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Addis hosts grand street *Iftar*

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

ADDIS ABABA – Tens of thousands of Ethiopian Muslims took part in a massive evening *Iftar* meal and prayers at a central square in Addis Ababa yesterday.

Addressing the gatherings, Deputy Mayor of Addis Ababa, Jantirar Abay congratulated the attendees for the Grand *Iftar* and prayer event.

The Deputy Mayor appreciated the Muslim Community and Ethiopians at large for thwarting plot by some anti-peace elements to cause a religious strife in the country.

“The government is working to hold those involving in inflicting the conflict accountable,” Jantirar said. He further called on the Muslims to pray for peace and prosperity for Ethiopia.

“Christianity and Islamism have peacefully co-existed in Ethiopia for more than a century, he said, calling for unity and



love. He finally expressed best wishes to Ethiopian Muslims for joyful Eid Festival.

For his part, Coordinator of the Eid-to-Eid Great Ethiopian Homecoming national committee Ustaz Abubeker Ahmed said that

one of the main aims of the Grand Ethiopian Street *Iftar* is to celebrate the *Iftar* with citizens who are living on the street.

As to him, such ceremonies will also help
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Fiche –Chambalala symbolizes peace, harmony

BY TEWODROS KASSA

HAWASSA-Fiche-Chambalala, a UNESCO registered New Year’s festival among the Sidama people, embraces various assets and values that strengthen national integration, peace, and harmony, said Sidama State Chief Administrator Desta Ledamo .

Thus, the celebration of the festival serves as an input to promote the country’s

endeavours towards sustainable peace and development, he underscored

It was learnt that the Sidama People celebrated yesterday Fiche-Chambalala colorfully for the first time after accomplishing statehood.

On the occasion Desta indicated that such ancient tangible and intangible heritages of

See Fiche –Chambalala... Page 3



Security forces take drastic measures to pacify Gondar: GCS

• *TPLF still blocks key humanitarian corridors*

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Security forces have been taking speedy measures to neutralize terrorist groups and extremists and dozens of individuals suspected to be involved in the recent civilians attack in Gondar town and environs have been apprehended, the Government Communication Service (GCS) said.

In a press briefing he held yesterday, GCS

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Gov't reaffirms commitment towards unfettered aid access to Tigray

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA—Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said that the government has allowed unfettered access aid to Tigray complying with the truce since the

See Gov't reaffirms ... Page 3

Linguistic and cultural diversities as building blocks for a New African Identity

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News

TPLF warmongering threatens enduring peace in Ethiopia

• *Utilizes proxy networks to create chaos*

BY BETELEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Due to TPLF's warmongering charterer that has been frequently displayed, its claim of withdrawing forces from Afar State and the federal government's humanitarian truce could not cease another round of conflict, a prominent social science scholar claimed.

Speaking to local media, Sociology Assistant Professor at New York's Iona University Derese Getachew (PhD) noted that though there is abundant evidence that could lead to a conclusion that the criminal faction is preparing to trigger another round of conflict. Understanding the fact that instigating conflicts across the nation would work for TPLF's favor, it seems that the clique is returning to its habit of inciting ethnic and religious strife like the one recently witnessed in Gondar.

The academician stressed that the government should exert utmost efforts to weaken and dismantle TPLF through diplomatic pressure until binding consensus is reached. More importantly, a firm stand should be taken by the government as to how the conflict should be resolved and reveal its stand on the reconciliation idea to the public. Similarly, the government should somehow put aside the conflict and focus on resolving the political threats that are troubling the society.

"Through the prolongation of the conflict, if there is an entity that would be put in a devastating situation whether in military or



Derese Getachew

political perspective is TPLF owing to the fact that the current TPLF is not the same as it was before the war erupted in many aspects."

For a lawyer, political and security analyst Blen Mamo, though TPLF could not appear as an imminent threat, it is currently using proxy networks to create chaos in the country. The recent conflict that occurred in Gondar is a good example of the clique's involvement in disrupting the peace of the country. "To tackle the threat posed by TPLF, strengthening the efficiency of both the federal and state security forces has a paramount significance."

Blen further highlighted that the government needs to enhance the diplomatic caliber owing to the fact that the diplomatic arena is something Ethiopia was significantly harmed. "Accordingly, diplomatic institutions should be reinforced to the level



Blen Mamo

that they can understand the global political dynamics and execute our foreign policy meticulously."

Lack of vibrant communication and media practice is also something that was identified by the analyst as the major limitation of the current government. "Compared with the government narratives, the Ethiopian political discourse is dominated by conspiracy theory. This is because the government has had limitations regarding ensuring efficient communication."

According to her, there were times where conspiracy theories surfaced in the country's political discourse but one sees no efforts from the government to debunk the false information. "This communication gap could widen the hole between the government and the public since society tends to embrace disinformation."

IDPs speak out life under terrorist TPLF

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA -The people of Tigray have been living in a lot of suffering under the insurgent TPLF regime, said Ann Fitz-Gerald, Professor of International Security.

In her latest article entitled: "The frontline voices: Tigray's IDPs speak on the realities of life under an insurgency regime" the Director of the Balsillie School of International Affairs and a Professor in Wilfrid Laurier University's Political Science Department, Ann Fitz-Gerald stated that the Tigray people have been living many lost due to the terrorist TPLF aggression.

According to her, the people of Tigray have been exposing to different challenges following by the northern parts of conflict provoked by the insurgent terrorist TPLF group. Many of them are fled from their homes, recruiting their children in to the battle field, and property destroyed by the terrorist TPLF.

"Mostly, the many male and female fighters under the age of 18 who were recruited under the "one family, one fighter" rule and trained by the TPLF commanders is one of its inhuman nature," she added.

As she has conducted a research from March 29 to April 8, 2022 interviewing individuals and groups in the northern states of both Afar and Amhara, where permission was granted to access both the IDPs camp in Jarra, in the Amhara state (where 620 Tigray's civilian IDPs are accommodated), and the compound in the Awash Basin of the Afar regional state (near Chifra), where approximately 15,000 captured TPLF fighters are currently being accommodated that have been living difficult situation the means of the terrorist TPLF.

According to her, the research shows that there exist a clear sign of a widened divide between the common people of Tigray and the TPLF leaders.

She further stated that the supporters of the terrorist group either at home or abroad do not have any concern about the issue of the communities on the ground. That is why they have not shown any voices when the group has been taking the humanitarian aid to war purpose. In this regard, respondents argue that sufficient aid was entering Tigray prior to June 2021, when the interim state government was in place. When the Ethiopian federal army withdrew from Tigray, and the TPLF assumed control, the population was informed that all aid was being blocked at the border by Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF). However, the Tigray population continues to be "sieged" by the TPLF's aspirations to continue the conflict.

"The international community should call on the TPLF to undertake a complete withdrawal from Afar and Amhara, and cease its arms procurement, armed activity, and aggressive deployment of fighters to border areas. Besides, the federal government should work with the wider international donor community to ensure that the needs of the approximately 16,000 Tigray IDPs in both the Awash Basin and Jarra IDP camps are supported via put National Dialogue," she cited.

She further noted that victims in IDP camps across the wider Amhara and Afar states must also be supported. International relief, which is focused only on Tigray to the disadvantage of the victims in Amhara and Afar, risks creating resentment and undermining prospects for a lasting peace. This support must go beyond basic food, water and shelter and also include psycho-social support for the many traumatic experiences endured by the Afar-based surrendered fighters, particularly the youth. Whatever peace settlement ensues should also include provisions for the safe, secure and supported return of Tigray IDPs back to home-Tigray.

AI, HRW joint report biased, unacceptable: Scholars, organizations

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA—The joint report of Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) accusing the government, the Amhara state, Amhara militia and Fano of committing human rights violations is biased, discriminatory and unacceptable, so stated scholars and organizations.

Expressing protest against the report, some 192 scholars and 36 endorsing organizations said, "We affirm that the findings and recommendations of the report are fraught with inconsistencies and biases and lack methodological rigor and objectivity."

"Though the report acknowledges the fact that the so-called Western Tigray was known as Welkai -Tegege -Humera and was part of Begemeder (Gondar) before TPLF annexed it, for its strategic attraction, to Tigray in 1991, it prefers to perpetuate the use of the misnomer so as to confer international and political legitimacy to TPLF's claim to the territory."

Thanks to the work of a team of scientists in Gondar University, however, TPLF's atrocities have recently come to light for the world to see. This team of scientists has reported that the remains of fifty-nine thousand Amhara victims have been

discovered in several mass graves in Welkai. Yet, the joint report does not reference the team's report, nor have its authors bothered to consult the team about these findings.

The call by the report for the disarming and demobilization of Amhara security forces, such as the Fano and militia, is totally unacceptable, for it is a clear violation of Ethiopia's sovereign right to organize its security forces in any manner it deems fit. It is interesting, although not too surprising, that the report's call for demobilization of the Fano and Amhara militia echoes the position declared by the US Secretary of State a year or so ago, suggesting that AI and HRW do seem to be acting in concert with the U.S. Government.

Report's recommendation calling for a peacekeeping force to be deployed to the region not only will constitute a blatant violation of the country's sovereignty but also has the potential to prolong rather than to defuse the tension in the region, they said.

