

Al Shabab's Ethiopian Version Coming Soon to Addis

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It is not how much chaff is in you, but whether you have any wheat.



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The ruling Marxist Tigray People's liberation front (TPLF/EPRDF) of Ethiopia introduced a system of "ethnic federalism" when it took power in 1991, after the military regime of Colonel Mengistu was toppled, with major ethnicities controlling the regions where they dominate. The TPLF's argument at the time was that the "ethnic federalism" is the only alternative to save the country from disintegration as it gives all

ethnicities equal power and through it all grievances redressed in an amicable and enduring way. TPLF is in power for nearly two decades but the end product it can present to the world and to its citizens is scary at best or abomination at worst. In stark contrast to its earlier political statements; after two decades the country is divided along hostile ethnic lines punctuated by armed struggle against the Federal Government and civil wars within ethnic groups. Mass arrests, summary executions, burning of villages and towns, gagging of media, denial of political pluralism, punitive man made mass starvation and the unequivocal wrath of Human rights Organizations all over the world is sadly what is left of Ethiopia.

TPLF/EPRDF whose guiding ideology is communism in disguise modelled their role to that of the political bureau of a communist state and hence deems that it is their right to decide who goes in to the two chambers; the members of the rubber stamp chambers are hand picked by TPLF cadres who control every venue of Ethiopian life down to Kabelle (peasant association). TPLF's political culture proved overtime that it can't stand any form of dissent or opposition how ever mundane it is and will go to the extremes to silence, uproot and discourage calls for broader political participation and any demand remotely linked to good governance.

Only a fool might believe that the TPLF, after it took over Addis in 1991 became overnight born again capitalists and hanged all their die-hard core communists at the gates of the boss's (chief of Ideology – Male Zenawi)palace!. TPLF maintains powerful secret services that report not to one ministry but to multiple ministries and agencies – a spider web like of intelligence agencies that are designed to even spy on each other which is a typical advanced trait of paranoid communist regime. TPLF/EPRDF handles the civil service as party cadres – deducts party contributions from wages, promotes or dismisses one according to his loyalty to the party and uses the old archaic communist tool of self evaluation (GimGima) technique in place of the universally accepted objective appraisal methods designed to gauge staff efficiency.

The TPLF/EPRDF's "Ethnic Federalism" project owes its failure due to the mendaciousness of its very proponents – EPRDF as a party was created by TPLF from the Ethiopian army prisoners of war and its members has no mandate from the ethnic groups they hail from and also the same applies to the Somalis, Afars and etc. The TPLF cadres without consulting the people of the regional states (Killils) super imposed a foreign party fashioned according to their likening on the traditional native ones and as a consequence the true representatives of the people either went in to forced exile or resorted to armed struggle against the Tigreyian occupation. "Ethnic federalism has not dampened conflict, but rather increased competition among groups fighting for land, natural resources, administrative boundaries and government budgets," said Francois Grignon, director of the ICG's Africa Program. The director added that "This concept has powerfully promoted ethnic self-awareness among all groups and failed to accommodate grievances." To incite ethnic hostility between brotherly nations of Ethiopia the TPLF plays a dirty game of drawing and redrawing provocative and often needless controversial Kilil or regional state boundaries of which the latest undertaking was the stretching of Oromia regional state boundary to 15 KM to the Somali regional state capital city, Jigjiga.

The local political environment is so hostile and tense that denies room for genuine multiparty politics to take root – the state is engaged in a campaign of churning out more restrictive and repressive laws on daily bases to a scale that chased away even the international Non Governmental Organisations at a time when one in every five Ethiopian citizen is in need of food aid. According to Human rights watch, the law governing the conduct of the NGO's is one of the world's worst laws on NGOs and yet the European Union rewarded Ethiopia with €250 million. European Union policymaker's action sends a clear signal to Ethiopia: - no matter how repressive the government becomes vast sums of string less aid is in the pipeline which in reality means the human rights abuses carries no weight. "The NGO law is repression, not regulation," said Gagnon. "If enforced, this law will make Ethiopia one of the most inhospitable places in the world for both Ethiopian and international human rights groups."



The Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa (HRLHA) expresses its concern that Ethiopia's so-called "anti-terrorism" legislation will likely become a severe weapon of suppression. HRLHA is highly concerned that this proclamation, under the cover of fighting terrorism, might be used as an additional tool to further suppress the voices of indigenous human rights activists, journalists, non-governmental civic organizations as well as opposition political parties, and to crack them down. The restrictive and harsh rules rubber stamped by the so called legislative body in practice supersedes the constitution of the country as the mere intent to exercise the right to freedom of press, freedom of association,

freedom of demonstration, freedom of expression and etc, which are enshrined in the constitution, attracts lengthy prison terms or capital punishment in the courts of the new TPLF/EPRDF Ethiopia.

