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Photo - Ashenafi Gudeta



## Adwa residents see durable peace on horizon

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- Adwa residents said the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) has turned their fortune for the

better and lifted them from complete darkness to normalcy and averted the tension that had lasted for two-year.

The residents told the visiting Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) reporter that the truce

has also created a glimpse of hope in the society and helped them to pursue their normal life without fear.

Haileselassie Estifanos, one of the  
*See Adwa residents ... Page 3*

## Ethiopian ambassadors receive recognition for exceptional contribution

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA—Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) has granted certificates of recognition for its ambassadors who had successful tenure completion and remarkable achievements in due course of running diplomatic career.

Handing over recognition certificates to fourteen ambassadors who have returned home up on completion of diplomatic service in their respective countries of deployment, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen said that all ambassadors have to receive

*See Ethiopian ambassadors ... Page 3*



## Ethiopian resumes regular flights to Mekelle

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopian Airlines has resumed its regular flights to Mekelle, Tigray region's capital as of yesterday.

The resumption of daily flights to Mekelle is part of the government's commitment to resume basic services following the peace agreement.

Hence, a passenger airplane departed from Addis Ababa Bole International Airport yesterday in the afternoon to Mekelle.

*See Ethiopian resumes ... Page 3*

## Experts underpin military, political engagement to thwart Shene

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- The Terrorist Shene has no clear political goal and defined structure, sources closer to the issue said, adding that the government has no ground to negotiate with the group without viable political desire rather than challenging the status quo.

*See Experts underpin ... Page 3*

Beefing up the private sector's role in the economy

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Incumbent's self-initiated efforts-oiling the wheels of peace implementations

Page 9

"I choose not to place 'dis' in my ability"

Page 10



Gutu Tesso (PhD)

## Amalgamation, technological, professional boost keep domestic banks competitiveness: Expert

BY TAMERU REGASA

**ADDIS ABABA** - The amalgamation of Ethiopia's domestic banks that is coupled with robust technological and professional buildup is the way that keeps them competitive in the wake of foreign firms' entry, a noted economist said.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, an economist Gutu Tesso (PhD) noted that local banks are expected to diversify business ventures, enhance professional competency and improve customer handling to remain competitive. Following the government's recent decision to open up the banking industry, it is expected that a-foreign banks with high portfolios are expected to join Ethiopia's market.

Explaining the importance of opening the banking industry for foreign firms, the expert pointed out that in a country with over 100 million plus population and a thriving economy, the entry of world-class banks is the order of the day.

The National Bank of Ethiopia has made commendable jobs to enhance the capacity and competitiveness of private banks by implementing viable policies. The recent decision to increase the 500 million Birr paid-up capital required for the establishment of banks to five billion is one clear indication.

Domestic firms are expected to enhance their use of up-to-date banking technologies, improve infrastructure, and invest in the professional capability of employees to compete with global counterparts. "I would like to recommend local private banks to recruit Ethiopian best minds that have been serving in different anchor banks including in U.S. and Europe.

## Ethio-Turkey bilateral ties crucial to defence tech transfer: Field Marshal

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA**—A delegation led by Ethiopian Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) Field Marshal Birhanu Jula has paid an official working visit to the Republic of Turkiye where he met and discussed with his counterpart Yasar Guler, Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces at the latter's office, according to ENDF.

The delegation also observed the level of technological development of Turkiye defence, ENDF said, adding that the Ethiopian delegation's visit will strengthen the old friendship between the two countries and will contribute significantly to the exchange of military experiences.