"As the report itself makes clear, its findings are based on information and data largely gathered by interviewing Tigrean refugees in the Sudan; many of these so-called refugees are the very same individuals left after committing gruesome Mai-Kadra massacre. How could it be credible in such a

way? Simply, they would shade the truth in order to avoid their own accountability for the crime of mass murder they committed."

Incredibly, Fisseha Tekle, the son-in-law of TPLF's notorious Sebhat Nega, is Amnesty International's "researcher for Ethiopia and Eritrea" and is currently promoting the report on their behalf.

The strongest indicators of the sloppiness of the report is its assertion, citing interim administration of Tigray, that 723,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Western Tigray had been registered in other parts of Tigray. However, according to a report of the Central Statistical Agency, conducted while the TPLF was in power, the projected total number of people in Western Tigray, including Amharas and other ethnic groups, for 2017 was only 410,662. This ridiculously inflated number, which cannot be justified by any known demographic principles, is indicative of the flawed and biased nature of the entire report.

Surprisingly, the joint report was released considering the U.S. sanctions bills to coerce Ethiopia to submit to their demands and thereby to revive the political life of a terrorist organization that the Ethiopian populace has overwhelmingly rejected.

News

Ethiopia's flower exports hit 371 mln USD

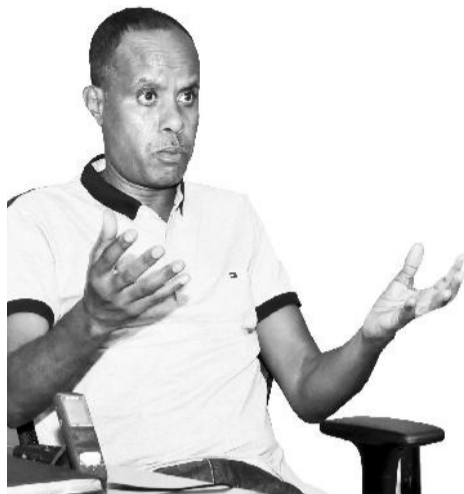
BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA- The Ministry of Agriculture said the country has secured over 371 million USD over the last nine months of the fiscal year exporting flowers to the global market.

Netherlands is the primary destination for Ethiopian flowers and purchased 53 million kilograms worth 251 million USD, Ministry Director for Horticulture Investment and Export Support Mekonnen Solomon told *The Ethiopian Herald*.

Mekonnen further highlighted that 76 percent of Ethiopian flowers make their way to Europe while Saudi Arabia is the second largest destination followed by Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Totally, Ethiopian flowers reach 56 countries through the Dutch market.

Noting the horticultural sector in general has provided about 200,000 jobs, the director indicated the flower sub sector constituted 80 percent of the new employment. Raising



from the deplorable and nearly non-existent status some two decades back, Ethiopia made a big step and became the fourth flower exporter in the world.

Indeed, Ethiopia is the second largest flower exporter in Africa next only to Kenya and its high soil fertility, the amenability of its climate towards the cultivation of diverse

range of flowers and the comparative abundance of water supply constitute the comparative edge. Also, a competitive logistic cost, availability of trained labor force and government's incentive package could draw the attention of international investors to the sector.

As to him, the flower-growing sector has become a reliable source of foreign currency; the area covered by flowers does not exceed 1,600 hectares. If the government invests more in the flower sector, the forex crunch will be greatly addressed.

In order to enhance Ethiopia's competitiveness in the global flower market, providing export incentives, customs duty exemption, income tax holidays, and offering land at competitive lease price to companies with the desired capital and know-how should be a priority. Amending some policies with a view to encouraging foreign investment is also something worth equal consideration, the director remarked.

Addis hosts...

followers to strengthen their unity and togetherness.

Ustaz Abubeker further thanked representatives of other religious fathers and followers for attending the ceremony and making it very colorful.

Regarding the recent incident in Gondar town, Ustaz Abubeker reiterated that the government should take appropriate measure against the perpetrators and ensure the rule of law.

He also called on citizens to support the government and security forces more than ever in exposing wrongdoers.

The event, the second of its kind in the capital, came at a time Ethiopia is preparing to host a Grand Eid-to-Eid Great Ethiopian Home coming program.

The faithful have also attended the Maghrib Prayers at the *Iftar* program.

Guests from various parts of the world who responded to the call made by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) for the Eid-to-Eid Great Ethiopian Home Coming participated in the *Iftar* program.

Gov't reaffirms...

announcement of the indefinite humanitarian truce on March 24, 2022.

Briefing media yesterday, MoFA Spokesperson Ambassador Dina Mufti said that the government is delivering aid to Tigray state of Ethiopia without any impediment even though TPLF is not refraining from disrupting the process of aid delivery.

Following the truce, the government has shown its commitment to peace by allowing continuous daily humanitarian flights and

working with humanitarian operators to get access to the state.

Accordingly, a total of 146 convoys including nine fuel tankers reached Tigray since the declaration of the truce.

TPLF has recently announced the complete withdrawal of its forces from Afar state but the truth is that the TPLF forces have only withdrawn from a few areas of Eribti, Berehale, and Abala town while maintaining control of the surrounding areas of Abala affecting the aid corridor.

It is still controlling other Woredas of Afar and Amhara states, he indicated.

"Contrary to the allegations of the TPLF and its sympathizers, the amount of aid supplied to the Tigray has never been limited by the Ethiopian government. The provision of aid is only depending on the capacity of the international partners to provide the required amount of resources and secure safe passage," he added.

As to him, the recent propaganda of the TPLF clique on "the shortage of medicine"

in the hospitals of Tigray state is a deliberate spin to create the illusion of scarcity.

He said: "To let the humanitarian truce fully functional and effective, the international community should exert pressure on TPLF to withdraw from all of the occupied areas of Afar and Amhararegions. Since there is a shortage of resources as compared to the number of people in need of assistance, we encourage the international community to scale up support in this regard."

Fiche -Chambalala...

the country witness that it is home to numerous homegrown knowledge and assets.

"Our forefathers/mothers deserve recognition for inheriting this valuable social value without losing its content. We will also work jointly to conserve and inherit the values of Fiche-Chembelala for the next generation," he said.

Oromia state Chief Administrator ShimelisAbdisa said that it is time to work jointly on realizing the country's peace and development through countering all odds.

At the event, the administrator wished peace and stability to the people of Sidama and Ethiopia in connection with the New Year.

For his part, Culture and Sport Minister KejelaMerdasa said that the ministry is working strenuously on developing and harnessing the country's diversified cultural assets' potentials such as Fiche-Chembelala.

"Fiche-Chembelala is the manifestation of the country's ancient civilizations and numerous cultural assets. While celebrating Fiche -Chembalalaelders preach peace and reconciliation that contribute a lot in nation building," he said.

Minister of Tourism NasiseChali said that the country is undertaking wide promotion of its cultural assets to generate more income from the tourism sector.

Tourism is among the five pillar focus areas of the Ethiopian government development strategy.

Therefore, the Ministry is working hand in hand with stakeholders to harness the sector potentials through properly developing and conserving the country's tangible and intangible heritages as well as promoting tourism investments, she noted.

Participants of the celebration express that Fiche -Chembelalabrings new hopes and aspirations among the Sidama community to renew commitment towards peace and unity.

Accordingly, Sidama's New Year festival Fiche -Chembalalahas been inscribed by United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) in 2017.

The celebration took place in Gudumale after two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic impact with the presence of senior government officials, city residents as well as representatives of various nations, nationalities and peoples from neighboring zonal and state administrations.

Security forces take...

Minister Legesse Tulu (PhD) stated that law enforcement forces have been ordered to take special operations in areas where terrorists and extremists have been camping. Following the unrest in Gondar, the Federal and Amhara security forces are conducting operations against the attackers and the mission will be continued until peace is guaranteed in the area.

According to him, some activists and social media actors are still disseminating inflammatory messages. "Knowingly or unknowingly, some activists, who were known for their good manners, are instigating insane information that could exacerbate the unrest. They are using religious contexts to trigger attacks on religious sites."

"Some individuals are playing the religion and ethnicity cards and we would like to warn them once again that they are playing with the edge of the knife. The government will take strict measures against such elements."

In related news, Legesse highlighted that government forces have launched fresh attack against the terrorist Shene group and inflicted a significant harm to the criminal faction. Accordingly, a large number

of Shene militias as well as leaders and trainers of the outlawed group have been killed and wounded in military missions that have been carried out in several parts of the Oromia State.

"As a result of the military operations, the majority of Shene-occupied areas have been freed and a large number of its combatants have also surrendered TPLF military personnel that had been assisting Shene were also killed in the operation."

Commenting on the humanitarian supply to Tigray, the Minister highlighted that TPLF is still hindering the aid delivery by occupying key corridors in Afar State. TPLF leaders are telling lies about fully withdrawing forces from Afar. Indeed the key areas where humanitarian supply is transported through the Afar State is still under the control of the rebellious faction.

