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SILENCE NOT ALWAYS MEANS CONSENT

By Ahmed Khalif
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He, who is silent, it said, is taken to consent.

Somalia, my motherland, had been sinking down for over quarter of a century; it has no central government since 1991, the fall of Dictator Siyad Barre. Somalia has been splintered into clan based statelets; and to make matters worse, some of those statelets already are occupied militarily by Somalia's avowed enemies: Kenya and Ethiopia; others are ruled for them by their satraps.

Somalis are witnessing that their country being divided by their age old avowed enemies; they sadly watch what is transpiring in their homeland, but not clamorously reacting with it; and for that matter, their silence might be taken as consent. No, it is not. Somalis awakened now and they will defend their birthrights to their last drop of blood; they don't take aggression.

It's agony to watch your motherland slowly perishing before your eyes; it is unspeakably painful to see the future of your children getting gloomier by the day.



The most painful injury, it is said, is the self-inflicted one. The unbearable pain of their internecine war put Somalis in comatose state; but Kenya's underway flagrant infringement of the Somali borders helped them to regain their consciousness now.

It seems now that the stratagems of their enemy neighbors became clear to the Somalis; and they understood that the only winner of their civil wars is their enemy who, after keep pouring fuel on their fratricidal war, now reaping fruits of it; they now realized this grim actuality requires the Somalis to unite against their pitiless enemy; and thus henceforth fight back forcefully and vociferously.

To clarify a bit of the conundrum of Somalia's continuous lawlessness, we may sort its problems into two categories: ecdemics and endemics.

Ecdemic problems:

Even though traditionally untold, most of the troubles that bedeviled Somalia were brought about and perpetuated by Somalia's false friends; and the only faulty in fact the dilemma in the Somali part became their credulity. Call it folly if you will, of blindly believing in these *faux amis*: 'international and regional communities/agencies'.

While Somalis were busy killing each other in their civil war, their enemies were busy plotting how they would obliterate them. Somalia's historical hostile neighbors - Ethiopia and Kenya - kept fueling its civil war; they disingenuously befriended with all rivals while supplying them ammos. They feigned empathy for their next door neighbor; and even hosted reconciliation conferences for warring functions keep your friend close, but your enemy closer; each time handing them a Pandora's box to open. They, nonetheless, lie in wait for their victim be ripe for attack. Their intrigues, however, are more conspicuous now than any time before.

Ethiopian and Kenyan arms, under the disguise of the green helmet of AMISOM (African Mission in Somalia) a mélange of arms from Uganda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Ethiopia which forced themselves in after being initially



rejected for conflict of interest, are deep in the lands of Somalia, in the name of war of terror with pretext of fighting with Al Shabab. Kenya is carving out Somali territories both in the land and in the sea -for its grab while Ethiopia itself is eyeing on the bigger portion.

AMISOM forces have been in Somalia supposedly to fight Al Shabab out close to ten years, yet they achieved no tangible victory toward that goal. On the contrary, Al Shabab, a terrorist group whose job is to get rid the Somalis out of their Somalia: dead or alive have significantly increased the frequency and the casualties of its terror attacks, however; that clearly manifests how AMISOM had failed wittingly, as suspected and even confirmed by Ugandan soldier to fight out al-Shabab and bring law and order back in Somalia.

For the AMISOM soldiers though, Somalia is a *gold mine*. UN pays \$1,200 in salary plus lavish perks to the AMISOM soldier in Somalia, who used to get less than \$ 100 equivalent in their

countries; so the longer their stay in Somalia, the richer they are. It thus hardly surprises anybody except some naive Somalis that they, due to the human greediness, put their pay above the Al Shabab's fight. As a result probably they collude with Al Shabab to avoid casualties, and prolong their mission in Somalia as long as possible. It is believed in the Somalis, with reason, that AMISOM provisions Al Shabab with food and ammunition.

It is much easier for the UNISOM [soldiers to rape under age malnourished Somali girls](#) virtuous and comely, even after so many years of living in harsh conditions in the war torn country with impunity than fighting with the Al Shabab. An elderly, sick and even pregnant women who sought medical treatments in the AMISOM's field hospitals were allegedly raped.

Al Shabab too has no interest in fighting with the AMISOM, for its ultimate goal is to get rid the Somalis off the Somalia, dead or alive; a task they [al-Shabab] know will take long time. They therefore, also are happy with the stay of the AMISOM soldiers in Somalia, as it serves them an excuse for the execution of the cream, the most valuable members, of the Somali society, and yet for the perpetuation of the Somali sufferings. It is, thus, widely believed in the Somalis, that they [the AMISOM and the al-Shabab] are too conspiring to perpetuate Somalis sufferings, while each claims defending them from the other.