TPLF/EPDRF says not a word of truth – even in prayers.



Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has dismissed reports that Ethiopian troops are back in neighboring Somalia, nine months after they withdrew. At a news conference, Mr. Meles also lashed out at a new report that warns of the potential for violence ahead of next year's Ethiopian elections. Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi flatly

rejected recent news reports saying Ethiopia is staging military incursions into Somalia to support President Sheikh Sharif's...

The Ethiopian regime dismisses any information pertaining to their poor governance or human rights abuses as a lie or fabrications from the enemy of the nation and interprets any expression of dissent as an act of unseating the government. The jails of Addis and the regional states are choked off with prisoners of conscience – Ginbot 7 leaders and Bashir Makhtal are among the multitude. Major political opposition members and activists are either in prison or have to endure daily harassment from TPLF hired thugs in all public political meeting and the case of the Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) in Adama, Oromia, serves as perfect example as Dr. Negasso explained:

Around 50 people started to disturb the meeting while Eng. Gizachew Shiferraw, Vice Chairperson of the UDJ was addressing the meeting. The disturbers were shouting, clutching and whistling from the rear of the hall. This mob came up running to the front and damaged a microphone while trying to grab it. They continued to shout: ‘This is Oromia’, ‘Oromo is our Language’, ‘You have to start the meeting by a blessing ceremony in accordance with Oromo culture’, ‘You can hold the meeting in Oromo language’, ‘If you do not speak in Oromo language, and you can not hold meetings in our country’. Several people tried to cool down the mob by promising that what is said would be translated in Oromo. But the mob would not heed the appeal. It even threatened to beat us up. Eng. Gizachew could not continue his speech. He was forced to announce that the meeting is adjourned because of the disturbance... The mob was not a spontaneous disturbing group. There were some OPDO/EPRDF cadres among the mob. I myself could recognize at least two OPDO cadres with whom I worked in the organization before I resigned from it in June 2001. It is obvious that the disturbance was an organized one.”

The TPLF/EPRDF government bought specialist software designed to censor, police the internet and phone lines from China and since then is engaged in monitoring its citizens’ internet and telephone uses in an attempt to tighten lids on all forms of sources of information; thereby infringing the rights of the Ethiopian peoples to receive and give information in the lame excuse of putting a stop to terrorism related sites. Among the many casualties, a popular Somali news website called Mareeg online fell under the hammer of the

new software. TPLF/EPRDF cadres are working round the clock to limit the access of information only to party approved ones.

PM. Meles was unimpressed by the recently released study [Read the Full Report](#) compiled by the renowned International Crisis Group (ICG) dealing with rising ethnic tensions and dissent in advance of the “May 2010” elections, Ethiopia’s Meles said, “This happens as some people have too many billions of dollars to spend and they feel that dictating how, particularly, the developing countries manage their affairs is their God given right and to use their God given money to that purpose. They are entitled to their opinion as we are entitled to ours.” The prime Minister is confused because the issue is not about a contest of individual opinions but hard facts that serve as a food for thought to the elite of the world. .

The TPLF/EPRDF boss’s opinion of the ICG and its findings was as expected offensive: “The analysis (ICG report) is not worth the price of or the cost of writing it up,” he reiterated. “We have only contempt for the ICG. You do not respond to something you only have contempt for.” Male Zenawi bragged that his “ethnic federalism” policy had saved the “country that was on the brink of total disintegration.” He shepherded anonymous authorities to support his conjured claim that he is the redeemer of the nation: “Every analyst worth his salt was suggesting that Ethiopia will go the way of Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union. What we have now is a going-concern.”

"The so-called rebel warning against corporations engaged in exploration in the Ogaden is a falsehood. The ONLF has no capacity to threaten or attack facilities," Minister of Mines and Energy Alemayehu Tegenu said in a statement. The TPLF/EPRDF regime live in a bubble of their own and thus lost short term memory because they read the same statement when the Chinese minors were killed in the exploration field owned by a subsidiary of Sinopec, China's biggest refiner and petrochemicals producer; when their invading forces were thrown out of Somalia “we broke the back bone of the Islamists” said by Meles.



