

SHOULD THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PUT PRESSURE ON ETHIOPIA ON GOOD
GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES?

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Abstract

In today's Ethiopia, journalists, entrepreneurs, dissenters, religious leaders and citizens who are not members of the ruling party are victims of the regime's power abuse, politically motivated incarceration and extrajudicial killings. In Ethiopia, arbitrary detention, torture, political favoritism and gross human rights abuse is rampant. Yet, the current Ethiopian regime is the recipient of the lion's share of aid money from the United States and European Union countries. According to the USAID Economic Analysis and Data Services report, in 2010 alone the United States provided an estimated one billion dollars worth of economic and military aid to the Ethiopian regime. Currently, the Ethiopian regime is among the top ten countries to receive aid from the United States.

Even though the United States is generously providing hundreds of millions of dollars in economic and military aid annually, the aid has been continuously diverted to programs that prolong the lifespans of the regime and a good portion of it goes directly to the coffers of the regime's top leadership. Why is that the Ethiopian undemocratic and repressive regime getting both economic and military aid from the major global powers despite its gross human rights violation record?

SHOULD THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PUT PRESSURE ON ETHIOPIA ON GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES?

In Ethiopia over ninety million people are living in a landlocked country and under a brutally repressive regime. Gross human rights violation, lack of good governance, and corruption of the ruling regime is rampant. The current regime has failed to justly govern its people and has become notorious for its transgressions against basic human rights. In addition, thousands of political dissenters are suffering from a dreadful and despicable treatment in secret prison camps across the country. Freedom of expression, and freedom of the press is stifled and many journalists are forced to live in exile while those who chose to stay in the country are facing continuous harassment, imprisonment, torture, and systematic assassination. Despite the widespread human rights violation and lacks of good governance, the Ethiopian regime continues to receive significant amounts of economic and military aid from the United States, and member countries of the European Union. Given the political reality of Ethiopia, it is important that the United States reevaluate its policy to promote the democratization process and to ensure the protection of human rights and the rule of law in Ethiopia.

This paper will analyze the current political situation of Ethiopia and investigates the atrocities and gross human rights violations committed by the Tigrian People Liberation Front (TPLF) regime. The paper also reviews the timelines of major political events that took place during the transition period of the Mengistu's regime into the TPLF tyranny. In addition, the paper infers reasons on why the United States of America should reevaluate its current policies on Ethiopia.

According to the Office of the Historian website, the bilateral diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and the United States was established in 1903, when the then king of Ethiopia,

Menlik II and the US representative Robert Skinner signed a treaty of commerce and decided to exchange their representatives. Furthermore, the Ethiopian army took part in the Korean War and fought along its American counterparts against the North Koreans. Ethiopians generally have a warm-hearted perception of the United States and Ethiopia has been a reliable ally to the United States.

In 1953, the Ethiopian government agreed to allow the United States military to build the largest radio relay and communications monitoring station in the world called Kagnaw Communication Station on its territory. The Communication Station was instrumental in monitoring the Soviet radio communication throughout that region. In return, the United States provided military aid to equip and train the Ethiopian Army. The United States had employed about 4000 personnel in Kagnaw Communication Station where some established relationships and families with the locals. (Global Security.org)

Global Security.org further stated that the relationship between the two nations was interrupted when the Hailesilassie's Monarchy was overthrown by a group of military officers known as the Derg in 1974. The Derg executed a large number of high-ranking Hailesilassie's officials, which alarmed the U.S. government. The first significant shift in relations between the two countries, however, started in 1976 when the Derg delegation that was headed by Mengistu Hailmariam visited Moscow and signed an arms agreement with the Soviet Union. In 1977, the United States Secretary of State Cyrus Vance testified before a congressional committee and recommended a cessation of grant military aid to Ethiopia because of the Derg's human rights violation. The United States also informed the Derg its intent to close the Kagnaw Station. Assuming that all U.S. military aid would be eventually eliminated, the Derg reacted by closing U.S. military installations and giving U.S. personnel a week notice to leave the country. The

Derg also terminated the lease on Kagnew Station. Simply thereafter the relationship deteriorated and the Derg aligned with the Soviet Union.