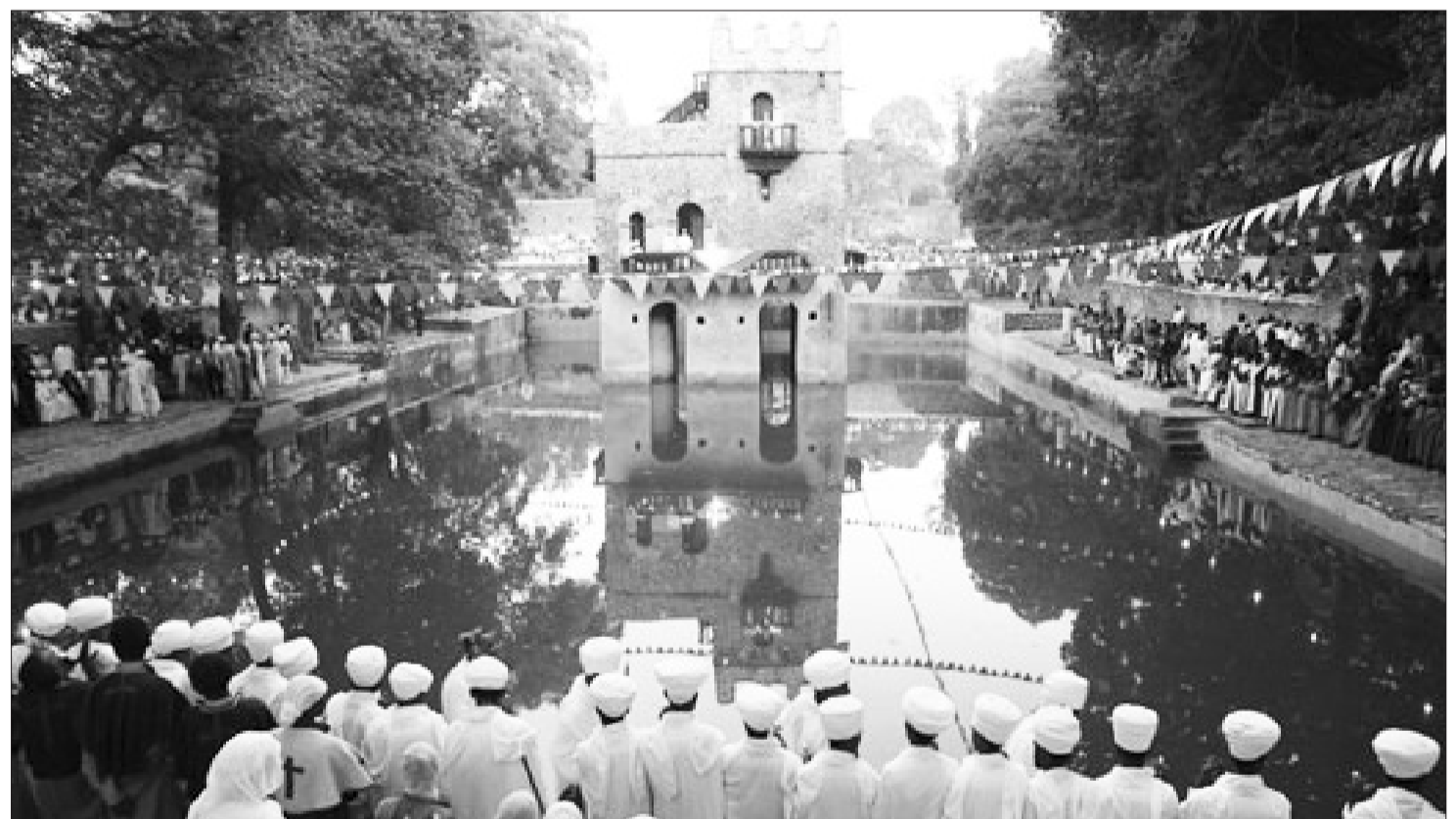
As to the source, in addition to the discussion between the two Chiefs of staff on military relations and other issues between the two countries, the delegation visited Turkiye's defence technology industries that contributed a lot to the modernization of the defence force and development of Turkiye.



It's also believed that the official visit is aimed at deepening the long-standing bilateral relationships between the two armies and act as a catalyst for closer coordination and cooperation between the two countries, which in turn fosters the level of the bilateral relations in military

practices, a hostage of strategic issues.

Recently, the Council of Ministers has approved a draft bill on military cooperation agreement with the republic of Turkey, including agreement on joint military exercise, anti-piracy collaboration, cyber-attack prevention and others.



## Amhara State eyes religious festivities to revive tourism sector

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA**- Amhara State Culture and Tourism Bureau expressed its readiness to utilize the Christmas and Epiphany festivities that are set to be marked in Lalibela and Gondar towns to revive the war and COVID-19-impacted sector.

The Bureau Deputy Head Abay Mengiste told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that consolidated efforts have been carried out to welcome over 750,000 tourists in Gondar and over 1.5 million in Lalibela. To make this real, the bureau is working closely with various relevant stakeholders that help to make the festivities peaceful and vibrant.

Star-designated hotels, lodges, and other tourist attraction sites are fully ready to avail quality services to local and international guests at recommended prices and to make their stay in Gondar memorable. "The bureau aims to capitalize on these festivities to enhance the flow of tourists and ease the sector's glitch in the years to come."

Different committees are set up to provide seamless services and amenities including water, electricity, security, and others to guests, he added.

Gondar City Culture and Tourism Bureau Head Chalachew Dagnaw, who also regarded the festivities as instruments to revive the tourism industry, indicated the place where the

arks stayed is cleaned and prepared by local youth. "Apart from the hotel's preparation, the main roads in Gondar have been decorated with different lights to create an atmosphere of festivity among the guests and residents.

