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The Real Desperadoes: Meles and Al-Bashir

By
Solomon Bakir

On May 1, 2009, Ethiopia's communications minister Bereket Simon reversed earlier claims that the government had foiled an attempted coup. Speaking to foreign journalists, Bereket denied that the suspects were part of a coup plot. He described those arrested as “desperadoes intent on creating havoc”.

Bereket Simon who make look Joseph Goebels, Hitler's propaganda minister, honest and truthful by comparison is the regime's perfect image of deceit, malice and moral depravity. Time and again, Bereket Simon, with his evil, neurotic and lethargic face, come rushing to the defense of any murder or mass execution the regime commits- trumpeting that the opposition or the innocent victims are to blame for the government's act. His claim would then be echoed by Aiga Forum and other tribal gangs whose tribal ritual is to drum up the lies louder than the atrocities committed.

Lie, permanent lie, is the hallmark of the Wayane regime and its chronic means of survival. Bereket Simon, the regime's patriarch of lies, is just the recycled image of the biggest monster in the country: Meles Zenawi who regards gun and jail as the only answers for the country's problems and feels confident and secured when he smells fear in his political adversaries and when he locks them up in jail.

The events portrayed from May 1 are not new to the Ethiopian public as they are routine tragedies the Meles regime commits every day, in many hidden ways, from the streets of Addis Ababa to the secret torture chambers in Kaliti, Gambela, Sidamo, Ogaden, Raya Quobo, Gondar, Ogaden, Wolega, etc. All around the country, the cries of our people are violently silenced but they are reaching us in drops making us live their lives.

In the meanwhile, the insecurity of Meles is mounting- not only from the gathering domestic and diaspora resistance but also from the growing political pressure of the international community. Unexpected intensification of the global pressure to lift the curtain of secrecy of the Swiss Banks where Meles and all other tyrants hide their theft, and the establishment of a permanent international court in the Hague are sending shudders to all global dictators. Scared that justice is waiting on him in the shade, Meles recently hosted Omar Al-Bashir, the Sudanese president for whom the Judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant on March 4, 2009 for counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity- making him the first sitting head of state ever indicted by ICC.

Al-Bashir, the already indicted war criminal, paid visit to his comrade-in-arms from April 22-April 24. According to the Sudan Tribune (April 23, 2009) *‘Ethiopia and Sudan concluded their two-day high level joint commission meeting by the signing a number of*

agreements, including trade exchange, the production of natural glue, and forest development and protection agreements; memorandum of understandings on quality and standard control, and human resource exchange, and principle of implementation on culture and tourism, youth and sports, health, higher level education and science research sectors'. The Tribune also reported that the agreements were signed by the Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Minister Seyoum Mesfin and Sudanese International Cooperation Minister Al-Tigani Salih Fidail; the Sudanese foreign minister Deng Alor, is in The Hague where he attends the oral pleadings of the Abyei arbitration court' The paper added that ' Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir have witnessed the signing ceremony'.

In the face of the ICC arrest warrant, world officials are avoiding to meet with Al-Bashir leave alone receive him on their territories -people do not like to be seen dealing with an indicted war criminal. But Meles, who is not less a criminal than Bashir, is trying to preempt his own indictment by glamorizing Bashir in Addis Ababa and seemingly defying the ICC arrest warrant. But, the truth is that both are panicking and both are trying to cling to their fading power a while longer by acting frantically in unison.

The alleged agreements signed in Addis are mere cover ups to hide their emotional disturbance for the bloody crimes they masterminded, the tribal warfare they spread and the new wave of terror they have launched on the our brothers and sisters living on the western border regions extending from Gambella to Humera. According the accounts of the Ethiopian Border Issue Committee the hardships, the injustices and the persecutions suffered by the farmers and their families in those border areas are too terrible a story to be told briefly. The Sudanese army with its semi-discipline of a criminal gang have been terrorizing the area for the last two years trying to reduce our people to crying and total passivity, and the treacherous Melese armed cadres have been active collaborators in this crime by driving thousands of Ethiopian farmers out of their farms and pastoral lands, and forcing them to march westward until they are completely out of the new Sudan border. This has sparked deadly clashes between the heroic peasants on one hand and the two looting armed forces on the other (the Border Committee last report). This situation could even get worse in the coming months as Sudanese Vice President Salva Kiir (himself a southern) warned, during his visit to Kenya on May 3, 2009, that the fragile north-south Sudanese deal is on the verge of collapse and renewed tension between the South and the North is fast raising that civil war could start any time soon and would easily spill to neighboring border regions (AP, May 3, 2009).

The two desperadoes, Al-Bashir and Meles, are responsible for all these crimes. Al-Bashir, who has been in power since 1989, is corrupt and swine, but Meles with his stronger and stinky odor of ethnicity is a curse on the African continent.

In the 1960's new African leaders made concerted efforts to curb and dilute the power of tribes and subordinate them to the greater cause of one nation building. In the 1990's, the great Mandella improved the effort of those pioneers by bringing together the Zulus, Pedis, Sothos, Tswans, Vendas, Xhosas, Koisans, Hotentoes, Indians, Africaans, etc.

into one people and created a vibrant democracy. In his famous defense case of April 20, 1964 at Pretoria Supreme Court, Mandella closed his statements as follows:

“ During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to the struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

Mandella lived up to these ideals and the whole world cheered. As a measure of his success and the remarkable distance he moved the country –watch the video of the Zuma’s inauguration on May 6 where the newly sworn President Zuma dropped down onto Mandella’s knees as a sign of reverence while tens of thousands of overjoyed people broke into spontaneous song and the military brass band broke into the anthem “God Bless Africa”.

