

Continued Human Tragedy in Sidama: State-Sponsored Terrorism of Meles Zenawi's Regime Becomes Unbearable

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The Criminal Cadres of Meles Zenawi's Regime Commit Religious and Cultural Genocide and Various other Atrocities on the Sidama people

The Sidama people suffered various forms of violence and repression since the EPRDF took power in 1991. The most brutal form of such violence was the massacre of over 70 innocent Sidama elders and youth during peaceful anti government demonstration in Awassa on May 24, 2002. Most of such violence against the Sidama people were carried out by the local puppet EPRDF administrators. Hailemariam Desalegn, the former President of the Southern Region (SNNPR), is one of such puppet EPRDF administrators who continually abuse the local people whom he is supposed to protect. This person carried out various forms of state sponsored criminal activities against the Sidama people.

Since his removal from SNNPR office and promotion to the Prime Minister's office in Addis Ababa, this person continued to use another puppet administrator of the Southern region known as Shiferaw Shiguxe and his EPRDF colleagues to continually and violently repress any democratic practices, freedom of speech and criticism against the ruling party and the regime.

On top of directly repressing any dissent within Sidama, Desalegn and his EPRDF colleagues deliberately instigate inter ethnic conflicts among the brotherly Kushitic nations in the South, notably the Sidama and their Oromo, and Wolayita brothers and sisters. This state sponsored interethnic violence among the sisterly southern nations led to loss of tens of human lives and massive damages to properties. The last years bloodshed in Wondogent district of Sidama led to loss of over 30 lives on both Sidama and Oromia sides. The recent state instigated conflicts between the Gujii living in Sidama and the Sidama people around Baleela district led to loss of over 15 lives on the Sidama side and similar numbers on the other side. Such state instigated conflicts between the Sidama people and other sisterly neighboring ethnic groups have continued unabated for the past 18 years.

The ultimate goal of the EPRDF regime in Sidama is uprooting the Sidama people from their city Awassa, and their land to incapacitate their potential to resist the colonizers, and to bury their aspiration for regional autonomy and liberation. The minority Tigray-Abyssinian regime continues to target the Sidama people because of their importance in the south in terms of the population size and economic potential. Sidama is the major producer of and supplier of coffee that earns nearly 60% of the country's export revenue.

As European colonial powers have done during the era of colonial expansion, Zenawi's regime uses interethnic conflict as a 'divide-and-rule' tactics to stay in power while the aforementioned down trodden brother nations are made to fight with each other for no fundamental reasons!

The Sidama Nation and their resistance against the Occupiers

The Kushitic Sidama nation with the population of over 5.1 million people is part of a broader Kushitic group that include Oromo, Ogadeni Somalis, Agew, Afar and Isa, Gedeo, Kambata, Hadiya and other smaller groups that inhabit the vast territory in southern, central, eastern and western parts of the country.

The history of Sidama formal and informal resistance to the Abyssinian colonial occupation dates back to the early 1890s. Their resistance movement (www.sidamanational-liberation.org) has shaken the foundation of the colonisers on various occasions although the nation failed to fully reclaim its sovereignty due to the military superiority of the occupiers who were provided ample weaponry by their European counterparts since the era of Scramble for Africa. The support of the West to the brutal Abyssinian regimes continued in different forms to this date.

Why Sidama is the focus of Attention in the southern Ethiopia

The fundamental reason why the Tigray- Abyssinian regime continues to target the Sidama region is due to its geopolitical and economic importance. The current Ethiopian regime blatantly defies its own constitution of ethnic self determination when it comes to the 45 Ethnic groups inhabiting the vast land in Southern Ethiopia. Other regions except the Southern region are formed on the basis of ethnic identity. However, the current Ethiopian regime does not bother to implement its pseudo "ethnic federalism" in the South because there are "so many backward smaller ethnic groups" in the region; according to the colonizers believes.

The Southern region is important for the EPRDF regime only in the following respects: first, use the region as an experiment of Ethiopian Unity to appease the hard-line Amhara opposition to pseudo ethnic federalism; second use the vast land mass and the population as bulwark against Oromo nationalism, and thirdly and finally exploit the abundant natural resources to industrialize the Tigray region.