Chalachew further stated that plan was set to collect two billion Birr from tourism activities in Gondar and the bureau is tirelessly working to increase the number of tourists from 326,000 to 750,000 in the current fiscal year. The town secured one billion Birr from the tourism sector in the last fiscal year.

It is to be recalled that the Amhara State chose Lalibela and Gondar towns to mark the forthcoming Christmas and Epiphany festivities at the state level.

## Ethiopian resumes...

The resumption of flights to Mekelle city demonstrates the government's commitment to practically implement the peace agreement.

Some passengers who spoke to ENA expressed their happiness about the resumption of the flight to Mekelle, adding that it is an expression of the government's commitment to implementing the peace agreement.

During his media briefing yesterday, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO, Mesfin Tasew said the resumption of flights to Mekelle is a very good news.

The CEO pointed out that the resumption of flights would help strengthen the implementation of peace process, reintegrate families, facilitate business, humanitarian aid, and tourism.

A high-level government delegation led by Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives, Tagesse Chafo, and



composed of CEOs of various service providing institutions including Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO, Mesfin Tasew, went to Mekelle and held discussions with residents and TPLF leaders on ways of strengthening resumption of services.

## Ethiopian ambassadors...

recognition and praise for their commitment and the ambassadors and diplomats did great deed in protecting the national interest of the country particularly at trying time during the war.

He further stated that they were more than effective in preserving Ethiopia's interests, living up to Ethiopians aspirations and the country's rich heritage. Despite dynamic and unpredictable nature of global diplomacy, Ethiopian diplomats exerted their utmost effort in protecting their country's national interest, he indicated.

Accordingly, Taye AtskeSelassie, Henok Tefera, Zenebe Kebede, Teshome Toga, AlemsteshayMeseret, Alemayehu Tegenu, Abdulfetha Abdullahi, Suleman Dedefo, Reta Alemu, Tizita Mulugeta, Mulu Solomon, Woinshet Tadesse, Hassan Taju and Meles Alem, are the Ambassadors who have been awarded the certificate by the Deputy Premier for successfully discharging their responsibilities during their tenure in the respective countries they were dispatched.

He also recalled that Ethiopia has achieved remarkable diplomatic successes over the last two years via addressing important issues in bilateral and multilateral fronts despite challenges amid their trek.

He mentioned the negotiations over the construction and filling of Abay Dam as well as the Pretoria Peace Deal, as examples of the successful outcomes of Ethiopia's insistence on solving matters guided by the maxim, "African Solutions to African Problems."

"The success of the ministry's endeavors against all the odds is admirable, and the need to take lessons has to be proactive, and follow a pragmatic approach towards keeping balance in the shifting geopolitics of the world," he added.

## Adwa residents...

residents, said that the conflict between the brotherly and sisterly people of Ethiopia is terrible and has impacted the life of many. As sustainable peace can be ensured by such an approach, the people of Tigray should support the efforts of the government to restore law and order.

As to him, repairing the damaged infrastructure, resuming essential services, ensuring peace and stability as well as enabling the delivery of goods and services into Tigray are the homework of the federal government.

"If there is peace, there is bread, education, prosperity; we need the success of CoHA to have sustainable peace. The peace situation in Adwa has been improving and

the past two years' gave us a hard lesson," Teacher Abraham Assefa said.

Thanking the federal government coordinators who saved the local community from starvation and other hardships, another resident Jemal Mohammed noted that the two parties should strengthen their commitment to sustain the peace process.

As to residents, two years of conflict resulted in the sacrifice of citizens that would have contributed for development.

Meanwhile, Adwa Federal Government Coordinator EndaluMosisa said the federal government has been doing its best to enable Adwa and surrounding people back to normalcy. Identifying the level of

damaged institutions and other activities have been finalized to resume services in schools, health centers, hospitals, and others. Two coordinators are assigned for each kebele to lead the resumption of services.

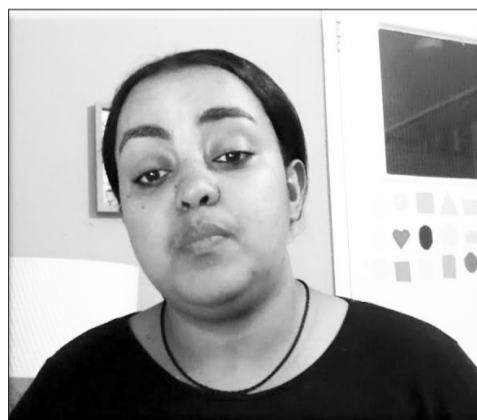
Temporary police stations were also established to prevent illegal and criminal activities, and police have been giving 24 hours protection upon identifying areas that witnessed security problems. Various stolen properties have been seized and given back rightful owners and by establishing temporary structures, ensuring peace and stability, resuming services and others, Adwa residents are now leading normal life, Endalu remarked.

