

## **Meles Zenawi: a Smartest Dictator and Spoilt Child of Africa,**

**September 26, 2004; By Denboba Kiya**

### **I. Meles being nominated as a member of Mr Blair's Commission for Africa, Is this morally justifiable?**

It was February 26, 2004 that the British PM Tony Blair announced the establishment of the 'Blair's African Commission' that comprises politicians and opinion formers from both Africa and developed world. The over all objective of the commission according to PM Tony Blair is a comprehensive assessment of a situation in Africa by taking a fresh look at African past, present and future. One of the cores of this theme is good governance, in another word, human rights respect and establishment of democratic system. The nominees are; UK PM Tony Blair, Campaigner Bob Geldof, Ethiopian PM Meles Zenawi, South African Finance Minister Trevor Manuel and the UK chancellor Gordon Brown.

This is undoubtedly blessed mission that emanates out of genuineness and humanity. Any one who reads this news and understands its core value gets inspired by this far-sighted vision of Tony Blair to support deprived nations of forgotten African continent for decades. Many human rights activists thrilled and applauded for Mr Blair's blessed idea. It is humane and morally acceptable value of humanity. However, equally, it would be unacceptable to see some people who themselves cause an unprecedented havoc to their own nations in such group of people who are really determined to show a tangible progress without prejudice and negative intent. The presence of such malicious people with hidden face would totally compromises the noble objective of this blessed mission and undermines its credibility.

For any person who is in position to lead and direct given country's nationalities, it's vital to comply with the accepted values and morals without intentionally crushing basic rights of his fellow citizens. Having a vision of equality, justice and equal opportunities for its citizens without making one group of people or nationality first class citizens and others second class citizens. Above all, any government must respect the rights of individuals, groups of people or nationalities based on international convention on human rights. The success or failure to implement this convention will show whether the leaders are democratic or despotic and such records further reveal whether that country is on the right track to democracy. In contrast, claiming to be democratic while ordering the massacre of helpless civilians is incontestably a pretence.

If the killings of thousands of innocent and helpless civilians; imprisoning tens of thousands without justice and causing the disappearance of thousands of innocents or oppositional party activists is tantamount a democracy, it will be unarguably logical for the British PM Minister to nominate Ethiopian silent and smart dictator PM Meles Zenawi to be one of the candidates for this blessed mission. In practice, Meles Zenawi reveals how corrupt, highly unequal and unjust system his regime is. It is worthwhile seeing the human rights records of his regime since he embarked on the throne in

1990/91. It has been uncovered that Mr Blair is planning to go to Ethiopia to have their second round official meeting of 'Blair's Commission for Africa' in Addis Ababa to be bombarded with mind boggling deceit of Meles and his officials' rhetoric. This might be considered by Meles as a good reward for his human rights abuses.

## **II. A 'Top Peace Award' to Meles; an Incentive for his Rampant Human rights Abuses?**

It was the week of July 19, 2002 that Meles Zenawi of TPLF's leader was awarded top peace noble by the 'International Peace Committee'. I used to hear and read that the people who receive such an award are recognized human rights activists. This may be at the leadership level or protesting against inhuman acts of any party or government. Nevertheless, an ambiguity of Meles's award makes you feel and say like; 'where are justice, genuinity and morality after all? This feeling comes to my mind simply because of my cultural background, the reality I observe in day to day lives and experiences I past through. In addition, my view of the world (perhaps because of naivety that comes out of genuine thought), in particular, democratic nations who have exercised the respect of their nations' basic rights for centuries was that 'the people who are responsible for such an events would scrutinize such awards before they decide to give it to some one of any country'. When you see the other way around, you would get totally perplexed.

I believe that the organization that awarded Meles of Ethiopia is the one that awarded 'Martin Luther King' in 1960s for his non-violent struggle to liberate his fellow black Americans from the superiority of others. I believe that the award is a type of award that has been given to Nelson Mandela for his life long struggle to emancipate his fellow black African from the treacherous South African Apartheid. I know that the award is a type of award that is given for several human rights activist who lived their entire lives for the well being of human and humanity. Mahatma Gandhi of the India could be mentioned as a main example of such a people who sacrificed the entire lives for the justice and humanity in addition to others. In contrast, Meles lived his entire life to keep his power by suppressing and repressing others, deceiving an international community perhaps including the British PM and others; killing and imprisoning innocent and helpless citizens and depriving the vary basic rights of individuals, groups of people and nations of the country.