The Sidama region perfectly serves the above three grand TPLF/EPRDF's objectives because (a) it is fairly developed compared to the other areas in the South, (b) its capital city, Awassa, is the biggest city in the region and convenient to control from Addis Ababa, and (c) Sidama is an economic hub of the Southern region and the country at large. Therefore, if the Sidama nation secures regional autonomy, the above objectives will be seriously compromised.

Therefore, successive Abyssinian rulers including Zenawi's regime strongly believe that crushing the political resistance of the Sidama nation for self determination is crucial for

the survival of the Abyssinian central government. Unfortunately, this belief is also shared by many Abyssinians within the country and in Diaspora regardless of their level of political consciousness.

Nominal Pseudo-Regional Representation is being replaced by the 100% Federal remote control

The nominal representation that Zenawi's regime claims to have bestowed on the regional ethnic groups is becoming utterly meaningless at present. In Sidama region for instances, those who decide about the Sidama affairs are virtually all non-Sidamas while the positions are still held by Sidama pariahs. The latter were handpicked by the EPRDF's regime on the basis of absolute ignorance or absolutely minimal socio-political consciousness.

Such Sidamas are naïve in their principal beliefs regarding freedom, democracy and human dignity. Their understanding, knowledge and perception revolves around their world of egocentrism and cowardliness instead of standing firm on basic principles on human and democratic rights of the Sidama nation so that their children can't inherit slavery.

Genuine Sidamas in this process are either obliged to remain away from regional, Zone and districts decision making in their own soil or became virtual slaves to serve the colonizers to sustain their lives.

Other majority Sidama nationals remain under constant fear, intimidation, insecurity and suffering ultra poverty that is caused by decades of neglect and socio-economic marginalization. Other Sidama nationals who utter a word against cruelty of colonizers and their loyalists are either made virtual prisoners, prisoners of conscious, tortured, made to disappear or silenced with death.

Desalegn is one of the key players who are assigned by Zenawi's Abyssinian regime to implement these criminal plans against the Sidama nation; bury Sidamas quest for regional autonomy; facilitate the expropriation of their resources and uproot Sidamas from their capital city and their land.

Haile-Mariam Desalegn and how he's transformed from cowardliness to Sadistic Satanism

As Meles's regime was strategically hand-picking surrogates from all ethnic groups that are under Abyssinian empire; Desalegn was incorporated with those who were handpicked and appointed to be a member of southern Ethiopian surrogates on behalf of his down-trodden, denigrated, subjugated and equally impoverished Wolayta nation.

Mr Desalegne was appointed by Meles's regime to divide Sidama clans and disintegrate their unity

When Desalegn was brought from Arbaminch (the capital of Gamo-Gofa) where he used to teach, in the late 1990's it was Zenawi's intentional plan for Desalegn to do his job in the south with particular focus on Sidama. After baptizing him with satanic ideology of hatred against the Sidama nation, PM Zenawi strictly ordered him to implement his policy of intimidation, uprooting the Sidamas from their city and land, dividing the Sidama nation in line with their clan with notable instigation of Hadicho clan (one of the clans within Sidama) so that they can fight with each other to be further weakened by division amongst themselves.

Desalegn and other specially assigned cadres recruited Sidamas from aforementioned Hadicho clan, and some other clans to take them for special trainings in Addis Ababa, Nazret and others cities on various occasions and further baptized them with the spirit of division among themselves so that the clans can claim that they are not part of the Sidaman nation - hence to claim their autonomy by establishing theoretically independent political entity. Central government -EPRDF cadres such as Bereket Simeon and Kassu Ilala also promoted the implementation of this divide and rule plans with Desalegn. Further ethnic subdivision of the Sidama nation while the already existing 45 ethnic groups in the South have been denied any rights proves the treacherous nature of the Abyssinian regime.

Although this implausible fabrication was planned to devastate Sidama resistance movement, it was however aborted by the far-sightedness of Sidama elders that took corrective measure before it went out of control although Abyssinians managed to establish a political party for Hadicho clan, which Zenawi's regime uses to date as one of his tools to incapacitate Sidamas.