But Meles is the curse of Africa. He and the so called revolutionary TPLF thugs resurrected apartheid and have put it into full operation in Ethiopia by partitioning the country into ethnic enclaves. They use the code name “ethnic federalism” not to liberate the other nationalities as they claim, but to control the other ethnic groups, implement the colonial divide and rule strategy, establish their ethnic tyranny and monopolize every aspect of life in the country. Tyranny is always cruel but there is no tyranny more debasing than ethnic rule as there is no surer way to inflict mankind with brute hatred than splitting it into ethnic groups. This is demonstrated in a grand scale in Yugoslavia, Iraq and in the never-ending Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Ethnicity as an ideology is repulsive to any human dignity as it appeals only to the chemistry of body and ancestry which is a primitive form of humanity and is a variant form of royal lineage. After men discovered science and political freedom this social form was progressively replaced by the highly-developed forms of organizations such as political parties (based on principles of political philosophy), professional and business associations (based on fields of interest), teacher, student or labor unions. But for an ethnic fanatic like Meles such associations that appeal to intellect, independent thinking and unity of people are threats. All he needs is blind loyalty and he knows that such loyalty easily comes from thugs who just can count back to the first digits of numbers.

Ethio-Sudan border issue is a dramatization of the betrayal of Meles to destroy, not Ethiopia as such (many foreign invaders have tried that several times and failed) but the idea of Ethiopia itself.

Once again the record of betrayal follows trails of Al- Bashir’s recent visit to Meles. As Sudan Tribune reports: “following the end of the joint meeting, president Bashir along with his delegations flew to the northern Tigray region to meet regional officials and also for a prayer at the historic AL-Negash mosque ...upon arrival at Mekelle’s ALULA ABA NEGA airport Al-Bashir was warmly welcomed by regional president Tsegay Berhe, state council members, religious leaders and community leaders.

In a dinner invitation at Mekelle's Axum hotel state president Tsegay Berhe said that the people and regional government of Tigray are proud and honored to host the Sudanese delegation. Tsegay added that "we in Tigray have exemplary relations with the eastern areas of Sudan particularly with Kassala and Gadarif states in promoting trade and people to people links."

The regional president also pledged to support the program of building infrastructure interconnection between the two countries to link the neighboring regions and to boost regional trade. "In this regard, the construction of roads linking the regional state of Tigray and the state of Gadarif and Kassala is already underway," he stressed.

While '*construction of roads linking the regional state of Tigray and the state of Gadarif and Kassala is already underway*', these two very states, Gedarif and Kassal, have been primarily responsible for stage-managing the atrocities committed by Al-Bashir on the border people – burning of farms, pillaging of property and forceful displacement of civilians in Quara and Armachoho, Metekel, Assosa and Gambela.

But all these people are not from the Tigray region and they are not of concern to Meles. According to Meles' ideology needs these are 'extraterrestrial' people destined to be exploited, corrupted, and to be made as scapegoats for any form of misery his own tribe suffered in the past. Calling members of his tribe the "Golden People" (compare this with that Hitler's "Pure Race"), his idea of development goes to one single region- to the region inhabited by his own tribe. Under Meles' rule, the Tigray region has spinned out of control. The region has become a state within the Ethiopian state (even the converse could be true) controlling over 60% of the Ethiopian's economy and urban and rural commercial real-estate property through a monstrous enterprise called EFFORT (Endowment Fund For Rehabilitation of Tigray.) This tribal enterprise has taken over every possible industry in the country ranging from manufacturing plants to the flea-markets of Merkato.

In addition, special rules apply to the Tigray region. For example, while 'chat' is banned in Tigray to protect the 'golden people', the Woyane regime generates one of the biggest sources of revenue by encouraging the rest of the Ethiopian population, especially the young people, to drug themselves out with chat. Second, education system is also special in Tigray where high school students are allowed to go to school up to 12th grade while the majority of students in the rest of the country are forced to drop out at the tenth grade and waste their lives in the slums of the cities. This parallels apartheid at its height in the 1950's.

But, what is more appalling is that while Al-Bashir's Sudan is moving from the west terrorizing our people Meles' Tigray region has been marching like a colonial power southward and westward committing untold crimes (press release of the Wolquit people) and grabbing the vast lands and pastoral areas of Humera, Wolquait, Tegede, Tselemet and Raya Quobo. This was what Nzi Germany did to the Polish people and what apartheid did to the Zulus and the Namibian people.

Indeed, Meles' rule has reached the ultimate climax of a tribal rule unseen in the modern African history. This monopoly of everything: political power, economic power, military power, real-estate power, etc. is a bubble waiting to burst any time soon, and the burden of fighting the appartied ideology and tribal tyranny falls primarily on Tigray intellectuals who should denounce, not only Meles and his clique, but the ideology embodied by him and the organization TPLF. The Tigray intellectuals should also work as field agents to protect the innocent peasants of Tigray from the influence of the corrupted tribal ideology, and with the full knowledge that when our country Ethiopia is allowed to work at the higher level of ideals—free from tribal, feudal, and cast tyrannies- harmony will set in and the achievement of one will be the material progress of everybody else.

This brings us full circle to where we started- that there is no difference between Al-Bashir and Meles in practice as in theory: both are brute dictators mistrusted and despised by their own population, and both attempt to con the international community by trying to make impression that the overwhelming majority of their population is on their side. But time is catching up with them. Like former Liberian President Charles Taylor and Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic Omar al-Bashir's destiny is to face justice soon, and there is mounting evidence documented by the US State Department and other humanitarian organizations that the next target of Luis Moreno Ocampo, The Special Prosecutor of ICC, will be Meles Zenawi. That makes the two tyrants, Al-Bashir and Meles, the real desperadoes, united by the mutual fear of unpredictable disaster that can descend upon them any morning.

Solomon Bakir
E:mail: solomonbakir@gmail.com