



ETHIOPIA

The old guard is still at the helm

► Only a very tiny number of the leaders of the parties making up the governing coalition were changed during the recent party conventions.

The results of the party conventions of the **Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM)** and the **Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO)**, which have just come to an end, made little change at the top. The ANDM executive committee (EC) is still dominated by old hands, even if **Tefera Walwa** (who has recently been critical of Prime Minister **Meles Zenawi**) was kicked out into the long grass as expected. The new party chairman, **Demeke Makonen**, is a longstanding member of its central committee (CC) and its number two is the MP **Gedu Andargachew. Yosef Reta** and **Yohannes Bayalew** have, for their part, been ousted from the ANDM EC. The President of the Amhara Regional State, **Ayalew Gobezie**, still risks losing this post even though he managed to keep his seat on the ANDM EC.

Nor are the changes spectacular on the side of the OPDO. The former party chairman **Abadula Gameda** has left his post as expected, but remains a member of the EC. He has nevertheless suffered from a broadside of criticism against him for corruption. The presidency of the OPDO went to **Alemayehu Atomsa**, the former head of **Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA)** who is a party veteran. His number two, **Mukhtar Kedir** is none other than a close advisor to the prime minister. In fact, the two new OPDO leaders are protégés of Meles Zenawi, as is **Zelalem Jemaneh** who has now joined the party EC. The mayor of Addis Ababa, **Kuma Demeksa**, was the EC member with the highest vote. On the other hand, **Junedin Sado**, the present minister of science and technology, came in last. He and **Shifferaw Jarso** are the main losers in this convention, losing their mandate on the OPDO EC.

ETHIOPIA

The TPLF is a family affair

► The wife of Prime Minister **Meles Zenawi** this week made her entry onto the executive committee of the **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)**.

Of all the recent party conventions of the various factions making up the **Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front** (governing coalition), the one held by the **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)** – Prime Minister **Meles Zenawi's** organisation – is the one that produced the most significant changes. **Azeb Mesfin**, the Prime Minister's wife, made her entry onto the TPLF executive committee (EC), while two of the party's heavyweights, **Abay Tsehaye** (advisor to the prime minister) and **Seyoum Mesfin** (minister for foreign affairs) were ousted. This should suggest that Seyoum Mesfin could soon be pushed out of the government, or at least lose his portfolio.

In fact, this new TPLF EC - in which **Abadi Zemo**, one of the **EFFORT** (consortium of companies linked to the TPLF) leaders has made his comeback – consists essentially of Meles Zenawi loyalists. The security services are also represented on it, in the person of **Debretsion Gebre-Mikael**, a former assist-

ant to the late head of security **Kinfe Gebre Medhin** who is now in control of telecommunications and Internet security. It is he who is responsible for jamming satellite television and radio stations that do not please the Ethiopian government. Meles Zenawi, for his part, remains chairman of the TPLF. His deputy is **Abay Woldu**, a TPLF old hand who is an MP and the husband of **Tirfu Kidame Mariam**, who is also a member of the party's central committee.

Furthermore, the TPLF convention accepted the departure from its central committee of several old hands, such as the former minister for defence **Sebhat Nega** who made this decision because of his advancing years, and **Fiseha Zerihun** who did likewise for health reasons. **Wolde Rufael Alemayehu** gave professional reasons for his departure. Meanwhile, **Mulugeta Alemseged, Gebreab Barnabas, Adhane Haile, Ambassador Tewolde Gebru** and **Hasile Mikael Abera** did not give reasons for not wanting to be re-elected onto the TPLF CC. In the end, the new composition of the TPLF executive body becomes a structure that is completely under the control of Meles Zenawi. And none of its members will be able to stand up to him if the need to do so arises.