When Desalegn was deputy president when Abate Kisho (the Sidama national) was the president, until he was removed for alleged corruption for which he was not involved, Desalegn was assigned by Zenawi's regime to spy on Abate Kisho.

Besides, Desalegn was scared of the Sidamas' aggressiveness in relation to their basic rights while Abate was a nominal regional president who pacified several EPRDF decisions. On various occasions, Abate kisho was ordered to oust Sidama's from their capital and relocate their Zone administration to others district towns within Sidama. Abate and other Sidamas rejected such plans although they were constrained by capacity and fear of reprisal which materialized with Abate Kisho's imprisonment with false allegations.

However, Abate and other Sidamas were determined to defend the interest of the Sidama people and kept passing such issues to the stakeholders- the Sidamas to decide on this matter as per the Zenawi's pseudo-constitution. No one dared to remove the Sidama people from their capital city and land during the stated period. Immediately after the removal of Abate Kisho, Melese Marimo and Shiferaw Shugute later have given away all the rights of Sidama nation and massacred over 70 innocent peaceful anti government demonstrators who opposed their decisions on may 24, 2002.

Desalegn continues to torture Sidamas on their soil as nominal Sidama representation wanes!

Immediately after Abate Kisho was arrested allegedly with the corruption of multi-million Birr, Desalegn is assigned to replace Abate Kisho as a puppet regional president for southern Ethiopia's amalgamated nations including his own Wolayta ethnic group- whose fate is entirely determined by the colonizers.

His appointment as a regional president was the turning point for the Sidama nation's tragedy. People of the Sidama origin started to be stopped and searched in their soil on daily bases by the security forces, police forces, military of the invaders. Speaking Sidamaamuafoo (Sidama language) became crime.

Desalegn with the leadership of federal criminals -under cover of southern regional representation continued to discharge his duties of incapacitating Sidamas. He publicly started implementing the policy of uprooting the Sidamas from their capital city, Hawassa (also known as Awassa) and its vicinity to give Sidama lands to his ethnic Wolayta's and others.

Desalegn also has got on his side Dr. Kassu Ilala, (Guaragie ethnic origin) the then Social affairs minister and special adviser to the PM- Meles Zenawi, to plot against Sidamas. Ilala also was behind the plan for uprooting the Sidamas from their city to give their lands to his ethnic Guragies whose business was booming in Sidama land.

Both cadres are also some of those who have planned and implemented the destruction of the only development institution, the Sidama Development Corporation (SDC) that was founded by the Sidama intellectuals and funded by international donors and was transformed into meaningful development activities in Sidama land. Later the Sidama intellectuals who formed this organization were obliged to flee the country to save their lives after the May 24, 2002's massacre of the Sidamas.

Both Desalegen and Kassu Ilala worked day and night with their loyalists including Shiferaw Shugute to witness a complete debacle of heroic Sidama resistance and to affirm their subservience to the rule of the colonizers.

Desalegn and Kassu Ilala with federal boss Bereket Simeon have also ordered the massacre of the Sidama and assassination of renown Sidama artist, 'Kefyalew' who mobilized thousands of Sidamas with his songs -against the colonial rule in the eve of Abyssinian millennium -almost two years ago. They continue to brutalize any Sidamas who are determined to stand and speak about their basic rights by killing them or imprisoning them with fabricated crimes. The majority Sidama intellectuals were made to flee the country.

The role of Desalegn in the May 24, 2002 Sidama massacre

When the massacre of the Sidama civilians took place on 24th of May 2002 Desalegn was the president of the Southern Ethiopia regional state (SNNPR). He chaired the meeting that premeditated how the massacre of the Sidama people has to take place on May 23, 2002 that comprised the following criminal cadres including;

1. **Bereket Simeon**, the then information minister and special adviser to PM
2. **Abadula Gamada**, an Oromo national and another pariah who was the then Defence head
3. **Melese Marimo**, Sidama cadre who was latter rewarded with ambassadorial position and to date Ethiopian ambassador to South Africa, and the then deputy president for southern Ethiopia.
4. **Abay Tsehay** , From federal PM's office
5. Others key regional and federal representatives including Galalcha Janje, Kebede Kanchula, Petros Woldesenbt (all of whom are Sidamas by birth), and others masterminded the massacre of the innocents and unarmed civilian demonstrators for which no one was held accountable to date.