The government of Ethiopia has lifted the restriction on aid delivery aiming to address needy people in Tigray. Accordingly, medicines and food supplies are being transported without a restriction. "Despite all those efforts, TPLF is trading with medical aid by opening new pharmaceutical shops," Legesse stressed.

Opinion

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch Report on Ethiopia's Wolkait Region: Biased and Tendentious

An argument endorsed by 192 Ethiopians and Ethiopian origin individuals and 36 organizations

As argued below, we affirm that the findings and recommendations of the report are fraught with inconsistencies and biases and lack methodological rigor and objectivity.

Flagrant Perpetuation of the TPLF Narrative of "Western Tigray"

Although the report acknowledges the fact that the so-called Western Tigray was known as Welkait –Tegede –Humera (collectively "Wolkait") and was part of the Province of Begemeder (Gondar) before the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) annexed it, for its strategic attraction, to Tigray in 1991, it prefers to perpetuate the use of the misnomer so as to confer international and political legitimacy to TPLF's claim to the territory. If that had not been its apparent purpose, there is no reason to prefer a newly minted name that does not exist in the lexicon of the local population or the history of the region. This fact, along with the report's evocative title ("We will erase you from this land"), presages the heavily biased and tendentious nature of the report.

Biased and One-sided Reporting of Atrocities

While the report is replete with numerous citations, it nowhere makes even as much as a passing mention of the animus toward Amharas the TPLF has harbored since its inception as a liberation movement in 1975 by openly declaring the Amhara people as its sworn enemy in its founding document. Notably, the report blithely ignores the atrocities the TPLF has committed while forcibly annexing Wolkait to Tigray in the mid-70s and during almost three decades of its brutal rule. Thanks to the work of a team of scientists in Gondar University, however, TPLF's atrocities have recently come to light for the world to see. This team of scientists has reported that the remains of fifty-nine thousand Amhara victims have been discovered in several mass graves in Wolkait. Yet, the joint report does not reference the team's report, nor have its authors bothered to consult the team about these findings.

In rare instances, the report begrudgingly acknowledges that the TPLF security forces abused the rights of Amharas "over many years." Yet, it makes absolutely no effort to describe in any detail the gravity of these abuses as it has done on behalf of members of the Tigray community residing in Wolkait. Because it does not take these abuses as seriously, it does not call for any accountability of TPLF officials in the same way that it has been quick to do so against Amhara officials currently administering the Wolkait region. Indeed, the report recommends the suspension of these officials pending investigations into their actions, in utter disregard of their right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

While the report is quick to call for



the demobilization of Amhara security forces, there is no similar call for the demobilization of thousands of militia the TPLF has mobilized to wage war and wreak havoc in the Amhara and Afar regions. The TPLF and its militia have shown by their actions and public statements that they are still waiting in the wings to forcibly retake Wolkait and in the process to cause even more death, mayhem and destruction than they have already caused. We would like to note in this regard the atrocities the TPLF has continued to inflict on the inhabitants of the Afar region.

Intrusiveness and Violation of Ethiopia's Sovereign Rights

The call by the report for the disarming and demobilization of Amhara security forces, such as the Fano and militia, is totally unacceptable, for it is a clear violation of Ethiopia's sovereign right to organize its security forces in any manner it deems fit. As enunciated in the UN "Declaration on Principles of International Law", one of these fundamental principles concerns the sanctity of non-intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of another state. It is interesting, although not too surprising, that the report's call for demobilization of the Fano and Amhara militia echoes the position declared by the US Secretary of State a year or so ago, suggesting that AI and HRW do seem to be acting in concert with the US Government.

It is also noteworthy, though not surprising, that Amhara and Kunama natives of the region were systematically shunned in the interview process. There is absolutely no justification for their exclusion other than that their testimony would cast doubt on the credibility of the story spun by the TPLF. Curiously, the report offers no explanation or justification for this exclusion, leaving us to surmise that the omission must have been deliberate.

It is on the basis of self-serving interviews conducted in the Sudan and some in Tigray that the report accuses Amhara

regional authorities of having engaged in a "coordinated" and "purposeful" policy of ethnic cleansing and other human rights violations. This conclusion is totally unconvincing, meritless and unfounded. For one thing, many of those interviewees are those who fled the area to avoid apprehension and accountability for the heinous crimes they committed in Mai-Kadra. For another, those who relocated to Tigray did so on their own fearing retaliation and accountability for the many abuses "over many years" the natives of the area suffered under TPLF rule, rather than as a consequence of an official policy of "ethnic cleansing". As such, the allegation of "a coordinated and purposeful policy" of ethnic cleansing cannot stand close scrutiny. (One point worthy of note here is the egregious fact that the report dismisses, as a legitimate response, the November 2020 Mai-Kadra Massacres against Amharas by TPLF's youth league.)

Also unwarranted is the report's negative aspersion on the regional authorities of Wolkait for undertaking to resettle "hundreds of Amharas from the Amhara region and [those returning] from the Sudan." Finding fault with the actions of the regional authorities in this regard completely ignores the fact that many of these settlers are natives of the area who were forced to leave their homes and farms by the TPLF since the mid-70s. Righting a wrong that remained unrequited for so long does not deserve to be seen in a negative light.

Perhaps, one of the strongest indicators of the sloppiness of the report is its assertion, citing the federal interim administration of Tigray, that 723,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Western Tigray had been registered in other parts of Tigray. However, according to a report of the Federal Demographic Republic of Ethiopia Central Statistical Agency, conducted while the TPLF was in power, the projected total number of people in Western Tigray, including Amharas

and other ethnic groups, for 2017 was only 410,662. This ridiculously inflated number, which cannot be justified by any known demographic principles, is indicative of the flawed and biased nature of the entire report.

Questionable Timing of the Release of the Report

Finally, it is curious that the joint report became public at a time when both Houses of the US Congress appear to be busy considering essentially similar bills aimed at imposing sanctions on Ethiopia. Given how often the international system seems to do the bidding of the US Government and its allies, including human rights organizations, the timing of the report hardly seems to be a coincidence. It is noteworthy that the US Government took no time to endorse the report and to call for "independent investigations" into alleged violations of human rights in Ethiopia. Given the release of the joint report and consideration of the US sanctions bills are occurring at almost the same time, and when we recall the earlier effort of the US Government and its allies to employ the Human Right Council's process to do essentially what the report calls for, we believe that the sanctions bills and the joint report have been meant to work in tandem to accomplish the same overriding purpose: to coerce Ethiopia to submit to their demands and thereby to revive the political life of a terrorist organization that the Ethiopian populace has overwhelmingly rejected.

For all the foregoing reasons, we find the joint report of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch simply one-sided, tendentious, bereft of methodological rigor, and, therefore, unacceptable.

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Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald

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Editorial

Ethiopia: An archetypal land of religions coexistence

Religion in Ethiopia consists of a number of faiths. Among these the main and longstanding ones are Abrahamic religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Religious beliefs that are indigenous are freely also being exercised among diverse followers.

The country's close historical tie to all three of the world's major Abrahamic religions is also manifest in the respective holy books. The name "Ethiopia" (Hebrew Kush) is mentioned in the Bible numerous times (thirty-seven times in the King James Version). Abyssinia is also mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith.

Ethiopia is one of the oldest Christian states in the world. The Kingdom of Aksum was one of the first nations to officially accept Christianity, when St. Frumentius of Tyre, called Fremnatos or Abba Selama ("Father of Peace") in Ethiopia, converted King Ezana during the 4th century AD. Many believe that the Gospel had entered Ethiopia even earlier, with the royal official described as being baptized by Philip the Evangelist in chapter eight of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 8:26-39).

It is also the site of the first Hijra in Islamic history and the oldest Muslim settlement in Africa at Negash. Islam in Ethiopia dates back to the founding of the religion; in 615, when a group of Muslims were counseled by Muhammad to escape persecution in Mecca and travel to Ethiopia via modern-day Eritrea, which was ruled by Ashama ibn Abjar, a pious Christian king. Bilal ibn Ribah, the first Muezzin, the person chosen to call the faithful to prayer, and one of the foremost companions of Muhammad, was born in Mecca to an Abyssinian mother. Moreover, the largest portion of non-Arab Companions of Muhammad belonged to Ethiopian ethnic groups.

Irrespective of the number of followers, all religions have lived

together in unison and cooperation among each other in many ways. To take the two religions with greater number of followers, Christianity and Islam as exemplary, one has been participating in the construction and mending of religious institution of the other. Besides, it has become common nowadays in which followers of both religions take part in cleaning the celebration areas of one another during festivals. This habit contributes a lot to the solid interaction between them that is sustained as strong as steel.

Despite such solidified coexistence, foreign enemies of Ethiopia and their allies inland have left no stone unturned to dismantle the country via orchestrating various conspiracies. They employ diversities of nations, clans, languages and even boundaries as tools to create conflict among the peoples. Realizing the failure of these tactics, they extended their intrigue to religious differences. The destruction and burning of religions' institutions of both sides and killing of their respective leaders in different parts of the country were aimed at achieving their evil goal though the people refused to go in their pipeline.

The recent incident in Gondar city, the northern part of the country, and the fabricated news that follow were to stimulate conflicts between the two longstanding Christian and Islam religions but in vain due to the strong bondage among the respective followers. This must give lessons to those engaged in such evil deeds to stop playing with fire being aware of accountability.