*“In this village, the TPLF forces crushed babies' heads with stones and in another, they cut up bodies and scattered the parts to prevent remaining villagers from burying the dead.”
Near the deserted village of Galashe there are about 50 bodies under each pile (Somali*

Region). The inhumane action of the TPLF forces spawns a pool of recruits for the ONLF which in effect contributes to the perpetuation of the threat from the faction

Countless researches, reports and studies ranging from satellite digital imaging to first hand witnesses on the ground were compiled about the atrocities in the Somali regional State, Oromia, Amhara and etc and have reached the desks of most governments and non governmental organisations. The U.S. Congress Rep. Donald Payne (D-New Jersey), the

chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa, has repeatedly criticized Ethiopia for “deliberating targeting civilians” with “routine raping and hanging” innocent citizens in the Somali region. He says the Ogaden crisis is “by far one of the worst human rights tragedies he has witnessed in his life”. The TPLF/EPRDF chairman dismissed Mr. Payne’s expression of concern as sad, misinformed and one sided.

In the U.S., various think tanks and social justice groups have called for the U.S. government to pressure Ethiopia to at least into easing the human rights abuses. But the U.S., which regards Ethiopia as an ally in the Horn of Africa which helps to rout Islamist terrorists in neighbouring Sudan and Somalia, has so far ignored these warnings and calls to action. It is heartbreaking and stain in the moral of the Ethiopian people in General and the TPLF in particular that Ethiopia produces sons like Male Zenawi that has an elephant appetite for gross human rights abuses.

Mass starvation is the most extreme form of censorship

Mohamed Daud, the President of the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia is considered by the bulk of the Diaspora as one of the most notorious stooges of Male Zenawi who is directly responsible for the most dismal human rights abuses in the Somali Region in the living memory. The Somali regional state citizens like their brothers/sisters in the other 8 Kilils and the federally administered city states have yet to choose a single MP to represent them since the TPLF came to power in 1991. The president, his cabinet, the party and the so called legislative body are all hand picked by the security services of the TPLF so in the real sense of the word “representation” this president represents the TIGREAN tribal regime and so has no credibility in the eyes of the Somalis and hence not accountable to them but only to his pay master.

This President supervises the Somali people which are completely sealed off from Ethiopia proper as well as from the rest of the world that can literally be defined as a big concentration camp- the fate of the Somali people is even far worse then the tragedy of Darfur which is widely reported. In this mega concentration camp sadists such as Daud and his paramilitary bloodhounds are said to enjoy their satanic fantasies ([video](#)) - drinking tea from the skulls of babies, throwing dads and mothers in to bonfires, gang raping of women, razing whole villages and its residents to the ground and above all intentionally mass starving millions of people by denying access to all UN and international NGO assistance.



The US government’s decision to grant entry to such a man whose hands are soaked in the blood of innocent children and women is deplorable and affronts to the ideals America stands for. It is immoral and unacceptable that the US government pays millions of dollars, without strings, to the TPLF junta to pay for the military and paramilitary operations meted against its own innocent citizens. It is the US government who is really answerable in the future for the instigation and perpetuation of the mass killing and mass starvation of four million people. Ethiopia needs as much foreign aid as it can

receive but the aid should be tied to human rights, good governance and political plurality institutionalization not a blank cheque (blood money) for Gestapo like army.

The Diasporas from Ethiopia are intelligent enough to interpret such transgressions as they are – Institutional racism of the highest order. The American government rewards genocide perpetrators as long as the victims are black people. “Can the US Government give us one plausible reason as to why Daud whose achievement is death and destruction allowed setting a foot on the free American soil?”

Ethiopian people are caught between Predatory Junta and off target resistance.

Armed Resistance movements in Ethiopia such as ONLF (Ogaden National Liberation Front) and OLF (Oromo Liberation Front) are organized along purely ethnic or tribal lines that is surprisingly bound to work in synchronization with the divide and rule policy of the TPLF they took up arms in the first place to unseat – history proved that only those who comes up with a superior ideology wins the day so there is no chance the ethnic and tribal based factions can overturn the same. Had the OLF and ONLF refrained from taking up arms too soon after the TPLF took power, I believe the political landscape of Ethiopia would have been more civil and pluralist to a certain degree. The armed ethnic based factions shouldn't shy away that they are equally responsible for the tragedy Ethiopia is thrown into and should remember that they would be named and shamed by the people unless they come up with a more robust all inclusive ideology – You can't cry” wolf” when, in the case of OROMIA, you killed and dispossessed your fellow Ethiopians (Amhara, Guraks, Somalis and etc) in the name of ethnicity which borders to racism.