Melese Marimo was ordered by Desalegn, Bereket and Abay Tsehay to warn the Sidamas on state-owned media the night before the massacre-by stating that if the Sidamas went on demonstrating even after they have fully exhausted all constitutional requirements (which they did) - that they would all be killed. Bereket, Desalegn and Abay Tsehay have also ordered the same Sidama pariah, (Melese Marimo) to deny the killings in the evening of the killings on the state-owned media after at least 70 civilians have been killed and their bodies left lying on the streets and few of the bodies were in the process of being devoured by hyenas.

Ever since the May 24, 2002 massacre of unarmed civilian Sidama demonstrators, there was no remorse from federal to the regional Zenawi's political apparatus for their criminal and sadistic act; and their uncivilized behavior that responded to Sidamas' civilized, non-violent and constitutional quest for regional autonomy with most abhorring and barbaric manner- that Meles's regime is deploying to this date in Sidama, Oromia, Ogaden Somalia and others occupied parts of Ethiopia- in front of the global community.

Desalegn has been appointed to higher authority post-Sidama massacre

Since Desalegn has been hand-picked by Zenawi's regime and made one of the main players in the southern Ethiopia's amalgamated nations and allowed to be key player in the main political apparatus; he has shown at-most loyalty to the Meles's criminal regime in sustaining Abyssinian dream in southern Ethiopian nations whose abundant resources enrich northern Abyssinian colonizers.

After successfully aborting Sidama's quest for regional autonomy on May 24, 2004 when he and his federal masters have ordered and caused the massacre of unarmed and non-violent civilians, Desalegn was rewarded with higher appointment- as a regional affairs head at ministerial level.

Once again he was given full authority to rule over Sidama and continue to order torture, detention and ousting of the Sidamas from their land and continue to relocate his Wolayita ethnic group, Guragies and others non-Sidamas from Diaspora as well as from the north by selling the lands of Sidama and pocketing the income for his and his masters while the Sidama people are considered second class citizens in their own soil.

Desalegn at present time and his role in Sidama

Desalegn is a federal Social affairs head and special adviser to Meles Zenawi with ministerial level- at present time. He is particularly assigned to focus on southern nations and to make the Sidama nation and its land prime target. As always he is strongly advised by PM to fully incapacitate the Sidama's potential and to dismantle as many social structures that are being used to mobilize the whole society against the aggressors as possible.

From Meles Zenawi's office, Desalegn is given full authority; thus does every bits of work that concerns Sidama and its land by using aforementioned remote-controlled surrogates such as Shiferaw Shugute and others. Hailemariam Desalegn plans, executes and makes sure that the job is successfully done in terms of marginalizing the Sidama from any meaningful political and social activities- and depriving them off their rights to basic needs including proper education, health services, religious and cultural rights and other development activities.

Sidama is the least developed region in the country. The people of the Sidama from all walks of life including intellectuals, farmers, university and high school students, businessmen and civil servants- are all made to feel totally powerless by day to day intimidation, harassment and moral torture; although there remains sense of indefatigability in claiming their basic rights when the right time comes sooner or later.

Desalegn's present role in instigating conflicts between Oromo and Sidama Nations

As a part of their heinous plan that aims at making sure that the Sidama doesn't question about regional autonomy anymore; the rulers of the colonial regime dig all possible holes where the Sidama's quest for regional autonomy and independence can be buried forever by using their remote controlled puppets from Meles Zenawi's office.

In addition to numerous attempts to undermine the Sidama people that have been deployed thus far, the recent plan includes instigating interethnic conflicts among the various sisterly neighboring nations in the South. In 2001, Desalegn and other cadres have instigated border conflicts between two brother nations, the Oromo and the Sidama- the nations that peacefully co-existed for several centuries.

They orchestrated border conflicts in and around Malga-Wondo (also known as Wondo-Genet) area where they mobilized both nations from either sides to claim that either

Sidamas are overtaking Oromo land or Oromos are overtaking Sidama land simply to instigate instability. Key players were pariahs such as Teferi Fikre one of puppet EPRDF cadres. They succeeded in causing unnecessary death of innocent people from both sides.