Whatever they do, Ethiopians, irrespective of their religious differences, should stand together just as they have been doing so far. The enemy of one religion should be considered as the enemy of all whether he/she is Christian, Islam or any other. It is the time to harden their ties more than ever before and show this to their enemies including those disseminated fake news.

Opinion

The Role of the Media on National Dialogue for Peace and Reconciliation

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Despite the fact that mainstream public and commercial and digital media outlets in Ethiopia are expected to engage in newscasts, press briefings, feature articles and electronic media programs on the importance of a national dialogue on peace and reconciliation, very little is being done on this important national issue. Here it is important to throw some light on the conceptual meaning of national dialogue and the prerequisites as a spring board from which we can take up issues regarding National Dialogue and Reconciliation in Ethiopia.

According to Blunck, national dialogues are: "nationally owned political processes aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of national stakeholders in times of deep political crisis, in post-war situations or during far-reaching political transitions" (Blunck et al., 2017, 21). They are typically accompanied by broader societal consultations, involving all sectors of society. Their objective can involve broad-based change processes (e.g. negotiating a new social contract) or more narrow objectives. It has only been in the last couple of years that various guidance and case studies have been published on national dialogues. These emerged in acknowledgement that there are many open questions and uncertainties regarding the concept of national dialogue; and that there are limited resources that provide guidance

and practical support for those who are exploring national dialogues (Blunck et al., 2017). While there is no blueprint for such dialogues, attention to lessons learned can help actors involved to identify factors contributing to the success and failure of national dialogues and to key challenges.

The political context of a national dialogue for peace and reconciliation is set in a series of factors that need to be carefully considered by the organizing Commission of the dialogue. These include political commitment by the government and the opposition parties, taking dialogue as part of the national reform program, common ground among all political parties, broader support from the public, acquiring lessons from countries that have conducted national dialogue and reconciliation through a series of bench marking processes, support from countries that are in favor of the dialogue and reconciliation, inclusive and participatory approach, proper representation and selection criteria, setting objectives and scope, institutional framework and support structure, using celebrities and renown national figures, clear decision making process, taking confidence building measures and charting out implementation modalities.

The recent meeting conducted between the National Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission and media executives in the country has clearly indicated the urgent and important role to be played by the media in promoting the upcoming National Dialogue

and Reconciliation Conference. Before going into the details, it is imperative to have a glimpse of the nature of mass media in the country in general and their characteristic features over the last 30 years and more recently in the last four years.

Ethiopian media outlets including public, commercial and social media outlets are politicized and over politicized by their coverage and remained emotional on the events in the country over the last three decades and more particularly over the last four years. The state owned and semi-autonomous electronic media outlets and the press outputs have reflected government positions on various topics but were in low pace of reporting and usually outpaced by the commercial media and social media users. Although the journalists are trained to serve as journalists, they usually also work on public relation positions in government institutions.

The social media in Ethiopia has become a center of opposition against the previous governments and suffered under the harsh law on terrorism. Over the last four years in particular, the users of social media including Face Book and YouTube in general spread misinformation, ethnic based hate comments, venting their anger and insults against the government but even then there are still responsible public and commercial media that utilize their social media to promote organizational polices, strategies and activities they have performed over time.

Although there is a media association and council to engage in peer review and for promoting their profession, they remained weak, feeble and incompetent compare to similar associations across Africa. Both public and commercial media outlets have limited feedback from their audience and did very little in conducting audience analysis too improve their coverage and were limited to their own subjective assumptions about their audience. Given the fact that the media in Ethiopia is almost a century old, it is difficult to conclude that they were up to their expectations and that there is still a lot to be desired.

The Ethiopian media outlets are not known for working on peace and reconciliation issues and some local media companies even doubted the importance of working on peace and reconciliation in a country that is marred with conflicts based on ethnic identification, narrow nationalism and chauvinistic viewpoints. The issue of peace and reconciliation was vaguely enumerated in the editorial polices of a number of public and commercial media companies. However, these media outlets in many cases took side and did the opposite of what is

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Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald

Art & Culture

Linguistic and cultural diversities as building blocks for a New African Identity

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

At the Berlin conference of 1884 also known historically as the Partition of Africa, European nations “agreed to rules for further claiming of African territory: each country was to notify the others of its claims, and each claim was to be followed with “effective occupation” of the claimed area. Conference participants stated lofty goals for their African territories, which included ending the slave trade and extending civilization, Commerce, and Christianity to the African people.”

European colonialism in Africa in the 19th century is legitimately demonized for setting the borders of African countries quite arbitrarily without due consideration to the characteristic that make the various African peoples different from one another and the territorial claims that may arise later on. History proved the advocates of colonial rule wrong as it later on transpired.

Post-colonial Africa is still enmeshed in border conflicts, rival territorial claims and counter-claims that often led to armed conflicts. Most of the border conflicts are thus the legacy of European colonialism. The process was undertaken in a rush and in accordance with the colonial claims of various European powers so much so that the realities on the ground were ignored and the consequences of their decisions proved fatal in the 20th century.

“In an article entitled “Africa’s Arbitrary Borders”, its author Howard W. French wrote that, “From the earliest days of African independence, this continent’s leaders have repeatedly had to wrestle with the legacy of the arbitrarily drawn borders established and frozen in place by Europe’s colonial powers. The impacts of these divisions were felt to varying degrees from one country to another throughout Africa. In the case of Ghana, for example, the country’s western border with Côte d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast) split the large cultural cluster of Akan-speaking peoples in two. Ghana’s eastern border with Togo achieved the same result, by arbitrarily splitting up the large Ewe ethnic group.

Over time, divisions like these have repeatedly fed political tensions between neighboring states. In the case of Ghana, both Akan and Ewe groups have shifted their national allegiances depending on the shifting fortunes of the countries they inhabit.

Even more troublesome are cases like Nigeria, where European boundaries forced starkly different, rival cultures, each with long-standing political traditions of their own, to cohabit within the confines of a single state. When Nigeria won its independence in 1960, these rivalries remained.”

Post-colonial Africa did not only suffer the consequences of the infamous partition of Africa as the borders of many countries were allowed to maintain the colonial demarcations as temporary or permanent arrangements depending on the specific

Both Ethiopia and Africa are endowed with linguistic and cultural diversities that can be used as building Blocks for a new African identity



cases. Yet over time, these time bombs left behind by the colonial rulers started to explode and give rise to many wars and border conflicts.

Just as European colonialists drew arbitrary borders by ignoring the linguistic, cultural and identity specifics, post-colonial African themselves applied the same rules and approaches in managing the claims and counter-claims of individual African

countries divided along colonial interests later added divisions or sub-divisions along ethnic and linguistic lines further complicating the colonial legacy of divide and rule.

In most African countries, communities are still distinguished along ethnic, tribal linguistic and cultural lines the as the major parameters of political management by the local authorities. Although these arrangements were as fiercely and violently implemented as in the colonial times, the frictions and conflicts they generated were equally disastrous. The power dynamics between and among the various ruling elites among the various African ethnic groups further exacerbated the colonial as well as the post-colonial arrangements and led to secessionist tendencies or civil wars that claimed many lives. In this sense both the colonial and post-colonial political dynamics of many African countries were shaped by the European powers at the infamous Berlin conference. Unfortunately no one among the powers could see or predict the consequences of their actions.

In the 1950s and 1960s, many or most African countries attained nationhood and independence while carrying the burdens of colonialism on their backs in addition to the immediate challenges of nation-building. Nation-building in Africa which is largely unfinished proved an uphill journey replete with reversals and even defeat.

Nation-building remains a burning challenge not only in post-colonial African societies. Ethiopia has never been colonized in its entire history, but the task of nation building in the sense of creating a unified and unifying identity still remains an unfinished homework for all citizens. Ethiopia started the process of nation building later than European countries that had already gone through advanced capitalist economic development culminating in 19th century imperialism.

Ethiopia on the other hand lost much time under traditional or feudal economic system that prevented the early unification of the different princely lands into one strong national entity. Many African countries have also attained nationhood during what are known the independence decades of the 1960s. Many of them have built stable, functional and unified national entities after so many ups and downs, reversals and advances. Ethiopia’s current political challenges of nation building largely emanate from its retardation in the unification process that was only started lately.

This does not however imply that Ethiopia remained under the tutelage of what is known in history as the “Era of the Princes” when the county was carved up into princely holdings with warlords controlling them ad ruling over them in accordance with their local interests. It was only emperor Menelik who completed the work of unification at the turn of the 20th century when he created a centralized administration and created a permanent capital for his unified empire.

In this sense Menelik is for Ethiopia as Garibaldi is for Italy or Otto Von Bismarck for Germany. These were European leaders who brought about the unification of their respective nations “by fire and iron”.

Emperor Menelik might have committed some errors in the process of unification of the various local principalities. These mistakes might have been inevitable given the level of political and economic development of the time. On balance however, Menelik has done what he could do under the difficult circumstance when European colonialism was threatening to occupy Ethiopia and the Horn region in general. The little appreciated fact is that Menelik was also a unifier of Africa for two main reasons. The first is his victory at the Battle of Adwa while the second is his success in creating the Ethiopia as we know it now and by inspiring other African countries to rise against colonialism.

