

## Ethiopia, Kenya and the leadership vacuum. By Yilma Bekele

Somalia would take a long time to recover and start acting like a Nation. Kenya the sane among the group has entered the warring Nations club. South Sudan has become a playground for all its neighbors plus the UN, Chinese oil companies, IMF, NGO's, Evangelical Christians and Israeli agents to mention a few of the actors. Eritrea is on UN and Western embargo crosshairs to make it submit like the others and Yemen across the sea is becoming a training ground for all Arab Air Force pilots.

That is the madness surrounding our country. It is also sad but true that our country has its fingers in all the conflicts in the neighborhood. We have been playing with fire for a while.

Ethiopian troops have invaded Somalia on behalf of others and many battles were fought with Somalia militias until the TPLF Army was compelled to withdraw in a hurry.

Ethiopia has fought with Eritrea and over one hundred thousand died for a few square mile of barren land that still is as empty and irrelevant as before.

Ethiopian soldiers and security agents routinely enter Kenyan territory pursuing what they declare to be 'terrorist' and kill Ethiopian opposition members. Kenya looks away.

Ethiopian impartiality was questioned regarding South Sudan peace talks and moving the venue was requested by the South Sudan Government.

Ethiopia's regime made a deal with the recently departed Yemeni President to ignore International law and kidnap an Ethiopian opposition leader.

Ethiopia still entertains the indicted and wanted criminal Al Bashir of Sudan in our capital city in a deal to ignore the arrest warrant for not allowing Ethiopian opposition to operate from Sudan.

The Ethiopian government is one of the main causes of regional instability.

It is from the rouge regime in Addis Abeba our Kenyan cousins decided to learn a lesson regarding use of force to make a point. What made Kenyan leaders convinced that they would fare any better than their fellow Africans in getting militarily involved in Somalia's internal affairs is not clear yet.

What we do know is that Kenya invaded Somalia in 2011. Kenya has not been the same ever since. It should be considered a watershed moment in their history. The reasons for the invasion were mostly due to internal politics and if Kenya was a person it would be considered a testosterone fueled decision. Such acts by individuals are usually egotistical in nature and absolutely blind to reason.

Kenya is fortunate in not having enemies. Ever since independence Kenyan Army has been getting fat and lazy. The Army stayed out of politics and the politicians stayed out of war. That formula worked like a charm and Kenya was seen as a sea of tranquility among the storm prone neighborhood. The Army became restless, the politicians

became delusional. The war against terror by the West gave them the opportunity to go to places where no Kenyan has gone before. Suddenly Kenyan army was given new toys to play with, trained in the art of warfare and given a task to fight the new threat of terrorism.

The Kenyan politicians and the Kenyan people were happy when their Army crossed into Somalia. At last they felt the Kenyan Army was going to prove how strong their nation has become. The fact that war is a dirty business and the Somalis they are trying to bully are not a push over by any imagination did not occur to the leaders or their cheerleading citizens.

The fact that they witnessed what the kat fueled Somalis are capable of in their single encounter with the US Marines in Mogadishu, the fact that they were observers of the fate of the poor Peace Keeping Forces from Africa that were virtual prisoners in their barracks and being subjected to daily harassment, not to mention their ring side seat to watch the embarrassing retreat of the Ethiopian invading Army that barely crossed the border with the militias in hot pursuit did not seem to have impressed our Kenyan friends.

Today Kenya is paying the price for failed leadership. It is going to take a long time until a sane and able leader emerges that would question the failed policy and push reset the button. If experience is a lesson Kenya is looking at a very dismal future where the country's priorities would change and instability would be the norm. The leaders of Kenya have a lot to answer.

As Ethiopians we are familiar with the concept of failed leadership. We are living examples of a devastated people and country due to our inability to have acquired the power to choose a leaders. In Ethiopia the power of the gun is what determines the person in charge. We have been attracting very disturbed individuals that have caused us untold misery.

That is why it was disconcerting to hear that the current TPLF puppet Prime Minister of Ethiopia making some ill-advised comments regarding the situation in Yemen. Our illustrious underling claims that our country stands with the deposed and expelled Prime Minister and supports the bombing of Yemen by Saudi Arabia led Arab countries.