In 1991, when the Colonel Mengistu's (Derg) government was on the verge of collapse, the U.S. government in general and the State Department in particular obtained a second chance to play a major role to transform Ethiopia into a vibrant and democratic state. However, that opportunity was missed when the two ethnic based groups, namely The Tigrayan Liberation Front (TPLF), The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the secessionist Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) were chosen to decide the future of Ethiopia and the tyrant Meles Zenawi was groomed to rule the nation. (New York Times, May 27, 1991).

When the former pseudo communist government of Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam (currently in exile in Harare, Zimbabwe) was overthrown by the current "parliamentarian democrats", former Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray proponents in 1991, some wrongly assumed that the worst days of Ethiopians would be behind them. Although the TPLF committed numerous human rights violations along the way to the imperium, including the massacres of other political party members such as the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party (EPRP). The international community, including the United States, failed to take appropriate actions to curb the crimes committed by the TPLF and chose to turn a blind eye and let them have a free pass to seize power.

For instance, when the Colonel Mengistu's government started to lose its iron-clad grip on power, various political groups attempted to establish an all inclusive transitional government. The role of the transitional government was narrowly tailored to regulate the nation's affairs until a national election takes place and a legitimate government assumes power. However, their efforts failed to bear fruit as it was scorned by senior U.S. diplomats such as Ambassador

Herman Cohen, the former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Ambassador Cohen was in a position where he could make a significant difference in the outcome of the entire process. Sadly though, the 1991 peace accord brokered by Ambassador Cohen marginalized all Ethiopian political parties of partaking in the platform that decided the future of all Ethiopians with the exceptions of the three ethnic based groups. (Eshete, November, 2007)

In 1991, Ambassador Herman Cohen brokered a power sharing deal between the TPLF, OLF, and EPLF that compromised the national interest of Ethiopia and enabled the defunct ruthless dictator, Meles Zenawi to emerge as the new ruler. Although, Mr. Cohen played a key role in changing the history of Ethiopia, it is important to highlight that the top diplomat's stance to champion the secession of Eritrea was contrary to the longstanding US foreign policy towards Ethiopia. Many Ethiopians condemned Mr. Cohen for endorsing the TPLF dictator to rule the country and for the missed opportunity to transition Ethiopia into a more democratic and open society. Although Mr. Cohen publicly stated the democratization process is a requisite for receiving US aid to Africa (New York Times, May 29, 1991), the regime in Ethiopia continues to be among the largest donor money recipients of US aid while exhibiting all of the undemocratic characteristics.

The current Ethiopian regime is repressive and detested by the majority of the people. Since the regime doesn't have a popular support, its survival depends on its brutal force and the support it receives from global powers in general and the U.S. in particular. Even though the United States is generously providing hundreds of millions of dollars in economic and military aid annually, the aid has been continuously diverted to programs that prolong the lifespans of the regime and a good portion of it goes directly to the coffers of the regime's top leadership. According to the USAID Economic Analysis and Data Services report, in 2010 alone the United

States provided and estimated one billion dollars worth of economic and military aid to the Ethiopian regime. The U.S. has a leverage of using its economic power to put pressure on the Ethiopian regime to bring about a feasible democratic change. However, arguably the U.S has failed to take adequate measures to promote and cultivate democratic idles up to this point. On the other hand, some become victims of the TPLF's regime incessant propaganda and manipulation that created a blurry picture of the political reality of the ancient nation. Thus, it is important to critically evaluate the economic, social and political situations of Ethiopia from the time the TPLF regime assumed power up to the present.

When the Mengistu's regime collapsed in 1991, Colonel Mengistu, the very person who orchestrated the government-run, Red Terror that killed thousands of innocent Ethiopians fled the country. The new rulers embarked to carry out their hidden agendas and proceeded with the secession of Eritrea, the Northern province of Ethiopia. Although they convened an assembly to establish an interim government, they selectively gathered only like-minded and satellite groups and barred prominent political parties and the people at large from being part of the political process. The honorable Professor Asrat Woldeyes was the only participant who voted no to the proposed secession of Eritrea, adopted by the assembly. He was put under arrest in 1994 for absurd allegations and prohibited from getting adequate medical care while in jail. Professor Woldeyes was intentionally left to die of an illness he contracted in prison. (theguardian)

TPLF used the entire political process to mislead and delude the international community. As if that was not bad enough, the interim government from its inception started to implement policies that had a significant impact on the nation's future without a legitimate mandate. The TPLF recognized the de facto government of Eritrea and dissolved the national army and the entire police force. In 1993, 42 senior Addis Ababa University academicians and

staff members were also dismissed on the basis of their political positions. (EthiopianStories.com)