## Experts underpin...

Approached by the local media, the sources indicated that a determined military operation coupled with meticulous political engagement are practical measures to contain the destructive activities of the criminal faction.

Lawyer, Political and Security Analyst Blen Mamo said that there are groups against the benefit of Ethiopian /Oromo/ people and supporting the faction for their civil survival and economic benefits. At this time, suggesting the need to negotiate with Shene is too early as the agreement between the government and TPLF is on the way for implementation.

Derese Getachew (PhD), Associate



Professor of Sociology at Iona University, said for his part that some elite's identity and interest crisis enabled them to create Shene. "If there are no individuals who



support its activity, the faction would not be a threat for civilians and the country as a whole. Taking a resolute military measure, clearing Shene's

structure and bringing its supporters to justice are worth consideration by the government."

Noting the group has no legitimacy to sit for discussion with the government; the expert further highlighted that taking strong military measures is a critical and permanent solution to curb its criminal activities. Due attention has also been given to fill the gap that Shene sympathizers have created in the government structure.

The armed group is a vessel for Ethiopia's historical enemies and some corrupts and criminals are supporting the faction to hide their illegal doings, Derese noted.

# Opinion

## PM Abiy Ahmed in Washington DC: He Came, He Saw, He Conquered With...

BY ALMARIAM

### PART ONE

**Veni, vidi, vici – I came, I saw, I conquered.**

Legend has it, Julius Caesar, following his quick victory – five days- at the Battle of Zela in 47 BC, informed the Roman Senate, “Veni, vidi, vici.” “I came. I saw. I conquered.”

*Caesar conquered by the sword!*

In mid-December 2022, Abiy Ahmed came to America to attend the Second US-Africa Summit, and he too is entitled to declare, “Veni, vidi, vici.”

*Abiy Ahmed conquered by the word! In 72 hours flat!*

Abiy Ahmed came, saw and conquered with nothing more than integrity, sincerity, probity, positivity, humility, reason, logic, common sense, candor, confidence, fair- and open-mindedness, good faith, good will and love.

Indeed, “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” Matthew 22:39

How difficult it must be to practice the precept, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44)

For the past two years, Ethiopian-US relations have been at their lowest point. I describe the bilateral relations over the past two years as hostile to the point of being mortal enemies. (But that is likely a view shaded by my own obdurate pessimism, skepticism and cynicism.)

There is no need to get into the details that have dominated the rancorous relations between the two countries. It was a relationship that produced the Apocalypse of the Three “Ds” (Death, Destruction, and Displacement) in Ethiopia.

There is no public record what the two leaders talked about formally or chit-chatted informally. Contrary to my tale of doom and gloom, the body language of the two leaders spoke volumes.

Those familiar with the forensic analysis of body language can make important conclusions from the two leaders’ facial expressions, gestures, stances and use of personal space depicted in the various photographs.

In various pictures, the two leaders are seen smiling and laughing without any trace of tension in their facial expressions. They maintained eye contact at all times. PM Abiy is seen listening attentively (one of his fortes) to President Biden.

President Biden is seen gesturing, touching, tapping and holding PM Abiy’s arm as they sat talking to each other. President Biden holds PM Abiy’s arms as they spoke standing up.

As they stood and sat down, their personal space was very close, probably half an arm’s length, something that can be described as being within “intimate personal space.” Their posture showed confidence and warmth in each other’s presence.

Both leaders were relaxed and mirrored each other’s body language. Based on a forensic analysis of their body language, we may



reasonably conclude they shared feelings of friendship, comfort in each other’s presence, common understanding, trust, good will, rapport, and appreciation.

*The fact of the matter is that PM Abiy’s successful diplomacy in the US adds honor, dignity and grandeur to Ethiopia!*

### 2022 World Cup- Politics and diplomacy are football games

If there is one thing that truly unites the world, it is football (soccer for Americans). It is estimated one-half billion people play it and four billion watch it. Kings, presidents and prime ministers as well as paupers, children, men and women, watch football.

Football transcends age, race, gender, culture, or nationality. If there is such a thing as a universal religion, it is football. Football brings people together, competitively and cooperatively.

Football is not all fun and games. The Football War was fought in 1969 with tanks and planes between Honduras and El Salvador resulting in mass casualties and displacement. “Football hooliganism” has been a plague as fans engage in criminal acts and destructive behavior at football events.

I would argue the 2022 World Cup brought Ethiopia and America together after two years of strained relations, to put it mildly. PM Abiy Ahmed and President Joe Biden watched the game between Morocco and France and chit-chatted. The only thing missing was the popcorn.