Overall, historians agree that Menelik has left behind a positive legacy that needs to be embraced and improved rather than dismantled as some separatist minded politicians would argue. In Europe there is no demand for a return to the pre-Garibaldi or pre-Bismarck times of national divisions. The same applies to Ethiopia in the sense that the task ahead of the people is one of political integration on the basis of economic, social and cultural integration.

As a country that played a central role in the final defeat of European colonization and African independence, Ethiopia should become a beacon of national and continental unification instead of looking back at its past with jaundiced eyes. The present generation of Ethiopian politicians should grasp the truth that Ethiopia was and is a great nation and that it should become great again not through divisions that lead to weakness but through greater integration and unity both within and outside the country. A country becomes great by working for the greater good of Africa and not by remaining isolated.

The new generation carries the burden of Ethiopia’s renaissance as a great, powerful, peaceful and prosperous country. Mistakes might be made in the course of implementing this great project. Yet, with selfless devotion to the country, hard work and honest bargain among all the stakeholders, Ethiopia is bound to emerge stronger than before. This is in fact the objective of the ongoing national consultation among the various political and civil groups. It can be summed up as a process of revisiting the past in order to build a stronger future for Ethiopia and for Africa.

Both Ethiopia and Africa are endowed with linguistic and cultural diversities that can be used as building Blocks for a new African identity. Africa will be great by taking these factors as assets and not as liabilities, as opportunities not as challenges alone. And the duty of African intellectuals and the people altogether is to come together to live up to the expectations of one billion plus people waiting to be lifted out of poverty and catapulted into the new era of freedom.

Law & Politics

TPLF's unforgivable, irredeemable atrocities against civilians

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

As part of an effort to continue its destabilization of Ethiopia, the ragtag terrorist TPLF group in numerous instances has been rocking and upending the northern part of the country by plotting layers of conspiracies and opening floodgates for disinformation.

In a similar vein, as the terrorist group has been tasked with creating instability, wreaking havoc, and derailing the positive development surfacing countrywide, it leaves no stone unturned to rub salt in the wound and turn the country into chaos. Thousands of internally displaced people in the Afar and Amhara states and their suffering could be a case in point for the nefarious deeds of the terrorist TPLF group.

Worse still, aside from masking its evil deeds and threatening a catastrophic escalation, the group paints the federal government as if it is not ready for peace talks and in the position to come to the negotiation table. Instead of normalizing the situation by bringing a vast array of effective strategies into play, the group time after time has been turning the lives of civilians into a living hell.

In fact, in light of the current situation, the federal government has been making an effort to get to the bottom of the predicaments on the subject of the displaced people despite growing challenges to halt the predicaments.

Dejectedly, as a response to the coordinated efforts of Ethiopians against the terrorist TPLF group, the evildoers have been persistently partaking in gang-raping, summary killings, looting, and other barbaric crimes.

On the heels of the cruel acts of the group, noncombatants residing in the northern part of Ethiopia have been facing a crisis in food supply and battling against the spillover effects.

In the aftermath of a rising number of displaced people in Afar and Amhara states, quandaries on the topic of food crises have been doubling down in the two areas more than ever before.

As the terrorist group has left civilians of the Amhara and Afar in the dust, the two areas have been a scene of multiple wars with numerous players involved. The recent actions of the group speak much louder than the victims' words without a shred of doubt. Quite a lot of tactics have been used to lay the blame for atrocities committed in the northern part of the country at the federal government's door and win the hearts and minds of the international community despite all their efforts going for nothing.

The criminal enterprise has been intensifying animosity among people and hampering the prospects of peace in the northern part of Ethiopia. Additionally, the racketeering group has been lining up its pockets at the expense of its compatriots and drawing sharp condemnation apart from sending a shocking wave around the world.

In the present climate, there are indications that leaders of the terrorist group are on the way to escalating tension by twisting the knife in the wound in the northern part of the country undermining its previous atrocities committed in the Afar and Amhara states



and humanitarian truce declared by the government.

The criminal clique has already committed grave crimes against civilians that would last long.

Lately, the Ethiopian Institution of the Ombudsman disclosed that at least 6000 children are said to be orphaned in the Afar and Amhara states as a result of terrorist TPLF military occupation of large parts of the aforesaid states.

The institution further stated that this happened between August and December 2021.

It was learnt the institution has recently released the result of a preliminary result of investigations in the Afar and Amhara states.

Speaking to VOA Amharic service, the institution Chief Ombudsman Endale Haile (Ph.D.) said that civilians were targeted and executed on alleged grounds of being a member or supporters of the ruling Prosperity Party.

The institution deployed a 16 members team of researchers in the states. Data, from the DW Amharic report, were collected from local levels of administration, namely district and kebele levels.

Most of the orphaned children are in the Amhara state. Over 4,587 children lost; at least one of their parents as a result of the war, and 591 of them are from the Afar state. The Ombudsman also remarked about rape cases related to the war, 1,252 victims are from the Amhara state and 37 are from Afar state.

In terms of the destruction of social infrastructures, including health and educational institutions, the cost of the damage is said to be over 29 billion Birr. According to the report, the TPLF deliberately targeted social service delivery infrastructures.

The Canadian Senior Fellow at the American University in Moscow, Matthew Ehret demanded that the international community disarm the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) forces for safe humanitarian aid delivery.

In an interview he gave to ENA, the senior fellow told that the government has been making big efforts by releasing political prisoners, declaring a unilateral cease-fire, and more recently an indefinite humanitarian truce to cease hostilities and secure safe passage of much-needed aid to the Ethiopian people in Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions.

The TPLF has, however, effectively rejected the efforts by conducting serious violence, causing hundreds of thousands of displacements and disrupting aid, Ehret noted.

“Despite the active goodwill (of the government), there has been only an increased amount of violent acts conducted in Afar and Amhara regions. I think with about 22 last time I checked acts of very serious violence conducted by the TPLF, there are 300,000 displaced persons who desperately need aid and support as they have been cut off anyways by the TPLF and essentially threatened by the sanctions as well. There is more humanitarian aid which will be cut off for these people if these (HR6600 and S3199) bills go through.”

He further pointed out that the international community should simply see the facts that are widely available, prove and demand that the TPLF simply disarm; and seriously act in good faith on the basis of a cease-fire that is maintained with the focus on helping these people with aid. But today the international community is defined by different people in different ways, Ehret stated.

“If we look at Joe Biden's definition of the international community, for example, it is only those members who were invited to his democracy summit in early December of last year, the other half of the world's nations were excluded. (So,) we are not considered parts of the international community.”

Thus if these bills are approved, Ethiopia should consider going with the orientation of the large coalition of Euro-Asia economic and security alliances that includes China among many others in order to distance itself from the crisis of the Westerners led by the US, the senior fellow elaborated.

According to him, some officials in the

U.S. Administration are using the bills as threats to force the Ethiopian government to negotiate with the TPLF and essentially treat them as if they were the legitimate power broker in Ethiopia because they don't want Ethiopia to have constitutional and economic sovereignty.

He further revealed that the TPLF has been committing atrocities starting from the early 1990s and more recently in the past over a year and a half.

If the international community won't demand the disarming of the TPLF, armed TPLF will continue to create insecurity and humanitarian crisis, the scholar said, warning that the approval of HR6600 and S3199 is economic disarray and economic terrorism against Ethiopia that will also cut people from much-needed aid and financial support.

“The two bills are atrocious.... They essentially call for vast sanctioning, economic warfare, cutting off Ethiopia from much-needed aid, but also dismantling the institutions of Ethiopia's sovereignty itself by forcing negotiations with terrorists TPLF; despite the provable atrocities that have been committed especially in the past a year and half of civil war, but even going back to the 1990s.”

Ehret pointed out that approval of the bills would be an act of economic terrorism against Ethiopia. It would cut off the Ethiopian people from vital aid that they require for their sustenance, especially the farming community.... A lot of loans will be cut off. Loans from the international developing finance corporation will be cut off.

Moreover, those bills will harm Ethio-US relations and threaten US security interests.

“It would hurt relations between Ethiopia and the US. It would be devastatingly bad,” he stressed. “The U.S. itself has lost a large measure of its own national sovereignty. It is not acting in its own self-interest and has not been quiet for some time. But especially now with the Biden administration, what we see is an increased push for activities and policies which will only increase destabilization around the world that is not in its interests and the interest of the American people.”

Our sharing culture has kept us together

Ustaz Hassan Ali

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

Ustaz Hassan Ali is well known among the public as a writer and translator of well-known religious works. He was also among the founders and managers of Africa multimedia production. The Ethiopian Herald had a brief stay with Hassan on Ethiopia's historical heritages related to Islam, its reputation in the Islamic world and current situations in the country. Have a nice read!

Could you tell us how Ethiopia is known by the Muslim world?