Although it was obvious that the TPLF was created from the get-go to promote the objectives of the EPLF in affirming the secession of Eritrea, they deceptively tried to trick the entire world by disingenuously stating that they had no willingness to fire a single shot against the former province and they preferred to resolve the issue through a free, fair and transparent referendum. However, the TPLF government had many bargaining chips and several alternatives to handle the case should they have concerns about the national interest of Ethiopia. Sadly though, the TPLF chose to be the first government in the world to recognize the cessation of one of its own province, Eritrea in 1993; and as a result, Ethiopia became the most populous landlocked country in the horn of Africa.

It should be noted that the two liberation fronts, the TPLF and EPLF had a program of establishing “The Great Tigray-Tigrign” government (a government that comprises only Tigringa speaking people) by first assuring the secession of Eritrea and then dismantling the rest of Ethiopia so that there will be no future Ethiopian government that could ask the validity of the secession of Eritrea. When the two fronts seize power, the TPLF in Ethiopia and EPLF in Asmara (the capital of Eritrean province), both organized a bogus “referendum” for Eritrea without giving freedom to the inhabitants of Eritrea and involving the rest of Ethiopia in such a way that the Eritrean people were forced to choose between “slavery” and “freedom”.

In January, 1993, unarmed and peaceful university students who went out to the street to oppose the regime’s positions on the secession of Eritrea were gunned down in broad daylight. The former dictator, Zenawi, appeared on the national television and attempted to justify the killings of innocent protesters by saying that the riot police had no non-lethal riot control

weapons such as water cannons and tear gas to disperse the protesters and had no other alternatives other than using a live bullet to disperse them. He had no remorse or compassion for the lives that were taken away too soon and the many grieving families. There was no remorse or regret for the lives taken whatsoever. Although that was a significant indication on what the TPLF was all about, the international community once again failed to take measures to restrain the government from massacring peaceful demonstrators. Quite the contrary the dictator was hailed as one of young democratic African leaders by some and the peril and misery of Ethiopians continued for over two decades.

Similarly, once the TPLF settled into power and controlled all the resources of the nation, they decided to marginalize, and degrade the OLF, one of the first three parties that participated in the London conference brokered by Ambassador Cohen. The OLF assumed that the TPLF would respect the equality of all signatories of the new political framework and would have an equal voice in the fate of the nation's political process. However, the TPLF unleashed its hidden agenda to concentrate power within itself and attacked the OLF armed wing without leniency. In 1992, Many OLF members ended up surrendering and the top leadership was thrown in jail. The remaining OLF members were forced to leave the country. Thereafter, the TPLF and its satellite groups became the undisputed rulers of the nation. Once the TPLFs political and material need had been fulfilled, they started to justify the concentration of power by claiming that tens of thousands of their members sacrificed their lives and started to implement short sighted unsustainable policies.

As a result, two decades later, Mr. Cohen himself became one of the most vocal critics of the TPLF regime after staggering numbers of civilians were gunned down and thousands more perished in TPLF secret prisons. Mr. Cohen described the TPLF regime as an authoritarian at its

best and, totalitarian at worst. During his brief interview with the Ethiopian Satellite Television, Mr. Cohen openly criticized the TPLF and its former leader Meles Zenawi for their violation of human rights and lack of transparency. However, he defended his involvement by stating that his role in their rise to power was trying to stop the war between the warring groups and to restore peace.

To assure its hegemonic rule and ultimately divide Ethiopians into smaller and powerless entities, the ruling party reorganized the political structure of Ethiopia based on ethnic lines. Until the advent of TPLF, Ethiopians lived in harmony for thousands of years based on administrative geographical regions with each citizen having the right to settle and pursue his/her livelihood in a region of his/her choice. TPLF redrew the Ethiopia political landscape based on ethnic lines with each ethnic enclave, having the right to secede and declare its independence from Ethiopia. This reveals the devious plot of the TPLF to weaken and when convenient to dismantle the country to serve the “Tigray-Tigrign” agenda of the TPLF and EPLF.

