Ethiopia set to announce nation’s new leader

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By Tesfa-Alem Tekle

September 14, 2012 (ADDIS ABABA) - Ethiopia is expected to announce on Saturday the country’s new leader who will replace the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who died on 20 August after suffering for two months of an undisclosed illness.

The council of the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) on Friday began a two-day meeting to elect the party’s new chairman.

According to government sources the new EPRDF chairperson, who will also be the prime minister of the country, will be announced on Saturday.

“The council assigns the chairperson of the organization that replaces our great leader, who departed from us suddenly”, the EPRDF said in a statement released on Thursday.

The council meeting on Friday deliberated on a number of national issues including on the five year growth and transformation plan (GTP), other decisions, policies and strategies initiated by the late Prime Minister and agreed to further strengthen them.

The council will also elect deputy chairman of the party.

One day after Zenawi died, deputy prime minister and foreign minister Hailemariam Desalegn was named as acting prime minister, however, parliament didn’t officially endorse him as prime minister. The party instead delayed his appointment and the swearing in raising concerns from opposition parties.

The council of EPRDF has 180 members who equally represent the four parties that make up the ruling coalition. The EPRDF controls all except two of the 547 parliamentary seats.

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