A scientific study shows there is “tribal love” among football fans. I guess we all belong to the original tribe from the “Cradle of Humankind.”

### Power of conversation (Power of the Word)

There is the art of conversation and the art of the BS. *For PM Abiy, everything is discussable and negotiable except Ethiopian unity, Ethiopian territorial integrity and Ethiopian sovereignty.*

In my experience, the vast majority of people love to talk but have a woefully underdeveloped sense of listening. The power of conversation is that it almost always improves understanding and helps build relationships. People talking with goodwill and in good faith can do a lot of good.

They are able to see new and better opportunities and explore mutually beneficial possibilities. They bring out and discuss hidden problems and issues and resolve them in a give and take exchange. They can come up with new ideas, share knowledge and narrow their differences.

*PM Abiy has proven beyond a shadow of doubt the irresistible power of conversation and dialogue in solving problems.*

In 2022, PM Abiy brought about a peace agreement resolving the conflict in Northern Ethiopia and ensuring all differences going forward will be resolved by conversation and dialogue.

PM Abiy and the Ethiopian Parliament set up a National Dialogue Commission to resolve problems in Ethiopia through conversation and dialogue.

In 2019, PM Abiy was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for initiating a conversation and dialogue with President Isaias Afewerki and together ending the no peace, no war situation between the two countries.

In 2019, PM Abiy Ahmed played a key role in the Sudan during negotiations (conversation

and dialogue) between protestors and the provisional military council which currently rules Sudan.

In 2019, PM Abiy Ahmed also played a key role in helping during negotiations (conversation and dialogue) the contending parties in South Sudan achieve a peace deal.

Ethiopia and Kenya have been key allies in Somalia’s peace and security matters particularly in fighting terrorism and supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and strengthening regional security.

PM Abiy was the first responder in resolving the decades of animosity between Somalia and Eritrea helping the two countries establish diplomatic ties.

PM Abiy was the first responder in the easing of tensions between Eritrea and Djibouti.

PM Abiy was the first responder in mediating a maritime border issue on the Indian Ocean between Kenya and Somalia. PM Abiy has been Africa’s first responder for peace.

Unfortunately, those blinded by ambition for power and those willfully blind to facts refuse to acknowledge PM Abiy’s role as an African, indeed global, peacemaker extraordinaire.

Contrary to my wildest expectations, PM Abiy has changed the dynamics of US-Ethiopia relations during the three days of the US-Africa Summit.

I don’t exactly know how to characterize the state of relations between the two countries. *Is it rapprochement? Detente? Peace? Accord?* Whatever it is, I will never understand how he did it! But I give him all the credit.

More than that, I thank him for persistently and incorrigibly, come hell or high water, choosing the path of peace.

Nelson Mandela said, “If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.”

I say, before you work with him, you must talk to him/her; engage him/her in an honest conversation.

President Biden (wink, wink) told African leaders at the Business Forum, “Folks, I want to thank you all for being here, particularly since I said Morocco is about to play as the first African nation in the semi-finals of the World Cup. (Applause)

I guess Biden’s team lost to France. President Biden and PM Abiy watching the game together defused the tensions that had built up over the past couple of years.

The two leaders did not talk to each other until they spoke for the first time by phone on January 12, 2022.

Their discussions were outwardly cordial, but there was no question the two leaders did not agree on the nature or resolution of the conflict in northern Ethiopia. On November 2, 2022, a peace agreement was reached which changed the bilateral playing field for the two countries.

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

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The Ethiopian Herald

## Editorial

### It's time for National Dialogue!

Expectantly, the National Dialogue has long been considered as a highly anticipated solution for the protracted political problems of the country. Indeed, dialogue among people is relatively a viable solution for the problems that arise among them. It avoids the tendency of resorting to violence as a means to address their differences.

Considering the significance of politicians, parties and scholars have also been propounding the need for dialogue. So far various factors were hampering the efforts to run a National Dialogue in the country. Needless to mention in the past the war in the northern part of the country was also a formidable challenge that delayed the convening of such worthwhile events in the country. Now that the situation in the northern part of the country is getting back to normal the NDC should continue to take all opportunities to facilitate the dialogue. Of course it has been doing its best to materialize the long awaited national dialogue for so long.

It is to be recalled that the signing of the peace deal in Pretoria, South Africa, in early November was a stark moment that suddenly changed the dynamics of the war that raged in the region. Ever since that moment, things are progressing as swiftly as we observed in the last two months. Following the Pretoria agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, the two sides have signed the implementation agreement in Nairobi, Kenya. After conducting a series of effective meetings and engagements in parties of Tigray they again met in Nairobi for process and updates which were still successful.