To accomplish its long standing agenda of weakening as well as dismantling the country, the ruling regime trains, finances and openly coerces different groups to organize along ethnic lines and advocates hatred and division to incite violence among various ethnic groups. The regime spends tax payer’s money to raise monuments that intend to remind people the scars of past misdeeds. Although Ethiopia is home to over eighty different ethnic groups, most of the key government positions are occupied by TPLF party loyalists and individuals of its own ethnic group. Political favoritism and unethical practices of the ruling TPLF bureaucratic machine has become the norm in every government institution.

In addition, almost all of the country's security apparatus and the entire senior military positions are also held and controlled exclusively by the Tigray ethnic group, where the former

dictator, Meles Zenawi, was from. Military Officers from other ethnic groups are limited to holding only lower roles of responsibilities and they are at strict scrutiny at all times. The economic disparity is astronomical. While party loyalists are prospering the majority of the people barely afford to eat a decent meal a day. The national resources are entirely controlled by the TPLF and its affiliate financial arms such as the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT) considered by many to be the richest organization in the country. Embezzlement, corruption, and mismanagement have become a norm in everyday life. It is almost impossible to get any public service from any government office without paying a bribe to the TPLF bureaucrats, who are inevitably mostly party loyalists.

The TPLF targets those who refused to align themselves with its political platform and instigates systematic massacres on selected groups. The Amharas (the second largest ethnic group in the nation) were thrown from cliffs and women and children slaughtered in cold blood by TPLF henchmen. Because most of Ethiopians with the exceptions of the TPLF and the EPLF members, were forced to disarm and surrender their firearms, they were helpless and incapable to fight back and repel those who attacked and murdered their loved ones. The TPLF public relations gimmick has deceived the international community and thus the outcry of the people was ignored.

From its inception the TPLF had no intent to peacefully settle political differences with any of its opponents. TPLF handled political differences by waging war against each and every political group that differences with it. In fact, in today's Ethiopia, a legitimate peaceful opposition to the government would be considered a security threat punishable by prison terms. Opposition political party members, independent journalist, and civil right activists being prime targets of the TPLF have been sent to prison for fabricated charges. At times the victims can

disappear indefinitely. It is important to mention that the EPRP members that have been kidnapped and imprisoned by the TPLF forces over two decades ago have been put incommunicado and their whereabouts has not been known up to now.

Although the TPLFs constitution clearly states the separation of state and religion, the regime openly interferes in religious affairs. In 1991, when the TPLF assumed power, it removed the legitimate head of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and forced him to leave the country and replaced him with their own choice of one from the Tigray ethnic group. The legitimate Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (a church of over 40% of the population), His Holiness Abune Merkorios resides in the United States. As a result of the TPLF's interference, currently there are two different Ethiopian Orthodox Church Synods. While the unlawful TPLF backed Synod is based within Ethiopia, the widely recognized and legitimate Synod is in exile awaiting for righteousness and fair justice. The reconciliation effort conducted by members of both Synods has failed to accomplish its objective due to the regime's interference.

The TPLF continues interfering with religious matters in violation of its own constitution and attempts to undermine the Ethiopian Muslims. Another example of TPLF's interference was grossly exposed when, the TPLF promoted a new Islamic sect known as Al Ahebash and forcibly attempted to impose their version of doctrine on the majority of Muslim population. When Muslims throughout the country opposed the unlawful acts of the regime, TPLF started to harass, imprison and using scare tactics to terrorize dissenters. The regime also tried to use its draconian terror law against Muslims that opposes the violation of their rights. Unashamedly, TPLF officials attempted to establish a bogus link between global terror and peaceful oppositions of Ethiopian Muslims. Muslim leaders that have been elected by the Muslim community to discuss and resolve differences with the regime ended up in jail for invented allegations.

Yet, in 1994 the TPLF successfully managed to fool the international community by ratifying a constitution that resembles most of the democratic states with one single major difference. Article 39 of the constitution unequivocally recognizes the power of regions to secede from the union should they meet the “prerequisite”. The constitution was ratified by like-minded political groups while Independent scholars, opposition parties, and the elders were barred from the entire process. Therefore the TPLF constitution cannot be assumed as an equally abiding document for all the people. Article 39 of the TPLF constitution is a clear indication on how the TPLF was planning to rule the country and intended to disintegrate the nation should things not go in its favor. It’s very important to highlight that the TPLF as an organization was formed to establish an independent Tigray separate from the rest of Ethiopia.