OLF is divided in to three major factions of which two works in separate offices in the same building in Asmara. Leaders of two factions of the Oromo Liberation Front declare that in spite of a split in the rebel movement leadership, both sides seek the political unity of Oromo people – General Kemal Gelchu could have served the Oromia and the Ethiopian cause better in Addis jail then in Asmara's hotel. At local level the Oromos are divided along religious, geographical and tribal line which is a recipe for a disaster that will have more far reaching ramification then that of Somalia! Leaders of the struggle must live among their people and guide them through the hurdles thrown in their path by the changing circumstances of the theatre of struggle but unfortunately the current out of touch leadership in exile is just another burden on the Oromo people in particular and the rest of the Ethiopian people in general –it is no wonder that hundreds of their fighters are captured intact without a fight time and again. There is no single village the OLF have liberated for twenty years and will remain so until the mission of the struggle is revised to reflect the realities of Ethiopia. I detest that OLF makes cause for celebration in bombing of hotels and the rail lines(soft civilian targets) – I was twice a victim of such barbarities while I was working in Ethiopia.

The cause of the Somali regional state was traditionally led for generations by WSLF (Western Somali Liberation Front) which was an all inclusive and conservative liberation front. The ONLF is an splinter group founded out by some students in the Middle East and

came at the for front of the politics of the region for the first time when the TPLF took over Addis. I remember the young militants, Mr.Mohamed Ibrahim and Mr.Indha Biraale and etc that showed up at the conference without any formal invitation from the TPLF under the new banner of ONLF and demanded that they should be allowed to join the conference! After many deliberations a consensus was reached to accommodate the new fiery brand organisation and in doing so WSLF relinquished some of its seats.

When the first Somali Regional Administration was established they took most of the seats and betrayed the cause of the Somalis by unilaterally moving the capital from Diredawa to Godey and then openly declared armed struggle without consultation with the Somalia public. The OLF members hail from the same tribe and operate in their local areas which is a large desert and semi desert areas that as consequence unfortunately became an area of no war no peace. They are warriors and give bleeding noses to the TPLF forces in most of their engagements but at same time also harass and kill their own people and impede all forms of developmental activities.

The ONLF is equally based on pure ethnicity and tribalism and has a divided leadership which is by coincidence composes of three factions who are united only to fight the government. Their struggle has no clear vision and their organisation is equally crude – undisciplined often angry men who, increasing in number by the hour, suffered under the hands of the unruly TPLF army filled the rank and file of the ONLF fighters. The cruelty and barbarism of the TPLF forces cements the continuation of the war in the Somali region for years to come.

Armed struggle not lead by stout and robust ideology is sure to fail and for twenty years the ONLF succeeded to make 70% of the Somalia region a no go area for the TPLF civil administration without putting an alternative one in place – lawlessness and chaos for two decades.

Recommendations: - Life is not of holding good cards, but playing a poor hand well

In précis, the Ethiopian people are squeezed under four genuine rocks – creeping ecological deterioration, control freak government, confused armed resistance and doomsday whistle blowing Diasporas.

Ethiopia for the best part of the last forty years was at war with itself and so invested heavily on regime defence which took ecological management out of the equation. A consequence of mismanagement and poor policies; there is a loss of a large amount of biomass cover, land degradation, soil erosion, and desertification. According to the UN, Ethiopia's forests are depleted, at present less than three percent of the entire country is covered with trees. The drought and famine that bedevilled Ethiopia has its root in the political, economical and ecological mismanagements – It is inconceivable that Haramayo lake in Harar dried before our eyes as recently as last year when Alamayo agricultural university is next door neighbour.

The timid TPLF/EPRDF should seize the passing opportunity by extending an olive branch (new palatable manifesto) to the opposition parties before things fall apart as the armed factions are not ready to lead at this juncture. TPLF/EPRDF must assume the coming five years the role of a care taker government or second transitional government with the view to form a unity government to save Ethiopia from the impending disintegration or a coup d'etat.

The diasporas should understand that twenty years of Kilils (Ethnic Regional States) is an objective reality that can't be thrown out of the window. The role of the Diaspora should be beyond negative, scary propaganda and senseless criticism of every thing done by the regime without tabling feasible and logical recommendations. TPLF regime has done a lot of commendable developments in civil infrastructures which transformed the country at pace that has no parallels in Ethiopian history; education at all levels is extended to all regions, trade liberalisation and many, many more.

The creation of ethnically defined regional states was not the choice of TPLF per se but was an objective reality to be addressed for the government to attain legitimacy to rule as in the case of land redistribution during Mengistu's regime. The regional states system was not imposed on the people but was a response to their popular demand but whether the system was cultivated and implemented vigorously is subject to discussions and deliberations.