What is more awesome is that the federal government and TPLF are coming closer to enforce the accord. Unlike the previous meetings, the federal government visit to Mekelle was not accompanied by mediators. Rather all relevant government officials were able to conduct a fraternal working visit to the region which met a warm welcome from the representatives of TPLF.

The delegation that headed to Tigray consists of senior government officials of major government institutions like Ethiopian Airlines, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Ethio telecom and the like that are in charge of leading the restoration of the vital services to the region. With the earnest collaboration of the institutions, there are hopes that the situation in Tigray improves and be back to normal soon.

Among the delegation is the leadership of the National Dialogue Commission (NDC). Being part of the delegation that visited Tigray in the first ever travel of the federal government to the region is a monumental step and shows the significance given to the issue. Indeed the dialogue is a top national priority that must not be postponed any further. The commission has to run the process along with the fast tide of political development in the region and the nation at large. As the saying goes 'Strike when the iron is hot', it is the right time to effectively conduct the long-awaited dialogue as everyone is now highly motivated and ready for change. Hence, realizing the significance of this dialogue, all relevant stakeholders ought to converge their focus and resources to assist the commission to accomplish this historic mission.

## Opinion

### Time for waning hostility and waxing fraternity

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is high time in Ethiopia to replace the murky and painful scenario from which all citizens across the globe have long been suffering with an appealing context instead.

Yes, Ethiopia is now being perfumed with an alluring air rife in its soil following the peace chronicle engraved in Pretoria, South Africa between the federal government and TPLF. It seems unequivocally these days that lasting peace is knocking Ethiopia's door as the agreeing parties have started sealing the deal in accordance with the oath they made earlier, and swearer to translate words into practical actions. They are working from the bottom of their heart to perpetually soothe the sullen of fellow citizens on both sides.

Needless to state, Ethiopians all over the world in general and all walks of life at home in particular have been under a revolting circumstance for two plus years as they are thinking of time sparking peace rays with a view to helping them breathe a sigh of relief.

Many have been heard of saying that Ethiopians can easily be indulged in a persistent civil war as they have been well dismantled and isolated following the wrong seed sown for the same purpose. However, their mere destruction propaganda has turned upside down and

all citizens started appreciating the steps taken in Pretoria, South Africa and Nairobi, too.

Hence, to make the peace deal a success, agreeing parties have to work hard to create a level negotiating format where they can expect that views, grievances and proposals will be addressed on their merit rather than taking the bold step as a mere function of military might. This will strengthen their confidence in the possibility of a fair negotiated solution and will prod the parties to develop their ability to negotiate rather than relying on potentials to impose.

As far as overcoming implementation difficulties is concerned, the agreeing bodies should abide by the terms of peace accord and possible ways have to be devised keeping in mind the functions that the international community will perform in terms of providing them with the required technical as well as financial supports, not dictating mechanisms.

As far as my understanding is concerned, it is really high time for both Ethiopian citizens to well narrow down the gaps and minor differences which can be potential loopholes for internal and external foes, since no one can come and act responsibly to help the nation seize the ladder of success thereby attaining its long aspired vision of being a middle income country within the shortest time possible.

The need for proper implementation of

the peace deal verse by verse and quick and effective provision of rehabilitating and reconstructing institutions as well as plan execution recommends the inclusion of the best experiences of other countries employing fruitful negotiations and close talks.

Thanks to all who have taken the very step, citizens have started trekking from wartime to peacetime, the leverage enjoyed by the two agreeing parties; the authority they exert over their followers will tend to decrease tensions, anxieties and fearful living ways. Besides, their ability to impose or sell the middle ground to segments of the society at the grassroots level, has to be well consolidated to bring about lasting peace as the community down the road is the owner of all faces of engagements, be it good or bad, constructive or destructive.

From the point of view of the relationship between the peace process and society at large, the risk is the shrinking and fragmentation of the agreement's social and political basis and the possibility of a resurgence of political polarization. As of this minute on, political conspiracy and sly approach has to be curbed if the two bodies have shown keen interest to create great Ethiopia. If they think on the contrary however neither of them would benefit out of the scheme.

The most important notion of which we all have to be stringently aware is as

extraneous, utopian demands placed on the peace process by donors can steer the process away from the course of political realism essential to its success at home, all citizens have to be determined enough to push the peace deal to the end prioritizing the sovereignty of their country. True, other issues will be confidently dealt with after peace since it is the unwavering basis of all activities performed in the nation.

Principally, mutual trust between the agreeing parties and armed forces has to be well nurtured as there is no substitute for the armed forces' mutual confidence in their respective intentions.