The current divide and conquer political system is intended to shatter the equal and cordial relationship that existed between Ethiopia’s various ethnic groups. The mutually shared values and long standing commonalities cemented among Ethiopians for thousands of years have not been broken by mistrust, hatred or lack of confidence concocted and fomented by the regime. The regime continued to be above the law by implementing the cruel terrorism law that was designed to silence each and every dissenter. Bloggers are in jail and colleges and universities have become an ideological battleground; Students and professors are under permanent surveillance by the TPLF securities and cadres.

Moreover, when the TPLF failed to prolong its wicked relations with the EPLF for reasons which have not been disclosed to this day, they unashamedly recruited back former members of the armed forces and pledged to compensate them unpaid wages and assured them that they will give them the opportunity to serve the country they loved dearly. Yet, the TPLF fooled everyone and opened a full-scale war against its former ally, the EPLF. Within a very

short period, over one hundred thousand lives were lost from both sides. (Global Issues) The TPLF put the former military members in the front line to use them as cannon fodder. It also had planned to eliminate them so that they would not pose any future threat to the regime.

Moreover, the defunct prime minister, Zenawi ordered the evictions and expulsions of Eritrean nationals from their homes and eventually deported them back to Eritrea. When he was asked about why he had ordered to deport innocent Eritreans including women and children, he claimed that his government reserves the right to expel anyone from the country, even for reasons that it doesn't like the color of their eyes. It is crucial to remember that his own mother was not only from Eritrea but also she casted her vote for the independence of Eritrea. Since there was no rule of law and those who run the government didn't care to abide by the very constitution, they ratified; the prime minister's mother was not affected by the mass eviction, and much later died of natural causes.

Today, Ethiopians are ruled and subjugated by home grown criminals whose preoccupation is the enrichment of its members. High level corruption and unfair distribution of the national wealth coupled with staggering inflation are causing unbearable living condition throughout the country. The number of internally displaced and homeless people is growing at an alarming rate. Recent studies indicated that in Addis Ababa (the capital city of Ethiopia) alone, there are over one hundred fifty thousand street children. (IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis) Ethiopians irrespective of their gender are also leaving the country in alarming rates. The regime's officials are indirectly involved in human trafficking. Ethiopian domestic workers in the Middle East continue to suffer from brutal employers. Young Ethiopian girls are forced to sell their bodies to make a living exposing themselves to various sexually transmitted diseases including the deadly HIV aids.

Although poverty is widespread in Ethiopia and the unemployment rate is sky-high, the regime continued to enumerate double digit economic growth. Inflation and shortage of basic necessities are the daily challenges of every household. Civil servants are forced to pay contributions to the TPLF projects. Public services are inadequate and professionals including medical doctors are leaving the country. Public hospitals don't have the necessary supplies to carry out their duties. If the Ethiopian economy is so vibrant, why are Ethiopians leaving the country on a bigger scale?

In Ethiopia, every political, social, and economic decision is made entirely by the executive body of the ruling TPLF group. The judicial and legislative body of the regime is deliberately incapacitated and is exclusively filled by ruling party members. The idea of check and balance of the federal government activities is too alien and nonexistent. The current ruling party has ruled the country for the last twenty-four years and does not show any indication to willingly relinquish power any time soon. The election process that has been conducted every five years does nothing other than legitimizing the ruling regime to stay in power. It is worth noting that the so called "Election Commission Board" is and has been hand-picked by the TPLF ruling elite. Freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, and most of the unalienable rights taken for granted in most democratic countries are suppressed.

In today's Ethiopia, journalists, entrepreneurs, dissenters, religious leaders and citizens who are not members of the ruling party are victims of power abuse, and gross human rights violation. The severity of power abuse by those who hold public offices and assumed to serve the people, includes and not limited to that of arbitrary detention, torture, and an extended jail time without due to the process of law. Although the TPLF constitution clearly states that no one will stay behind bars more than forty eight hours without a court's ruling, the regime constantly

violates its own rules as it sees it fit. Judges at the local and federal level are appointed by the ruling party. Nevertheless, the TPLF cites its constitution to make allegations against anyone who oppose the repressive system of government. Independent journalists who make ethical reports ended up in jail for allegations of terrorism. Because of the regime's continuous harassment and improper applications of the terrorism laws against journalists, the independent media is diminishing to the level of non existence. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) 2014 report, Ethiopia is among the first ten countries that are identified as the world's worst jailers of Journalists. Ethiopia is also identified among the first ten most censored countries by the CPJ.