Al Shabab's actions are self-explanatory of who they are, Somalia's foe or friend? According to the 'to whose advantage is it?' (*cui bono*) principle, probable responsibility for act lies with one having something to gain, al-Shabab serves no interest of Somalia. This terrorist group not only massacres and terrorizes the Somalis but it also name smears them while claiming the responsibility of Kenya's or Ethiopia's false flag operations; giving plausibility to their unestablished claims of being attacked from Somalia and consequently giving them pretext for their wish to conquer and divide it, their erstwhile adversary neighbor which is now torn apart by civil war. It is the nature of every aggressor nation to claim that it is acting in to defense its borders and interest.

Al Shabab issues terror threats or claims the responsibility of terror incidents happen even in as far away countries as America; it is obvious that those threats are beyond their scope of operations but they still claim it to label all Somalis as terrorist to demonize them, dehumanize them, so that nobody sympathize them when they are trodden, if they are to fight for their rights. Isn't this fits well with the saying: "give a dog bad name and hung him"? That is why Al Shabab is believed to be foreign arms in disguise, acting at the behest of Somalia's enemies Kenya and Ethiopia.

While Al-Shabab in fulfilling its mission of emptying the Somalis out of their country - clears the bath for them, a massive influx of Somali-as-second-language speaking people, from the neighboring countries, specifically Ethiopia, are flooding the country and replacing the Somalis; all the Cushitic languages speakers - in disguise of being *maay*-speaking Somalis - and literally

anybody who can utter a word in Somali moved into Somalia, claiming that they themselves are the rightful owners of this newly found land: Somalia.

Furthermore, the United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR) receives and daily accepts refugee claimants from Ethiopia *en masse*, and gives them refugee status in Somalia, whereby UN Habitat builds a permanent houses for them; as a result there is a refugee city (known as IDPs, internal displaced peoples) beside every original Somali city equally in size. Ironically, the genuine Somali refugees are in badly crowded and restricted refugee camps - known as open prisons- in Kenya and Ethiopia, where they can't work nor go out; whereas refugee claimants from much better off countries are being accepted and helped reside in their country; Somalis suspect those claimants authenticity; it is believed that they and the al-Shabab are in one and work hand in hand in killing and replacing of the Somalis. This also has aroused suspicions that UN agencies have hidden agendas.

All 'aid agencies' - to call them aid agencies would be misnomer, 'agony agencies' should fit them more - in general including UN aid agencies are rapaciously self-seeking, self-perpetuating lords of poverty; and they act out of pure selfishness; metaphorically, they are comparable to maggots in a decaying carcass; they feed on the human miseries and prosper in the troubled countries; the more they are, the worsen the condition of that country.

Somalia is categorized by the 'aid agencies' as a hellhole: a high risk post and a Muslim country; that automatically qualifies their staff in Somalia for more than triple of their normal salaries plus lavish perks – including life insurance, weekend pay, security bodyguard, highly per diem; Somalia, therefore, is a **cash cow** for them; and in order to preserve the continuation of that cash they have to perpetuate it's problems – at higher cost for the Somalis, of course.

While everyone else AMISOM, UN, international community/partners, Al Shabab, and so on - is cashing in the Somalia's miseries, the naïve Somalis are cashing their chips in.

Endemic Problems:

Tribalism, for sure, is at the center of Somalia's dilemma; it is its two legged Frankenstein monster - the poverty and the illiteracy are the two pillars over which it stands. It is jokily said, tribalism is the ghost of Somalis' ancestors which forever haunts them.

Tribalism is the mother of Somalia's all past and present ills; and it might be the cause of its death if not averted. Somalis kill each other for tribalism; their enemies always exploit their tribal contentions to defeat them by playing one off against the other; therefore tribalism , can be said, is a concentric multi-layered curse over the Somalis.

Even though Somalia's civil war, in its early years, was on the tribal and clannish lines, nowadays there is no much hostility on that basis; yet full reconciliation could not be reached because of the foreign imposed *pseudo*-solutions the latest of which was the federalism from the Pandora's Box and the ineptitude of the Somalis.

Somalis, since 1991 (some say 1969), have been fleeing their country - from Dictator Siyad Barre; from warlords; and now from terrorist: Al Shabab - and in the most cases with their wealth and intellects, manpower; that exposed the country to deadly combination of brain, wealth and workforce drainage. A very little of them have since came back to the country; as a result, the cream of the Somali society is in far lands, or died in the high seas, or languishing in prison in foreign countries. Literally the people that owned this country have completely abandoned it; and those who remained in the country now are crippled either in physically or mentally. They are traumatized badly by the war; they can do nothing for themselves nor for the country.

‘Finder keeper, loser weeper’, says the children; reer xamarkuna: ‘wax *jid laga helay, jiidjiid ma leh*’. Or *ninkii seexdaa saciisu dabi dhalay* - to the late, goes the leftover. Unless Somali Diasporas the real owners of this land come back for it, Somalia is no man's land; and whoever comes first can claim it.

Soldiers and the nomads have done their part of destruction of Somalia. Although instrumental, mostly it is now the turn of the Somalia’s enlightened minority to take over and save their country from those destructive forces and start rebuilding it.