Plainly, the current position of the federal government and TPLF usually mirrors one another to develop their willingness and ability to accept a political settlement of the country. As to me, both believe that the motivation behind the other party's decision to negotiate has to come up with ultimate goal to defeat adversary. Such a common ground is quite relevant as long as they are utterly keen to declare peace in the nation. In simple terms, the recently crafted peace scheme would no doubt help wane hostility and wax fraternity.

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

# Business & Economy

## Beefing up the private sector's role in the economy

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

During the imperial era, though the nation's economy was very small as compared to today, the private sector had its own role particularly in modern agriculture flourished in the Awash valley, in Arsi, Setithumara and Wolayta areas. It also had involved in import and export business and contributed to the nation hard currency earning venture.

That time, to protect the interest of the private sector, the chamber of commerce had been established. However, the advent of the Ethiopian revolution broke forth in 1974 and the assumption of power of the socialist oriented Derg crippled the private sector's aspiration and confiscated its properties. Since then, the chamber has not been able to work independently.

Birhane Mewa served as the former president of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and sectorial associations returned home from abroad following the regime change four years ago. Currently, he is in the process to establish a pharmaceutical industry with 24 million US Dollar investments. Recently, he made an interview with local media. While explaining about the establishment of chamber of commerce since the imperial time, he said that firstly in the imperial era the chamber was established as the Chamber of the Addis Ababa Traders; but later on, it was named as the Ethiopian Traders Chamber. That time the chamber was independent because it had an objective in advising the government and proposed ideas for policy improvement and its relation with the government was fairly good.

When the Derg assumed power, the economic system was changed. Being member of the chamber became obligatory. Therefore, when traders wanted to get license, they were obliged to be member. In addition, the person was required to pay monthly contribution in cash. The leadership of the chamber were removed and replaced by the new ones.

Out of the 11 members of the board of the chamber, 9 of them were from the government corporation. From the side of business men, there was only one board member, Wubishet Workalemahu, the renowned advertising company owner appointed as vice president. That time Birhane Mewa was the vice president of the Ethiopian Private Manufacturing Industry and in order to strengthen the chamber, he served as a vice president.

Later on, Kihbour Gehna, the renowned economist became president of the chamber. Again after fierce competition, Birhane himself was reelected as a president. The objective of the establishment of chamber of commerce was that to generate ideas that can be utilized as an input when the government prepares draft laws with regard to the business so that the laws do go in line with the interest of chamber members.

The second objective of the chamber is providing consultancy service to the business community. It established a radio station to disseminate valuable information and ideas regarding business to the public



**The private sector includes both local and foreign investment. But the local private sector is more valuable than the foreign one. When severe situation occurs the foreign investors might repatriate their capital to somewhere else because they have their own country and other investment destiny. But the local investor has no other country than his native country**

which received international award by its good performance. The award was given by South Africa named as "The Best Chamber in Africa". As to Birhane, while he was in his presidency, the former regime pursued a divisive policy.

As a result, misunderstanding and conflict was prevailed between the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and the chambers established in cities of the regions. Hence, when he became president his priority issue was creating enabling environment to all chambers to come together and narrow the differences among them.

He exerted great effort to change the regions chamber attitude towards the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and to look it as partner rather than foe. To that end, he provided some trainings and technical support to strengthen them. In addition to that, there was a plan to repatriate the chamber properties and land holding confiscated by the Derg regime.

The place which is serving as an exhibition center at the moment is reinstated to the chamber by the current government. By now, the construction of the new head office is undergoing and the size of the land is more than 100 thousand square meter. Asked how he could define the role of the private sector as compared to that of the public in the economy, he said that in the view of fundamental principle, the free market economy considers the private sector as the back bone. The private sector plays crucial role.

When it was in power, the earlier regime did not recognize the private sector as a partner. To perpetuate its power, it created its own so called private entities which move in his orbit as if they were endowments. And later they named as the government development organizations.

They are supported not only to compete with the private sector but to play a dominant role in the business sector. To that extent, they were supported by information, finance; bureaucratic facilities and such practice weaken the private sector. The trend is still witnessed and the problems created that time have existed to date. They are intermingled with media and political parties. There are also numerous business

firms which have affinity with parties. There are also opportunist traders which are backed by the party and have privilege to get loan access from banks. They are also allowed to import goods free of tax and sell in advantageous price.

To tell the fact as to Birhane, there are few business entities grew up by their own effort and professional integrity. He further said that, an inappropriate marriage between political parties and the business entities is not an outdated practice. Even it came today by changing its feature. Whenever one asks with regard to a business firm he can trace it which is behind that business. Therefore, the legible private sector should be represented by the chamber of commerce.