In line with its Marxist-Leninist ideology, the ruling party (TPLF) declared that all land, rural and urban, belongs to the government. Following this ideology the TPLF evicts and confiscates land from poor urban dwellers under the false premise of modernizing cities without adequate compensation. Citizens are getting uprooted from their ancestral land and forced to live in places where infrastructure such as roads, electric power and water lines are not provided. The displaced are also unable to make a living since they are far away from the city centers where they buy and sell merchandise. When they are unable to provide the basic necessities for their families, their school age children are forced to stop attending school, and this will in turn have a long term effect on the well being of the entire Ethiopian society.

Those who are lucky enough and manage to obtain a college level education have to overcome the regimes subversion and paranoia. The regime consistently under funds the schools and colleges and shortages of school supplies are routine. Teachers and college professors are under constant pressure from the regime and academic freedom on college campuses and educational institutions has become nonexistent. The regime intentionally instigates animosity

between students and rewards those students who spy on their peers and professors. Due to the fact that the regime doesn't use the merit system to recruit qualified government employees including teachers, unqualified party loyalists are presiding over school instruction across the country.

Although the Ethiopian school system has been criticized for its deficiencies, the regime denies that such allegations as baseless and unfounded, and unashamedly lies about the ineffective school systems. However, almost none of the TPLF inner circles are interested to neither take classes from schools within the country themselves, nor send their children to the schools they are talking very highly of. In fact, almost all of the TPLF leaders starting from the existing prime minister are sending their children overseas, mainly to the US, Europe, and in some cases to China. It will be proper to ask how they afford to send their children to prestigious schools in Europe and the United States when their officials monthly salaries don't amount their expenditure. It is equally important to mention that almost all scholarship opportunities are exclusively reserved to the party loyalists, and family members of those who are in power.

When the TPLF came to power, most of its leadership was high school and college dropouts. However, they realized that they have to justify their competence to hold the respective offices they run under. Once again, they implemented a street-smart strategy and started to attend distant learning courses from bogus universities and colleges. A recent investigative report by addisvoice.com unveils that not only the TPLF officials, but also college professors recruited by the TPLF's political favoritism were dishonest about their academic credentials. The most recent deceit was that of the speaker of TPLF controlled house of representatives, Aba Dula Gemedo. The speaker claimed to obtain various degrees from a nonexistent university in China and non

accredited private university based in the United States known as Century University. (addisvoice.com)

Free and fair elections are alien in practice, even though they expertly talk about it to disguise and mislead the international community about their real nature. The election board that oversees the election process are on the government payroll and they are known party loyalists. The election board is simply created by the TPLF for the sole purposes of justifying to hold on to power. In the 2005 election the TPLF was defeated at the ballot box and lost the election. Nevertheless, the TPLF imprisoned the elected leaders and killed over two hundred unarmed peaceful protesters and refused to give up power. The independent investigative group that has been set up to investigate the regime's violence has become a victim of constant pressure to make a fraudulent report. Those who refused to cooperate with the TPLF were threatened and ended up leaving the country. It is important to mention that there is only one opposition party member in the so called "house of representatives" of over five hundred TPLF and its satellite groups.

In Ethiopia, indigenous tribes are under the continuous displacement from their homes and fertile homelands. The TPLF is displacing natives from their ancestral land and depriving them from their small-scale farming, grazing, and fishing and moving them to areas not suitable to maintain their lifestyle and their land being sold to the closest associates of the regime and any higher bidder of foreign investors. Under the current regime, the Ethiopian fertile land is leased for the period of up to ninety nine years for the fraction of what it is worth. The money will not see daylight and directly go to the foreign accounts of the TPLF leadership personal coffers. According to the Oakland Institute's extensive studies, hundreds of thousands of indigenous people has been forcibly displaced from their land and those who refused to comply were

subjected to arbitrary beating, and arrest. The Institute classifies the state sponsored forced displacement as violation of human rights. (Oakland Institute)

Furthermore, the institutions crucial to the establishment of democratic systems are none existent in Ethiopia. State and federal court justices are known turncoat politicians. The courts are created to make politically motivated rulings to favor the regime. A Justice's tenure is directly related to the political convictions they pledge to benefit the TPLF. In the very few instances that the court's ruling contradicts the interest of the regime, the TPLF violates and disregards the court's power in violation of its own constitution. Political prisoners that have been found innocent by the court were thrown back to jail despite their innocence. For instance, activist Abera Yemaneb was found innocent by the court contrary to the regime's baseless allegations; however, he ended up incarcerated for over twenty years for a crime he didn't commit.