Since then, they worked hard to cause conflicts in all corners of the Sidama with Oromia- and have caused serious damage to the lives of peoples in both nations and their properties.

Recently, Desalegn's death squad, that is armed with heavy military machines and various forms of fire arms attempted to invade Sidama in the North west where Sidama and Oromo lived peacefully under the cover of Oromo farmers and Sidama internal conflicts. Although the Sidama people weren't ready to confront hundreds of military personnel that is mobilized to attack the Sidamas, there have been unnecessary casualties from both sides.

About roughly six-seven weeks ago, in this process, the Sidama farmers found on one of few of dead bodies an Identity cards including higher military commander who has been sent by the central government to eliminate Sidama from that part of their land to allegedly accuse and blame Oromos for such hideous action.

The same unnecessary killings are unfolding in all directions of Sidama land that is purely orchestrated and masterminded to cause endless hostility between both colonized brother nations.

Sometime after the May 24, 2002's Sidama massacre and post May 15, 2005 Ethiopian highly rigged election (where over 190 peaceful and unarmed demonstrators were massacred by the security forces in the capital alone in addition to hundreds of other casualties in regional cities and towns), Desalegn also organized his ethnic Wolayta people against the Sidama and armed them with heavy weapons so that they can take their share from Sidamaland in the west in addition to the land that is officially given to his people from Sidama capital Hawassa and its vicinity under the pretext of federally chartered cities.

The Wolayta armed personnel burnt about three hundred Sidama traditional houses and destroyed the livelihood of over 10,000 Sidama people in 2006.

Paradoxically, Desalegn and his federal masters have recently organized Wolayta ethnic groups to stand against Oromos whose relationship to Sidama remain far much stronger than that of their false plan. Their conspiracy is believed to be masterminded to saw endless poison to create eternal hostility between the two nations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The ultimate goal of successive Abyssinian regimes is to stay in power by crushing, torturing, exploiting the resources, and causing cultural and religious genocides against

the colonized peoples. Political autonomy for the nations conquered in the late 1880s and early 1990s is unthinkable. .

For the Abyssinian colonizers to be able to do so, they have to use traitor pariahs from the colonized nations under the pretext of representation (in case of Meles Zenawi's criminal regime) to avoid direct confrontation with the wider society from where they exploit the resources and subject them to eternal slavery and subjugation.

Therefore, Abyssinian Empire remains one of very few places on the planet where humanity is down-graded to such abhorring situation and people are, tortured, imprisoned, continually harassed and intimidated and treated like criminals for no crime; but for their views.

The international community, in particular Western super powers such as U.S.A and the EU -the UK and France need to re-think their approach towards Ethiopia's current dictatorial regime. They need to revisit their often illusive rhetoric about such issues as democracy, liberty, and respect for basic and fundamental rights for poor nations as their forefathers envisaged for their nations instead of sticking to their vested interests.

The western powers need to re-think their principle and change their hypocrisy with genuine support for the establishment of strong democratic civil institutions that lay bases for respect for human rights and there by paves ways for change and development and general socio-economic transformation in the country.

All aforementioned criminals including Abyssinian PM. Meles Zenawi must be brought to the International Criminal Courts (ICC) for possible charges against humanity that they are committing on daily bases in this neglected part of the world.

The nations whose fate are being decided by the oppressors must be able to say 'no!' to the dictatorial regime and show their untied actions against the occupiers until they see that their lands are being liberated instead of fighting with one another for nothing fundamental.

In particular, Oromo and Sidama peoples must re-think their actions and refrain themselves from engaging in such unnecessary conflicts that damages their lives and resources to further serve the purposes of the colonizers. They must reject the poisonous plans of conspirators and their masters. They have to deploy their egalitarian and most democratic systems, 'Gada' and 'Luwa' respectively to shame colonizers.

Equally, Oromo and Sidama Diaspora must tirelessly work towards increasing the awareness of their respective nations and bring about genuine understanding between two brother nations and encourage them to stand against the fundamental enemy that took away their liberty. Both peoples must work hand in hand for their total liberation from the oppressors.

Kambata Xoola July 25, 2009