A Dark Cloud on the Horizon:

Somalia's political situation today resembles a lot with the Palestine's situation around early half of 1940s; God forbid, but I am afraid for Somalia; I am afraid that Al-Nakba of Somalia. Al-Nakba of Palestine was 1948 when they were displaced from their homeland and state of Israel was created is on the horizon.

Somalia’s historical enemies with Al-Shabab in cahoots want to internationalize Somalia’s problems. They want to advertise Somalia as security threat to the whole world; they plan, after everyone else accepts to leave Somalia alone, to insist that they cannot leave it alone - for its proximity to them; they plot to argue that they have to occupy it for their own security.

Somalia is at the crossroads; 2016 is very critical for it; the path on which it embarks in 2016 – its presidential election year and the end of its UN current road map - will decide its destiny: death or rebirth. If Somalis elect national *leader*, a unifying *one*, then unite after him, Somalia will born again; otherwise I am afraid that it may not exist past 2016 as sovereign nation; and even if it does, it will not, for sure, exist beyond 2020 if it stays on its current course.

If any Somali could not understand how being under foreign occupation looks like, they should seek a word of advice from Palestinians, Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, or Uyghurs in China; or should learn a lesson from their plight.

Liberty, it is said, is not sold well for all the gold. Somalis should reflect on the consequences of being under the yokes of foreign occupation; on losing their sovereignty; on losing their birth rights and freedom. It may be not too late yet, but Somalia, if not steered away, can anytime cross the Rubicon: the point of no return.

Somali solution:

Somalia is dying the proverbial death from a thousand injuries; and *only* Somali medics and medicines, sincere Somali solution, can save it; a genuine solution to Somalia's problem can only come from the Somalis.

Whatever remains of spilled milk, should be saved - *caano daatey, hambadoodaa la qabtaa*; Somalis should put their differences aside for later times - if they can't put their past behind once and for all - and unite all their efforts in words and deeds to save their soil and souls from extermination. In the meantime, a lesson should be drawn from the past and that lesson will not be allowed lost in time.

The enormous challenges that Somalia currently goes through call for *popular uprising*; it calls for bravery and courage of all Somali men and women, from all walks of life, to put their minds and muscles together to save their country; and to avoid the name 'Somali' living in infamy forever and thwart curses from future generations.

A healthy nation is analogous to the human anatomy; body parts are highly interdependent; the head leads the limbs and decides for them; whereby the limbs must serve the head and implement the decisions; some is true for the nation; thus a leader alone cannot rescue a nation, *a fortiori*, a nation without leader can't exist.

Furthermore, idiocy or ingenuity can be ascribed to someone according to what is in that person's head; same holds true for a nation: a nation can fail or succeed according to its leadership; like a fish, nation rots from the head.

The snake is killed by the head, says so a Somali proverb; so is the nation; Somalis can't afford their leader be selected for them by foreign leaders, let alone their known enemies; they ought to elect their leader and they must elect on leadership criteria, not on tribal lines or kin basis.

Today Somalia is proved itself to be a nation lacks both head and limbs: no leadership, nor followership; Somalis must put *right* national leader – a savior, far-sighted, perceptive, patriotic, courageous, conscientious and more importantly uniting figure - to the helm. Leadership is the core in any organization, yet followership is a vital too.

For the leader alone can't do that much, Somalis *should* form good followership and should fully stand behind their leader based on the rightness of their deeds but not on tribal lineage, if they ever wish to exist again - a *sine quo non* condition to their existence.

As for the leaders -*masuul* in Somali which means the one who is questioned - they have to know that they will be questioned about their responsibilities by The Allah: The Creator, and the people who entrusted them with it; they have to know that they will leave behind all the wealth they hoarded in this world, except only two meter cloth - the shroud- of plain cotton; they have

to know that as gluttony kills more men than the sword, their gluttonousness will eventually cost their lives.

Make no mistake that Somalia will survive or perish wholly; no discreet part, region, or 'regional state' will escape death apart; Somalis should learn to live as brothers or perish as fools, paraphrasing Martin Luther King's famous quote: "let us learn to live as brothers or perish as fools" - no third option.

Where there are foreign arms in Somalia, al-Shabab will be there; not because al-Shabab is defending Somalis from foreign occupation or *vice versa* as each claim, but they are in one, give cover to each other, in killing and displacing Somalis. al-Shabab thrives under foreign arms.

Somalia's future hinges on the Somalis themselves – Somali *xeer* and under *the famous tree* - and how unanimous and quickly they act; no foreign 'stake-holders' ever wish a way out for Somalia, nor would it solve if they do. The first thing Somalis must do after putting right leader, a savior, in the helm will be booting out all foreign arms, including al-Shabab of their country and solving their problems under their traditional tree within their means.

Silence must be broken. Somalis awake, and say **NO** to the yoke of foreign occupation, or your silence will be taken as consent.

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