In addition, Independent websites that are critical of the regime's human rights abuses are completely blocked. Similarly, independent radio stations are also jammed by the government controlled Telecommunication Authority. TPLF has invested tremendously to block all independent media from reaching out to the public. The regime censors and wiretaps personal communications of people. Furthermore, the TPLF continuously attempts to hack email accounts of Ethiopian political activists and journalists who are living abroad.

In Ethiopia, artists and performers are also living under strict scrutiny. Performers are not allowed to engage in any activity presumed critical of the regime. In reality, while those who have sold their souls and choose to live disgracefully are receiving various privileges and are lavishly rewarded, while those who refuse to serve the regime suffer severe consequences. For instance, one of the legendary country folk singer, Fasil Demoz who is currently living in the

United States had been brutally beaten and miraculously survived a brazen attack of the regime's henchmen. Demoz was viciously attacked because of his widely loved song "Aresut" that illustrates the economic disparity in the country. Because of the regimes unjust exercise of power, artists are forced to leave the country in great numbers.

Independent labor unions, such as the teachers and the journalist union had been consistently targeted by the TPLF. The regime created illegitimate rival unions to replace the popular and legitimate organizations with their own choice. In addition, in 1996 the regime imprisoned the legitimate union leaders such as Dr. Taye Woldesemayate for a fabricated and absurd allegations. The regime tirelessly applies all illegitimate methods and coercion to subdue the legally elected representatives. Despite the global outcry the regime crippled and effectively dissolved the legitimately formed unions. As a result, the union leaders are forced to leave the country and seek refuge in other countries. (EthiopianStories.com)

Because Ethiopians are not optimistic about the future of their country and they are so unhappy about the political circumstances, they are leaving the country in huge numbers. At times they take a huge risk and perish at the hands of cruel smugglers where women are sexually abused and young men get killed for their body organs. Many lose their lives while trying to cross the Mediterranean sea to make it to Europe. The human traffickers use unsafe boats to smuggle them into Europe and the Middle East and often ended up capsized on the way. For instance, in December 2014, a boat used by human traffickers capsized in the West part of Yemen and seventy of the victims were Ethiopians. According to the Algezzera America December 8,2014 report, the boat that has been used by human traffickers was capsized in the Red Sea, off the coast of Yemen due to a rough weather. In addition the report further states that tens of thousands of migrants use unsafe boats seeking a better life in Europe and other parts of

the world. The Algezzera America report also states that in March, 2014 alone, the Italian Navy rescued over four thousand of migrants from unsafe boats.

In 2013, Ethiopian immigrants in Saudi Arabia were rounded up and brutalized by vigilantes and lawless criminals. Ethiopian men were beaten inhumanely and women reported gang raped. Ethiopian immigrants were dragged out from their homes and killed by callous mobs. Although the TPLF regime was fully aware of the danger Ethiopian immigrants were about to face, it failed to take adequate measures to rescue their safety and intentionally waited until the crackdown starts. While the immigrants were victimized and Ethiopians worldwide call for immediate actions to stop the brutality, the sarcastic TPLF's minister of foreign affairs kept posting useless information and phone numbers in social media instead of executing a meaningful exit strategy to rescue those at risk. To make things worse and painful, the TPLF regime prohibited Ethiopians from rallying around Addis Ababa and other cities against the mob killings that took place in Saudi Arabia. Those who risked their own safety to become a voice to the voiceless and staged a peaceful demonstration in the streets of Addis Ababa were brutally beaten and incarcerated by the TPLF security forces. In addition, in 2015, twenty-nine Ethiopians were beheaded by the Libyan branch barbaric Islamic State terrorist group. While the recorded video of the brazen act was circulating throughout the world, and the news media was covered in major news outlets, the TPLF regime officially announced that it was still attempting to verify the victim's identity and failed to make any stern statement leave alone to take any appropriate measure in condemning the actions of the terror group. Although Yemen is notorious for being a torture chamber and a death bed for immigrants, both the TPLF crooks and the self righteous international organizations has disregarded the misery of Ethiopians and other unfortunate immigrants.