Ethiopia has a very special status in the world. No country has such an opportunity that you can find different religions that come from different sources directly. When it comes to Islam it was introduced to Ethiopia before it was even introduced to the second holy city of Islam, Medina. Before it reached Medina it came to Ethiopia. It is a very good blessing, because those people who came to Ethiopia are not ordinary people but they are related directly to the prophet, and his families. So they are well known figure throughout Arabia and Africa, in the Islamic world. They are every much known so Ethiopia had an opportunity to host these people to give them ..., to exercise their religious right. So this story is very much known in the entire Islamic world.

Once I met an Egyptian man and he told me "If that was part of Egyptian history we would have declared it a national holiday" So Ethiopia has a very unique opportunity but we couldn't possibly exploit that to our advantage.

What were the Hindrances?

In different times in Ethiopia the different governments that ruled the country had a very deep hatred, deep suspicion, but not among the people. The people live very well. That is what keeps us moving. But the politicians including the Royal Family, all of them tried to exploit this to their own advantage by dividing the people so that they could rule them. That is why they don't want to bring this history to the forefront. Instead of bringing it to the forefront and flourish they kept it as a divided people.

So they didn't accept it from their heart. The history is there. But it should be the government that should have promoted it. Even today some parts of the elite do not want that to be integrated. Once a government official said "Whatever a benefit comes from accepting the story,



Photo: File

Ethiopia's Islamic heritages are very much recognized by the outside world. Unfortunately it is not even well known amongst Ethiopians. If you go to Shonke for example, if you go to Harrar, Direedawa, Bale you can find lots of heritages that could be of interest to Ethiopia

we would rather get nothing." This is prejudice. That is what hinders it. Otherwise this history is enshrined in the whole Islamic world. Whenever we are out of Ethiopia we are very much respected as Ethiopians. In Turkey when they meet someone from Ethiopia, they kiss the hands. Their mosques, Charitable Organizations, streets are named after Nejashi ... etc. You can find in the whole Islamic world paying tribute to the history. But we, the ones who owned it do not know that much. It has to change.

What can we do about it?

Four years ago, the former government tried to promote something. For the first time the hadj package tried bring people to visit Nejashi mosque in Tigray. So the mosque was renewed. Before visitors go to Mecca, they have to drop in there and visit that place and then to Mecca. That package was announced. When these things were launched through the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Higher Commission, a number of people came and visited that place

from Turkey and West Africa. About 350 thousand people expressed interest to come there. Ethiopia would have got a lot of opportunity. Unfortunately, there was conflict with the government and opposition and they could not go.

What do you say about Ethiopia's Islamic historical heritages at home and abroad?

Ethiopia's Islamic heritages are very much recognized by the outside world. Unfortunately it is not even well known amongst Ethiopians. If you go to Shonke for example, if you go to Harrar, Direedawa, Bale you can find lots of heritages that could be of interest to Ethiopia.

But they are not cultivated. There are good starts now and then. Unfortunately the value we had is more known by people from outside. When they come and discover it how come we don't know about it?

If you go to Shonke it is equal to the Maya, people of Latin America, who build their houses in high places. The

Herald Guest

same thing is available in Shonke. The place is about 800 years. Still now some 250 families live there. The rest have gone to other places. But still it is habitable. But it is very amazing.

How is the current situation of Ethiopian Muslims holdings in Mecca that was established by Jimma Abba Jifar?

It was first bought by Jimmaa Aba Jiffar about 150 years ago, so that Ethiopian pilgrims would rest there. But the place was needed for expansion of the hadj place and removed from the original site. It has been removed two or three times. It was near the Kaaba. Now it is a very big building that accommodates about 850 pilgrims. Otherwise throughout the years it gives service to other persons. It is still Ethiopia possession, but administered by Saudi and Ethiopians. The family of Aba Jiffar are still in charge of administration of the place.

Currently some Islamic Banks have started operating in Ethiopia. How do you think is the economic advantage the country would gain from this?

For a long time there was question. At the end of the day it stopped. At that time everything was going well. At the end the government said it has taken a political decision to stop it. As a result the organizers of the establishment of the bank were not able to open it. So the money was returned to the people and were very disappointed. Now it is allowed. Three of them are launched. There were so many who were skeptic about Islamic banks. They thought that if the interest free banks come the Muslims would keep the money there and the economy... it is controlled by some groups, there would be confrontation with others and there were a lot of questions that we should have our own banks.

But we can see that other private banks have flourished very much, they have depth. But Islamic banks are late comers, they are trying to address many problems. That is given them interest free services. And those service not only for Ethiopians in the long run lots of people in the Middle East and Asia would be the ones who would be bringing money to Ethiopia. So Ethiopia will benefit from a lot of other sources. This should have been through earlier by the government. The initiative should have been thought by the government, rather than Muslims. It should have come from the government. Those things should have been exploited earlier. The main problem in the Ethiopian economy is making balance between import and export. They are working hard to balance this. Now a days it is a good beginning. We are on the right track. If we work hard the benefit will be harvested very soon. Previously they cannot think big because the amount of money they have was very small.

After Nejashi and Bilal, what does the

Eid Al Fitr is one of the two important holidays in Islam. We fast during the last 30 days and during the 30 days we share with people, the needy. It is what kept us together

world know about Ethiopian Muslims contribution to Islam during the last 1400 years?

Ethiopian scholars are not known locally by Ethiopians, but they are well known in the Arab world. Their scholar works are very much known in the entire Middle East. That is their books, their researches is there all over the Middle East Universities. That is well known and have deep root in Ethiopia. In the



past many foreigners used to come to Ethiopia. They used to come here and learn. These places are well known. But here in Ethiopia it is not that respected. It is Ethiopia that gives the renaissance of Islam, a lot of things. If these are properly place they can allow Ethiopia to be well known.

What do you think should be the role of religious leaders, religious scholars in consoling the people during this trying time?

The first thing we should understand is that the challenge is not only in Ethiopia. The whole world is in trouble. Even Europe and America are in trouble. Americans have never seen the current level of inflation in the last 40 years. We are not different. We hear around the world in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America they have very big problems. It is the amount of problem that makes the difference. We should understand that when it comes to economic or political problems, we are not the only country in trouble.

How we are trying to pass this time? The culture of helping each other is enshrined in our culture. In some countries poor people could not survive problems and take action to the extent of selling organs. But in Ethiopia if there is no food in one house, they can get from the other house. Regardless of what you have what you wear, what your religion, anybody can support you. You don't have to sell your organs. It is not because we are rich. But we share because our culture. That is how we are passing this time.

When we come to the political issues, we have come a long way and I am very much optimistic. Indeed there is a problem. For example in the past

three years there were three million internally displaced people. Now we don't see that, especially this religion issue. The incidents that we see in some parts of the country are not religious but political. They are trying to use religion as a cover up. But the incidents should be addressed on time. When something happens in one place, it should not go unnoticed. It should rather be investigated deeply and brought to justice.

So we might have grievances or differences. But we can solve our problems only if we have a country. IF we don't have a country there is no place even to sit and discuss problems. So the first thing is let this time pass. There is always time to solve the problems. Problems cannot be solved now as they were created during the last 50 to 60 years. You cannot solve them in 5 or six years. It takes a lot of time to solve things properly. We have to have patience.

Finally is there any message you would like to send to the Muslim community?

Eid Al Fitr is one of the two important holidays in Islam. We fast during the last 30 days and during the 30 days we share with people, the needy. It is what kept us together. We have to keep hem increasing. The problem is here. It is not going to go away soon. So we have to think about others.

I wish Muslims in and outside Ethiopia a happy eid. I hope we will overcome our problems and hand over a good country for our children. I am optimistic that things would improve. And thank you for inviting me.

Thank you too, for allowing us your time; and we wish you happy eid!

Sharing love while sharing *Iftar*

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Iftar is beyond filling the belly. It is not also about having dinner. It is a partaking of a combination of spiritual and physical food. Iftar is an Arabic word, which literally means “to break”. In the Islamic context, it means to break the fast, to eat and drink in the evening after the daylong fast. According to Islamic teachings, there are five pillars of Islam. Fasting in the month of Ramadan is one of the five pillars.

Iftar is like a dinner, but it has something to differ from the ordinary dinner for it is spiritual in its nature. As to Abubeker Mohammed, a Muslim in Addis Ababa, Iftar is a good experience to all Muslims to feel the true meaning of hunger.

“It is a time where a fasting man would experience hunger in the daytime and discover the importance of food and water that give us energy. After passing through a long day without food and water, a fasting man will discover the value of sharing with others and the pain of others. By the time a man enjoys his/her Iftar, S/he will be thankful to the Creator. Iftar is a source of spiritual learning and a time where an individual will discover the pain and suffering of others who could not afford food.”

Iftar ostensibly ends the time of fasting, but treating it as an end would be an underestimation. For the spiritually



Photo: Dagne Abera

Muslim and Christian employees sharing Iftar

awakened mind, it is like a new beginning towards spiritual uplift. Such a person will analyse the experiences of the day and try to learn lessons from them. Thus, Iftar gives a glimpse of the boundless rewards that await man in the world hereafter.

Last Thursday, The Ethiopian Press Agency had arranged Iftar program at its premises for its Muslim employees. At the event, both Christians and Muslims have attended the program. Abdurezak Mohammed is a journalist at The Ethiopian Herald newspaper. For him, having such an event in the Agency is a true reflection of love and sign of tolerance.