On many occasions, several western leaders and human rights activists have been, and are, becoming victims of Meles's maneuvering and impenetrable deception. One of such people is Bob Geldof who has labored hard to save the lives of many million Ethiopian people during the 1984/85 famine under the Derg regime. In June 2003, Bob Geldof went to Ethiopian to internationalize the effort of rescuing more than 16 million starved Ethiopian people under Meles's regime. In fact, Meles himself has got the BBC and CNN including AFP and most international Medias on the spot while he has been begging an aid for the people who were and are starved primarily because of his poor governance and repressive polices. (In practice, most part of the aid goes to his militarily purposes rather than real beneficiaries). He has been told the opposite, however upon his return

Bob reiterated the absence of good governance and poor human rights record in playing significant roles in not averting the famine.

About 6-7 thousand innocent citizens have been massacred by his security forces since he came to power in 1990; tens of thousands are imprisoned without justice. More than 125 thousands Ethiopians' have sacrificed their precious lives for unnecessary war between Ethio-Eritrean border conflict of 1998-2000. Tens of thousands made to vanish by his security forces without any trace. Tens of millions are deliberately made victims of street life without any hope and futurity. No system is in place to protect the lives of such people rather than running his deceptive political agenda militarily superiority. Does this man deserve incentives to continue his arrogance against innocent citizens in the lights of these evidences? The time will not be far away that global community, in particular the people who are spoiling this dictator would gravely regret their contribution in the process of rampant human right violations and extra judicial killings of Meles's regime.

### **III. Meles's Deception versus His whole being: - an Obscurity to others?**

Meles Zenawi is one of the smartest leaders world ever had. Previous dictator, Mengistu H/Mariam of communist Derg regime was one of the cruelest and massacred tens' of thousands of Ethiopians with clear intent of destroying his oppositions without hiding from international and local community. Ironically, Meles is killing or causing the death of even more innocent people than his predecessor. However, no one can trace his secretive strategy of suppression and massacre in such a way no one could have breathe. He is causing life long trauma and hatred between nations of the country in a number of ways. He is the one who causes ethnic conflicts and clashes that in turn gives good ground for his security forces to legitimately massacre innocents in the name of security. Others are massacred and imprisoned by the name of supporting oppositions.

There are and have been several dictators with their distinct evil character all over the globe who indiscriminately violate their fellow citizens' basic rights. From former Ugandan, Rwandan to Central African Republic dictators; from Cambodian to Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet and others several Latin American; African, Asian and former Eastern Europe dictators have encroached on the rights of innocent civilians. Those all haven't been as secretive as Meles's regime that is working hard to keep his dissents silent and others in prison or killing. His regime works day and night to keep itself on power and superior of the region. International community keeps silent as always while Meles's regime is making the life of innocent Ethiopian peoples unbearable. Repression, suppression and intimidation are a typical of his hidden face. If one thinks that this is the man who stands for the rights of others to be nominated by Mr Blair, and invited to the UK to lecture on good governance, it will be morally controversial. If this man is thought a type of genuine person to be invited to the White House by the name of democratic leader, the meaning of democracy may need another definition.

Where thousands are gravely starving, Meles's regime is developing his military superiority in the region. One can imagine how terrible it would be to see the last country in the world in development indicators standing 20<sup>th</sup> globally in militarily power, having

more than 280.000 army that is tantamount to the number of the UK, Japan and Italy's army all together; with annual budget of about 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of a billion USD, with 60 war jets and 320-350 tanks. Ethiopia is the second army superpower in Africa following Egypt. But, it's the third poorest country when you count from the bottom of poorest world countries.

Thus, does this man deserve to be encouraged to develop his dictatorship and repressive regime whereas the entire peoples of the country are paying unnecessary life sacrifice in a number of ways? Do the leaders of democratic nations have legitimacy to support such a dictator? In the end, therefore, is it morally acceptable to encourage such a leader who terrorizes his own citizens to pursue his plan of superiority and repression? I am afraid this smartest dictator once upon a day might be more dangerous to the security of the region than any other dictator ever has been in the silence of international community. I think Mr Blair has got a duty to re-evaluate his stance with regard to Meles's human rights track and about his hidden face. The need to act on time so that it does not become too late to reverse the catastrophic situation that might follow in the silence of powerful nations, is crucial.

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