

# The Deafening Silence of Unionist Ethiopians

## Personal Observation on the Anuak Justice Council Meeting in Washington DC

By Emebet S. Bekele

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On Saturday, Nov. 17, I attended a human rights meeting organized by the Anuak Justice Council. My knowledge of the Anuak people was very limited until I started following the movement of Kinijit through the Ethiopian Web sites. I learned of Ato Obang Metho through different media outlets and the fate of the Anuak people and their struggle for human right. On every platform I heard him speak about being an Ethiopian, about how to uplift each other from the madness that is engulfing us. I have heard him proclaim his Ethiopian nationality not only amongst those who claim to be unionist, but also amongst those who support and believe in the separatist movements. Obang's message is a message of peace, love, mutual respect for all of us. His message does not have any hidden agenda. It does not exclude anyone or accuse any ethnic group. His mission is to introduce all the children of Ethiopia to each other so that brothers and sisters can stand shoulder to shoulder to love, respect and protect each other. This is the message I heard him introduce on every platform. So on that Saturday afternoon, I expected to see a lot of my fellow Ethiopians to support this man with a beautiful message.

What happened to Kinijit? Where were their supporters? I remember hearing the announcement of this meeting at the last Kinijit meeting. I clearly remember hearing the delegation saying that Kinijit will stand shoulder to shoulder with any organization that is working on the empowerment of the Ethiopian People. I listened to the leaders saying that the protection of human rights is one of the fundamental principles of democracy. So why were there no representatives of this organization at the Anuak meeting? Wzt. Bertukan has assured us that her organization will work with all Ethiopian organizations to find a lasting solution for all our people. If Kinijit cannot take initiative to lead it's supporters in laying the foundation for a grass root movement on human rights, it should at least lend support to organizations like the Anuak Justice Council who are trying to do the job. Unfortunately, on Nov. 17, Kinijit not only failed to lead by example. The big question is, if Kinijit cannot lend its ears to civic movements that are trying to help build a democratic system, how is it going to respond to political organizations that are vying to share power?

Where were you my brothers and sisters on the day that our Anuak brother rose up from the ashes of his people and stretched his hand to us? Where were you when Ato Obang Metho proclaimed himself the true son of Ethiopia despite the atrocities committed on him and his people by the central government? Why weren't you there to hear his message of peace, love and mutual respect? Why didn't you answer his call to stand with him and to make a reality his vision of creating a human right movement?

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The writer can be reached at [emebet3@juno.com](mailto:emebet3@juno.com)