According to Abdurezak, Iftar goes beyond filling the belly. “Sharing meals with Christian brothers and sisters has a significant meaning to me. We may have religious differences but, we have lots of

things to share in common. For this very reason, I consider the day special.”

Humanity is beyond religion. For that reason, sharing meals with individuals with different religious backgrounds creates more strong bondage and social attachments.

“Ethiopian Press Agency is old as press history in the country. However, it is for the first time in 81 years the Agency prepares an Iftar meal for its employees. This is another surprising experience for me and others.”

Ethiopian Christians and Muslims have lived in tolerance and love for more than 1,400 years. Despite several attempts to stir this strong attachment, it has never been successful. This strong social attachment and tolerance had been manifesting itself for centuries. Whenever Christians build a church, the Muslim community has role in that. This participation could be in the form

of providing money or directly involved in the construction process. The same is true for Christians. Whenever there are Muslim events, there is an active involvement of Christians. “Yesterday’s program at the Press Agency is a good indication for this. Despite the fact that it was Muslim brothers and sisters were the one who has direct role with Iftar, it was Christian brothers and sisters who arranged and managed the program.

Ethiopia is truly a land of tolerance and love. This is witnessed and testified by the Prophet Muhammad, when he sent the first Muslim refugees to Ethiopia.

As it is indicated in the Quran “...you will surely find that of ail people they who say: ‘We are Christians’, are closest to feeling affection for those who believe. This is because there are worshipful priests and monks among them, and because they are not arrogant.” (5:82).

This truly shows how Ethiopian Christians were (are) friendly to their Muslim brothers and sisters. Despite the fact that there were Arab neighbours with similar culture, the Prophet has preferred Ethiopia as a destination place for his followers.

According to Abdurezak, organizing events such as last Thursday’s have a key role and it is a message to those who try every means to create enmity among Ethiopians. It creates strong social bondage among people of different religions. Such kinds of events will narrow the gap of religious differences that may lead to conflict.



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AMU’s discussion with Indian staff

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Arba Minch University (AMU) has recently held a panel discussion with Indian lecturers on how to work in collaboration with their home country institutions on issues related to research, community service, and technology and innovation in the presence of Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia Shri Robert Shetkintong. The key points are included in this article.

AMU President Damtew Darza (PhD) noted that Ethiopia and India have a long-standing cooperative relationship in various fields, especially in the field of education in his opening remarks. “For the past 40 years, many Indians have been teaching in Ethiopian high schools.”

With the rapid expansion of higher education in the country over the past 20 years, the participation of Indian teachers in almost all universities has been significant. This underscores the historical role of the Indians in Ethiopia’s human resource development,” Damtew (PhD) said.

“At the moment Arba Minch University is working to become a leading research university in the country, in which India and Indian lecturers will play a key role in innovation, technology transfer, and creating collaboration. Hence, the forum will have a significant impact on creating mutual understanding,” he trusted.

By the same token, AMU Research and



Community Service Vice President Behailu Merdekiyos (PhD and Associate Professor of Global Health) said that the university has a responsibility to play its part in the efforts of the country to achieve in the fields of agriculture, health, education, mining, tourism, information communication, and other sectors since it is one of the eight research universities in the country, it in his welcome speech.

“AMU is ready to work with governmental and non-governmental organizations at home and abroad as it is difficult to fulfill its national responsibilities alone,” he said adding: “Hence, the program is designed to create enabling conditions for foreign lecturers working at the university to recognize the need and create links with various educational and research institutions, and industries in their respective countries to collaborate in various fields to create mutual understandings.”

Similarly, Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia Shri Robert Shetkintong on his part said that Ethiopia

and India established diplomatic relations in 1948 and the two countries will work together in various fields in a mutually benefiting manner.

“The two countries have been cooperating in the field of education for many years and many Indians still teach in Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions while Ethiopians are also attending higher education institutions in India,” he added.

The interest of Arba Minch University to work in collaboration with various institutions in India is encouraging. Besides, the Embassy will provide the necessary support to enable Indian lecturers to play a significant role in realizing the University’s needs, the Ambassador reaffirmed.

Regarding AMU’s cooperation with other nations, AMU Research Executive Director Tesfaye Habtemariam (PhD) has listed some for his part. “AMU is currently undertaking various collaborative projects with various local and foreign institutions. It is mainly working in collaboration with various institutions in Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, United

Kingdom, Indonesia, India, Germany, and other countries.”

As well, AMU is ready to work collaboratively with various institutions in agriculture, health, tropical diseases, tourism, anthropology, archeology, mining, and other fields. For the success of these mutual aids, it has developed enabling systems that create an auspicious environment, he indicated.

Currently, there are 127 foreign lecturers at the university, Tesfaye (PhD) said, adding that the foreign lecturers should understand the direction of the university and work hard to create and implement relationships with various institutions in the country.

On the forum, five collaborative works developed by Indian lecturers were presented including S. Babuskin’s presentation entitled “Establishment of Common Incubator and Training Facility for Dairy and Fruits Processing.”

The presentation indicated that more than 5 million people of Ethiopia depend on fruit and vegetable production. And 30 to 40 percent of the production is wasted for various reasons. “Therefore, the focus of the project is to establish dairy and fruit processing centers in collaboration with Indian institutions, train producers, and enable them to produce value-added products and reduce wastage,” he said.

In conclusion, other sister Ethiopian universities need to work collaboratively with both local and international higher learning institutions like AMU.



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the Ministry of Agriculture

Contribution of green legacy campaign for forestry development

Ethiopia's land features are characterized by mountainous and rugged topographic landscapes that are suitable for natural resources conservation including flora and fauna, water reservoirs and multiple functions. Therefore, landscapes and watersheds management through natural regeneration and restoration has important contribution for the country and beyond the territory.

Forest development and management is not a matter of choice, For Ethiopia, rather it's compulsory to ensure sustainable development and to achieve overarching Climate Resilient Green Economy. Some scholars reported that Ethiopia has about 40 per cent forest coverage.

However, to address forest problems, deforestation and enhance forest development, and thereby, improve forest goods and services that has crucial social, economic and environmental roles.

In 2011 EC, the Ethiopian government launched the ambitious Green Legacy campaign that set a milestone to plant 200 billion tree seedlings with in years. For the beginning, the annual plan was to plant 5 billion tree seedlings and 4.7 trees were achieved. Hence, it was registered to be 1st Green Legacy year.

All the campaign has shown that substantial government dedications towards green development actions, mobilizing stakeholders and forest development initiatives as a country.



By Following the Prime Minister national call, tree planting activities across different parts of the country took place properly and effectively at selective planting sites.

Consequently, the national and international Medias had broadcasted all events and the achievements of tree planting in the country including more than 350 million seedlings that had been planted on a single day. It shows that forestry development has a

critical role to address climate changes through mitigation and adaptation measures, which have national and international significance.

It also solves the problem of Hydro dams which have been under serious challenging issue due to watershed degradations led to soil erosion and siltation that impacts on electricity generation and power supply.

In general, Agroforestry practices have

critical roles to improve land management and productivity. The ultimate goal of tree planting is to enhance forest resources to provide improved goods and services sustainably. Ethiopia Green Legacy action looks forward to support further the country's inclusive green growth efforts.

Finally, in 2022, Ethiopia has planned to plant six billion tree seedlings all over the country for the coming summer.

The Role of the Media...

expected of them by triggering a number of conflicts in the country through their misinformation and defamation campaigns. This however does not include few media outlets that adhere to accenting the positive and the constrictive information for the public.

Let alone for the media, peace education has not been given enough focus even in the universities and institutes of higher learning in the country. Some politicians even question the importance of reconciliation denying the existence of any conflict among the people of Ethiopia to the conflict among the politicians in the country.

The press law of the country provides sanctions against those media companies that either broadcast or write on issues that could trigger conflicts among the people of Ethiopia but does not explicitly provided for the legal importance of peace and reconciliation in the functions of media companies.

Maintaining the necessary balance is an important factor for media reporting. If one could make an extensive research on the issue of balance and proper sourcing one could easily identify the existence of biases, imbalance and emotionalism in the deliberations of the media institutions in the country.

Given the state of affairs in which we find the Ethiopian media outlets, what is to be

done to make them well prepared to cover the National Dialogue and Reconciliation? The first thing that comes to mind is a rigorous training for reporters and editors from various media houses across the country on the objectives of Commission and the legal instruments, strategies, standard norms of conduct regarding the process of covering the events to be conducted at all levels in the government nomenclature.

Strict adherence to the rules and regulations set by the Commission and setting accountability in case of violations of norms and regulations is important to facilitate or operate media coverage on the deliberations of the conference and related activities.

Moreover, reporters need to gather information on countries that have previously conducted national dialogue and reconciliations.

Media houses need to handle broadcasting of public opinions, suggestion and concerns in a way that takes into account the cultural context and sensitivity of the opinions to be raised by the public.

So far very little is reported on the current and future activities of this independent Commission but reporters and editors are expected to gather the necessary information and act proactively in getting ready for their work in covering the events

with the necessary quality and journalistic ethics.