Yet, the current ruling ethnocentric regime of Ethiopia receives the lion's share of aid money from the U.S. and other European countries. Why is that the Ethiopian ruling undemocratic and repressive regime getting monetary aid from major global powers, including the United States despite its gross human right violation record? This is a question that is puzzling the majority of Ethiopians who are making intensive efforts to extricate themselves from the quagmire they are into.

Ethiopia has endured the precarious political volatility, civil war, clashes of ideologies, and aggressions of its neighbor, Somalia. Over two generations of Ethiopians have suffered enormously and their lives neglected by the global community. In the 1970s the Western world supported the aggressor, Somalia to counter the Soviet's proxy, the Mengistu regime. Although Mengistu is long gone, for over two decades now, Ethiopians are still suffering from a corrupt and repressive regime. Although Mengistu was eventually deposed, he was replaced by people who have similar mannerism and brutality. The difference between the two regimes is that the former says and does everything it believed openly while the latter does discreetly and in a sophisticated manner in order to conceal their evil deeds.

The TPLF regime is banking to benefit on the war waged against the global terrorist network. The regime doesn't have legitimate power since it has lost the election in 2005. The only reason the TPLF remains in power is because it controls the army and the security forces. The economic development the TPLF infamously boasts about is not benefiting the people and wealth is unevenly distributed. Most importantly, there is no fair business competition in Ethiopia; those who are party loyalists are allowed to break regulations and import merchandise without paying appropriate taxes and they sell those merchandises much cheaper than ordinary

business owners. Many from the business community are forced to be bankrupt because of unfair business practices.

TPLF cannot be a reliable partner to the United States. It is safe to say that the TPLF is accustomed in forging alliances with any group to promote its party's interest. The TPLF used to idolize the Albanian tyrant, Enver Hoxha to later abandon the mossy philosophy without further explanation. The alliance between the TPLF and its former staunch ally and mentor, EPLF ended up in a disastrous and costly war. Currently the TPLF is juggling between China and the rest of the world to benefit from both sides. Most importantly, there are unconfirmed reports that speculates that the TPLF is indirectly supplying the Al-Qaeda affiliated Somalian Al Shebab to continue receiving monetary and military aid from the rest of the world and the United States. A prominent Kenyan businessman, Jacob Juma stated his concerns about the secret cooperation between Al Shabab terrorist groups and the Ethiopian regime. Mr. Juma questioned on why Al Shabab never struck Ethiopia despite Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia and its continuous military intervention in that failed state; while Kenyans have suffered numerous attacks by the terror group. In addition, Mr. Juma recommends to the Kenyan government to investigate the matter with regional and global stakeholders. Although the businessman's claim seems not to be substantiated with a concrete evidence, it is impossible to remove the benefit of the doubt given the TPLF's reckless and self serving nature. (quatero.net)

In conclusion, Ethiopia has been a reliable ally to the United States and the Ethiopian people generally has a warm-hearted perception of the U.S. of America. The Current bilateral relationship between the two nations, however, is not benefiting most of the Ethiopian people with the exceptions of the ruling class. Even though the United States is generously providing hundreds of millions of dollars in economic and military aid annually, the aid has been

persistently diverted to programs that prolong the lifespans of the regime and a good portion of it goes directly to the coffers of the regime's top leadership. According to the USAID Economic Analysis and Data Services report, in 2010 alone the United States provided and estimated one billion dollars worth of economic and military aid to the Ethiopian regime. Currently, the Ethiopian regime is among the top ten countries to receive aid from the United States. Nonetheless, the Ethiopians continue to suffer from the ruling group high levels of corruption and embezzlement. The TPLF has been suppressing the people for the last twenty-four years and shows no sign to cease power any time soon. Yet, the TPLF oppressive regime continues to receive significant economic and military aid from the United States and member countries of the European union. It would be proper for the United States to reevaluate its policy on Ethiopia and put pressure on the regime for human dignity, equality and the rule of law. The United States can attach strings to its economic aid that would force the regime to respect human rights of its citizens. It would be also in the best interest of the two sisterly countries to strengthen ties with a democratically elected and broad based future Ethiopian government.

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