This is what is called self-inflicted wound. It is said there could be over one hundred thousand Ethiopians in Yemen. They are all political and economic refugees. Ethiopians have no reason to go to Yemen other than the need to get away from their country to start new. It is the dismal economic condition, the miserable ethnic situation created by TPLF that compels our young people to venture to Yemen wishing and hoping for a better tomorrow.

Today they are caught in a civil war situation. The Yemenis are too busy killing each other to pay attention to our people. Our people that are mostly young and possess rudimentary education at most find themselves in a terrifying and dangerous circumstance.

Such situation requires careful analysis with protection of ones citizens taking a center stage overriding all other political concerns. A head of state does not shoot of his mouth without considering the implications of such loose talk. A normal country with leadership that responds to the needs of the people would look at the situation carefully and pick a solution that would not put its citizens in harm's way.

The problem in Yemen did not start yesterday. It has been going on for over two months now. There was plenty of time for the Ethiopian government to consider removing its citizens from such a war zone. The current plight of our people is not new. We experienced the pain when Saudi Arabia disgracefully deported thousands of our citizens a year ago and our own government robbed them of their possessions when they arrived home.

It is dejavu time. Our regime is caught off guard and one month into the crisis they are talking about siding with one section of the warring faction and exposing our citizens to danger. We wish the puppet PM and his minders would learn a simple adage that goes 'lead, follow or get out of the way.' They as usual have decided to get on the way and put their Party's interest ahead of the general welfare of the Ethiopian nation.

I am hoping our Kenyan friends will wake up and realize the use of military force comes with unintended consequences. Today it was reported that Kenyan Air Force bombed to Somali targets. It is baby steps like this that turn into full-fledged war that Kenya cannot afford nor win.

One would think that they would look at their neighbor to the North that is in perpetual war and learn a lesson. If I were Uhuru kenyata I would nip this idiotic idea in the bud and withdraw my troops from Somalia and find someone to talk to in both in Northern Kenya and Somalia.

As for our esteemed policy makers in Ethiopia I ask you whose interest are you serving- Ethiopia or the TPLF Party? Why would the regime that purports to look after the interest of its people go around pledging alliance with one of the factions while our people are stranded there?

The only concern of the ethnic regime is staying in power and that goal compels them to pimp our sovereignty to the highest bidder. It is not that they are smart and powerful but rather it is because we still lack the courage to question authority. They hold elections where they choose the opposition party and the candidate and we look with surprise and continue to do business as usual. They sign an agreement with a foreign power without consultation or discussion and we fume but let it slide. They take sides in a civil war endangering the lives of our people and we grumble and move on.

Ethiopia is one of the few countries in the world where elections have become a farce. This is the fifth attempt and it is going to be condemned by many and celebrated by a few. The people are not part of the play yet. The one with the gun and the purse would dictate and the people will follow. We Ethiopians have been doing that for millennia. In Ethiopia we the citizens allow the inmates to run the asylum.

Kenya stands a better chance of coming out of this crisis hopefully without much damage. There is a real vibrant opposition and the media is much developed than in Ethiopia. When the euphoria of the feeble and ineffective air bombings dies down and the cost is known the Kenyan people will put an end to it. Uhuru Kenyata has been in office very short and the opposition is watching his every move. He has to grow fast in the office for Kenya's sake.

As an Ethiopian my advice to him is 'do not mess with the Somalis.' Let them sort out their clannish issues. Most of all do not listen to the foreigners whisper in your ear. They have their own interest and they can afford to make mistakes whereas in your case it causes death to thousands and unnecessary drag on the development of your country.

	<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>Kenya</b>
Population	96 million	45 Million
Life expectancy	60.7 years	63.5 years
Literacy	39%	87.4%
GDP per capita	\$1300	\$1800
Electricity production	4.92billion Kwh	7.33billion Kwh
Telephone Mobile	20.5 million	30.7million
Internet hosts	179	71,018
Internet users	447,300	3.996 million

<http://www.nation.co.ke/news/South-Sudan-wants-peace-talks-moved-to-Kenya/-/1056/2649672/-/lf2djw/-/index.html>

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136670/daniel-branch/why-kenya-invaded-somalia>