The Diaspora must strive to help in engineering how to make better the certainty on the ground without resorting out of nostalgia to outdated models based on yesteryears which failed in their time and space – you cannot live in history, which every one is struggling to forget and forgive, and at same time to anticipate that the present generations to heed your advise from the bottom of the grave.

The 40 year old Oroma or Somali person for instance has no recollection of how centralized Ethiopia historically conducted its business, how the design of the imperial flag of Ethiopia looked like, what the student movements stood for and if EPRP ever existed. It is sad that we in the west spend most of our spare time running unconstructive campaigns in the corridors of donor agencies to an extent that some shamelessly even tabled that the “coffee beans” of Ethiopia should be classed as blood beans which is tantamount to wiping out substantial number of the peasant class of Ethiopia.

The Diasporas must always bear in mind that the foreign aid is for the sustenance of over seventy million poor Ethiopian souls who have yet to see a good day so one's dislike for the regime shouldn't blind him/her from the reality and plight of his people. The moderate unionists and the pragmatic secessionists should bear in mind that if the foreign aid (lubricant of the civil/military machine of the TPLF) pipe is plugged for a year then God for bid, a scenario far worse than Somalia will take over – it is in the interest of every body to deal with the devil to save the geese that lays the golden eggs.

Perhaps my recent experience in Ethiopia will serve as a wake up call to many of my brothers and sisters in the Diaspora. I flew from London to Addis for just twenty days to comfort my

late brother who was at his death bed at the time. I think it is important to mention that I have seen Addis once in 1991 and stayed there for one week only and that I am non Amharic speaker. Upon my departure I was advised that I shouldn't go out of my hotel unless it is necessary, not to look in the eyes of the armed police men, to buy all my essentials in London and not to venture out side of Addis. Less then a week in Addis I found out that you can walk in the major streets as late as 4:00 Am with out any fear, you can chat with the armed police if you are Amharic speaker, you can buy the same branded essentials at local supermarkets and can venture in comfort outside Addis.

I was captivated by the politeness, kindness and openness of the people I met in the streets, restaurants and at tea shops. The high esteem they bestow to neighbourly which is second to none actually reminded me of what my late father used to say about the Ethiopian people in General and the highlanders in particular. It is part of the rich culture of Ethiopia to invite acquaintances for a coffee drinking sessions served in a beautiful traditional setting which haunts me to this day. It is not fair on them that we, lucky few, take as our religion to shut down the trickle down economy that puts food on the tables of so many.

I fell in love with the country and took a job with the United Nations development programme and succeeded to open the first UNDP office in the most unstable region, Somali region, of the whole country. It was not an easy task because there is a some what cultural difference between us in the west and the people in the country – the UN and government staff sees things through the same wave length. Few white elderly international staff (white Raja without vision) dominates the UN institutions and run it as their own business – the most inefficient highest paid civil servants on earth. During my term of employment I would be lying to every body if I say I had a good time all through but the truth is - it was tough, challenging but by and large fulfilling. Despite all the problems and risks mentioned, I am prepared to go back and help the masses at this testing time as soon as my circumstance allows me to do so and I hope many will join me in answering the call of duty- defeat is not to try to challenge the TPLF in a constructive way.

The Diaspora in the west can make positive impact in the life of the Ethiopian people only if they dare sacrifice their luxurious life for a while and work amongst their people to update themselves and rekindle the bond. Working and living with the masses is the most successful vehicle through which one can forge understanding with all stake holders.

The military solution and the camouflage policy of ethnicity have just reached its end and the hallmarks are there that Ethiopia will never be the same again after 2010 elections which are seen as forgone conclusion. The student movement led revolution was hijacked by military junta in the 70's due to the movement's tactical mistakes and history seems to be repeating itself – break the cycle by cohabiting with the lion before the window of opportunity closes.

The Tigrey ethnic military and paramilitary machine fattened by the unconditional US funding is most likely to take over during the ensuing confusion. The Generals will start war at the northern front to play the narrow nationalist (Unification of Tegray Region) tune which will soon turn in to the TOMB of Ethiopia and the rise of Al – Shabab’s Ethiopian version.

Ethiopia is in a precarious situation which can only be reversed if the age old irrational mistrust among its stake holders is shelved once for the good of the country. My advice to Mele Zenawi is “*avoid tragic exit and aim to live amongst people in such a manner that if you die they weep over you and if you are alive they crave for your company.*”

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