In its recent report the head of the Commission, Professor Mesfin Araya said his organization has divided its activities inn four stages including preparation, consultation, planning activities and implementation.

Indeed, conducting peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia benefits not only Ethiopia but it would also help to promote peaceful development in Africa. Given the fact that Ethiopia is well positioned and rooted in the socio-political and diplomatic affairs of Africa, the results of the dialogue and reconciliation in the country could set a good benchmark for the rest of African countries suffering from over dragged internal conflicts.

Although the country has no solid curriculum for peace education, journalists in Ethiopia can work with CSO and other local organizations in providing awareness creation programs on peace and reconciliation in the Ethiopian context.

The Ethiopian media outlets can prepare their own strategy on how they can support the Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission over the coming several months. They need to discharge their historical responsibilities by supporting all peace and reconciliation programmatic issues and events that the Commission

would organize.

The tasks and responsibilities bestowed upon the National Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission is not an isolated undertaking but it is part and parcel of the entire reform program of the country and the basis for all development programs the country is planning to implement.

Moreover, the media in this country need to work together through various associations including the Ethiopia Media Council which is dead silent on the issue and the Association of Ethiopian Journalists who for so many reasons are not as active as expected.

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Agency is expected to take the lions share in supporting the Commission by organizing multiple sets of trainings for journalists and media functionaries across the country in a bid to prepare a good ground for the upcoming National Dialogue for Peace and Reconciliation.

The Ethiopian media now have an excellent opportunity to use the deliberations of the council ass an experience sharing and in the areas of peace building and reporting on conflicts and potential threats for peace in the country. At any rate, a lot is expected from the Ethiopian media and they need to strive to keep up to their national expectations.

International

Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti to receive drier than normal rainfall: ICPAC

IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Center (ICPAC) forecasted Drier than normal conditions over much of Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea as well as parts of southern Sudan, north-eastern Kenya, south-eastern Uganda, and eastern Tanzania in the next month.

Normal rainfall expected over most of South Sudan, western Ethiopia, southern Uganda, parts of western and southern Kenya, Burundi, and northern Tanzania, it added.

Meanwhile wetter than normal condition is expected in Rwanda, northern Uganda, and cross border areas of Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.

Warmer than normal temperature conditions is expected over Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, eastern Kenya, and north-eastern Tanzania while normal temperature conditions is expected over parts of central and western South Sudan, western Rwanda



and Burundi, and southern and western Tanzania.

Moreover, cooler than normal conditions likely over western Kenya, southern South Sudan, much of Uganda, eastern Rwanda and Burundi, and parts of central and north-western Tanzania. (Source: ENA)

Climate change causing suffering in East African countries:

EMI Director General

Climate change induced challenges such as flood and drought are affecting African countries, especially East African countries, causing suffering on people's livelihood, Ethiopian Meteorology Institute (EMI) Director General said.

To solve the problems, Fetene Teshome stated that it is necessary to strengthen meteorological infrastructure and service of the continent to set up modern data collection and improve service capacity.

Speaking at the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Associations I (Africa) Management Group that started in Addis Ababa the director general said the meeting will discuss building capacities in the meteorological service sector to provide improved services.

WMO Regional Office for Africa Director, Amos Makarau said on his part that flooding and drought have been affecting developing African countries.

Africans need to, therefore, use their own resources to provide meteorological services



to overcome the challenges.

According to him, Ethiopia has used its potential to realize cloud computing technology and set an example for other Africans.

The recent drought in Ethiopia, repeated floods in East Africa and other effects of climate change continue to be a challenge for developing countries in the continent.

WMO has reportedly allocated 110 million USD for the modernization of its Africa office. (Source: ENA)

Auction

Right Holder: Elilta construction Machineries, Sale and rent
Judgment debtor:- Simplex Infrastructure Limited.

With regard the litigation between the verdict right holder and the Judgment debtor, as execution has not been effected in line with the award and the Judgment debtor has not accepted the court's summon letter, The Awsi Rassu Higher court has ruled, on 20 April, 2022 that the materials registered by the name of the Judgment debtor; construction machineries, different types of vehicles and frame work steels will be sold in Auction on 12/ May/2022.

Awsu Rassu Higher court

Notice

Regarding the case between Plaintiff: **Federal Prosecution General** and Defendant: **Mr. Spayro Fato** on the **Contraband** case held at **F/F/I/Court Lideta Bench 8th**; the court has rendered order so the defendants appear before the court 17/05/2022 on 10:00. If the defendants fail to appear on the next appointment, unless, the court will issue judgment in the ex-parte of defendants.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Federal First Instance Court

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Ethiopian Trading Businesses Corporation has allocated funds to be used for **Procurement of Constructions of 2B+G+10 Mixed Use Building at Addis Ababa Akaki Kaliti**. The Ethiopian Trading Businesses Corporation, **Procurement, property and facility management department** now invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified Firms/Bidder(s) for the procurement of:

No.	Type of work	Tender No.	Site
1	2B+G+10 Mixed Use Building at Addis Ababa Akaki Kaliti	ET-ETBC-NCB-13/2022	Addis Ababa

- Ethiopian Trading Businesses Corporation Bidding will be conducted through the **National Competitive Bidding (NCB)** Procedure and is open to all bidders.
- Domestic bidders who have an interest to participate in the bid shall have **Registered Contractors** of Grade One (1) BC and GC Contractors who can demonstrate adequate capacity and experience in similar work.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the central procurement Team at the address given below from **8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.**
- A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested bidders as of April 28, 2022, **Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. 12:00 noon.** On the submission of a written application to **Ethiopian Trading Businesses Corporation** Central procurement team and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **Birr 1,000.00 (ETB One Thousand birr only)** or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before 10:30 p.m. on May 20, 2022 Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders/representatives who choose to attend in person at the address below at **10:30 a.m. on May 20, 2022.**
- One Original and Two photo copies of technical proposal shall be produced in different sealed envelopes and each proposal will be sealed such a way that one original and one photo copy to be sealed in one envelop while the sealed photo copy will be sealed in another envelop

separately and labeled as "One Original and Two Photo copy" to be placed in another Outer envelope and all proposal documents collectively must be placed in the already bid box along with a separately sealed bid security: **ETB 500,000.00 (ETB Five Hundred Thousand birr only)** in CPO or un conditional Bank Guarantee, besides one Original and Two photo Copy of financial offer shall be produce in different sealed envelopes and must be placed in the bid box.

- Ethiopian Trading Businesses Corporation shall select the successful contractor by applying the least cost based selection method. Bidders must meet the first stage i.e. minimum 70% qualification criteria to pass the second stage i.e. financial proposal evaluation and comparison.
- Ethiopian Trading Businesses Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject all or parts of this bids
- Bidders are seriously advised to read and comply with all the instructions provided in this bidding documents
- All bids must be accompanied by
 - Contractor's registration Certificate from Ministry of Construction.
 - Trade license valid for 2014 registered.
 - Valid principal/Commercial/registration Certificate.
 - Valid Tax Clearance.
 - VAT registration Certificate and Tax payers registration certificate.
 - Registration Certificate in the suppliers list under public procurement and propriety Agency
- The address referred to above is.

Attention: Ethiopian Trading Businesses Corporation
Procurement, property and facility management department
Debrezeit Road, located around global hotel in front of Temenja Yazi
Commercial Bank of Ethiopia
P.O. Box 7858, Telephone No. 011-416 73 45/011-0114 669 336
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ethiopian Trading Businesses Corporation

Verbatim and Caption

Lemi Cement Project



“The Lemi cement project in Amhara region is one of the many historic projects that serves as a bridge to the future Ethiopia we want to be. North Shoa has a huge potential for development, and such big projects that are compatible with Ethiopia’s needs help to exploit the potential. Investors

that are engaged in the sector with multidimensional view for quality and speedy supply are partners in the sector,”

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

The Ramedan Month

In the month of Ramadan, we are reiterating that followers of all faiths have long lived in love that religious diversity should not be a means of pursuing the objectives of anti peace forces through instigating conflict from minor problems. Elders and religious fathers are also urged to teach their followers about peaceful coexistence as in the Holy Quran, where good spirits and good works are dominated the month of Ramadan. Regional and federal governments need to take the necessary measures against the perpetrators and discharge their governmental responsibility to save the nation from destruction. Noting that peace is both the first and the last option, the whole section of the society should stand for peace, the Amhara Regional State Islamic Affairs Higher Council President Sheikh Said Mohamed.



Sidama Yonth



The Sidama youth will have to strive for peace and prosperity of the country by upholding the many good cultural values that emanate from its identity. The youth should strengthen peace, cultural values that are vested deep in their culture and identity. The people of Sidama have got a response to the question of self-administration to be bestowed regional state status and the celebration of Fiche Chembalala will double the victory of your struggle, FDRE Armed Forces Chief of Staff Field Marshal Berhanu Jula.

Itelian Priest

The beautiful and attractive cultures in Ethiopia have made me live here for 50 years and Ethiopians must respect the culture of unity and solidarity and continue their country. Ethiopia is endowed with wonders of culture and history, Italian Priest of the Catholic Church Joseph Dittomasho.

