.4. Promoting political participation of Hadiya scholars***

It is important to note that there is always a competition to sell ideas. There is a market for ideas everywhere. Various interest groups try to influence people's thinking by selling their ideas to the public to promote their interests and get the best out of others. They use social media, activists, celebrities, religious leaders, investors, etc., to promote their ideas. However, not all ideas in the market are healthy for society. Some of the most intriguing ideas on the market can easily trick unsuspecting and politically unenlightened people into making the wrong choices and leading to severe problems in their lives. Such a choice would deprive citizens of their livelihood and put their lives in danger.

Far-right fascist forces have developed a manifesto or a roadmap that glorifies supremacist, assimilationist, and colonial ideology. Dissemination of violent medieval conspiracies (such as honoring barbaric medieval leaders for bravery, military prowess, and loyalty) is part of the standard far-right visual and textual imagery, which they turn into a weapon. They use heroic medievalism to create narratives that activate violent hatred. We need to develop counter-narratives to combat their perverse narrative. We must combat medieval supremacist narratives by projecting counter-narratives that set the record straight on peoples' true history and exposing the horrible history of supremacist colonial ideology in the past.

Scholars are required to play an irreplaceable role in raising public awareness of political, economic, and socio-cultural issues. Scholars need to examine ideas promoted in the idea market and protect the community from disasters by analyzing their content, meaning, and positive and negative effects on society and helping them make balanced choices. In addition, scholars are required to serve the community as “thought leaders” in political, economic, and social affairs.

Hadiya is one of the most educated people in Ethiopia. Hundreds of highly qualified Hadiya scholars work in local and foreign universities, research institutes, and international organizations. There are few professionals in journalism and the arts. Hadiya scholars should ask themselves how much they are serving the Hadiya people. Therefore, creating a network among scholars and establishing a database of Hadiya scholars is critical to exchange ideas through several platforms.

### ***3.5. Establishing alliance and collaboration with nations, scholars, and institutions that share similar political vision***

Another crucial strategy that the Hadiya nation must follow is to align Hadiya's political struggle with partner nations, progressive scholars, activists, and journalists. The struggle for self-government must be fought in collaboration with the nations and nationalities excluded from political power and wealth in Ethiopia for centuries. Hadiya's political struggle must be fought in conjunction with other nations sharing similar goals who believe in rights of nations to self-determination. No nation or people should be left behind. Therefore, it is important to put aside our minor differences and strive for the common good with other nations.

### **4. Medium and long-term focus of Hadiya political struggle**

The country is in civil war at the moment and national dialogue is inevitable. The national dialogue will be a historic moment in which all nations and nationalities will debate about their nations' future and a new state arrangement is expected. We expect that approval of the statehood demands of nations and nationalities will be one of the priorities in the dialogue. In light of these developments, we call upon the people of Hadiya to focus on the upcoming political development in the country and partake in this crucial historic moment.

Key propositions and demands of the Hadiya nation include:

1. Hadiya nation, as one of the founders and stakeholders of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, strongly condemns the ongoing civil war in Ethiopia and proposes a peaceful resolution through all-inclusive political dialogue;
2. Hadiya nation upholds the faith in equal political, economic, civil, and human rights of all nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia;
3. Hadiya nation reaffirms commitment to the norms and principles and promised equal socio-cultural, economic, and political rights of nations, nationalities and peoples in the 1995 Federal Constitution of Ethiopia and international declarations;
4. Pursuant to the rights of nations to self-determination enshrined on Article 39 of the 1995 Federal Constitution of Ethiopia, Hadiya nation shall steadfastly pursue the delayed request to establish Hadiya regional state;
5. Hadiya state shall establish and strengthen institutions and administrative structures to achieve the vision, goals, and objectives of the Hadiya people with the free will of the Hadiya people;
6. Hadiya state shall use and promote the language, culture, and traditions of the Hadiya people, which sustains Hadiya identity;
7. Hadiya state shall protect succeeding generations of Hadiya people from assimilationist ideology;
8. Hadiya state shall use and administer all-natural and man-made resources in Hadiya region;
9. Hadiya nation fosters respectful partnerships with people of Hadiya origin all over the Horn of Africa by establishing platforms such as the Assembly of Hadiya Peoples to maintain security and promote the political, economic, and social progress of the peoples of Hadiya kingdom;
- 10.** Hadiya nation establishes treaties and negotiated agreements with neighboring nations and nationalities for peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, recognition, and equitable sharing of resources.