The business entity should be free from political party affiliation. When trader is defined it has to comprise actors from retailers in the traditional market up to the factory and bank owner. They have common interest. They need the chamber which defend their interest. Nevertheless, still conducive environment is not created to chambers to empower themselves. Conflict and misunderstanding among various chambers is prevailed. There are still unresolved problems. It should be understood that the fate of the nation's economy is determined by the strong and empowered private sector.

The private sector includes both local and foreign investment. But the local private sector is more valuable than the foreign one. When severe situation occurs the foreign investors might repatriate their capital to somewhere else because they have their own country and other investment destiny. But the local investor has no other country than his native country. Foreign investor has the right to repatriate his profit to the country of origin. He will take his capital when he faces uncertainty.

True private sector is created naturally. If you go Mercato you come across with crowded people unable to pass by but all you see are exchanging their goods and services through purchasing and selling. No one is government employee and salaried and the private sector emerges in such activities. Creating conducive environment to the business is vital and in addition to supporting the sector, inspection is needed.

As to Birhane, there is affinity between the private sector and the political parties even in the USA. The sector finances various parties and assumed the practice as legal bribe. Corruption is official but they call it as lobbying. But when you examine, it is corruption they do not consider as crime but at the same time there is supervision. In Ethiopia political parties establish their business and derive their income. The established business entities have a duty to support the parties which politically sponsored. But what is worse is when parties themselves engage in business. What prevails in our country is blatant which is immoral and illegal. Therefore, parties must be completely banned from such activities.

# Art & Culture

## Seal the deal

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Unknowingly or calculatingly,  
Things were made wretched and extremely ugly,  
Millions of lives have been claimed,  
Decisive institutions were demolished,  
Meaningful national wealth has been shattered,  
There are of course pull or push factors,  
From the side of terrorists' masters,  
It is inevitable to happen,  
Claiming lives, destructing properties,  
And even witnessing inhumane circumstances,  
For solid twenty-four months,  
Things would have been reversed,  
And short contained,  
Had warring parties closely discussed,  
And tied heart-to-heart,  
Devoid of ill intent,  
Now wrongdoings attract negotiation,  
A good step,  
After Peace deal and confession,  
Collaboratively to help citizens breathe a sigh of relief,  
Closing chapters of hostility, gloomy trend,  
Is unequivocally worth appreciating and grand,  
What matters is sealing the deal,  
To become quite fruitful,  
All Ethiopians from both sides,  
Waiting for the practical move,  
The concrete and tangible step,  
To declare lasting peace and fill the wider gap,



Walk the talk in no time,  
To prevent further crime,  
Seal the deal,  
Walk the talk,  
Either side has to ignore ill-advice,  
Unrewarding and worthless conspiracies,  
Taking weaknesses into account,  
Those who dislike Ethiopia's change,  
growth,  
Have never slept and become restless,  
To hold country's progress back,

And to make it all the time aid dependent,  
Laughing at it away from horizon,  
Dividing it into conflict zone,  
Let's be well aware of tricks,  
As no one benefits out of chaos,  
Turmoil and unrest,  
We have to capitalize on the best,  
No doubt,  
Their sly move can be bent,  
Via coordination and being smart,  
Of the indispensable measures to trek,

Citizens at home and abroad,  
Should act on the ground,  
Make everyone their friend,  
With district territory, being bordered,  
Have to move in unison, and exert utmost effort,  
To make their country peaceful, quite great,  
We had better get all sources of enmity dried,  
Let Ethiopia be our best pride,  
Have to produce bright guide,  
The peace deal has to be an eternal trek,  
To demolish hostility, to sustainably break,  
Seal the deal, walk the talk, have appeasing nation,  
For the next generation,  
Sure, Ethiopia is equaled by none,  
As endowed with what the earth does have,  
For instance with a weather compatible  
With every phenomenon,  
Tangible, intangible resources to help,  
It defeat dependency, flourish democracy,  
Within the continent or others,  
Have to establish constructive ties,  
With a balanced and mutual relations,  
No more interfering in its affairs,  
Burdening undue influence,  
Game over!  
Say always cheers, seal the deal, and declare independence!  
Defeating conspiracy, interference,  
ethnocentric clashes,  
Abyssinia prevails!!!  
Seeing for good anti-peace, evil phobia,  
Long live Ethiopia!!!

## Happiness

SENAIT G/HIWOT

Many people yearn for this feeling but they don't experience it as they would like ... do you know why? It is because their mind tries to control everything and doesn't go with the flow. When we surrender to life, it becomes enjoyable until the mind takes part and makes speculations and judgments.

When we go beyond our minds there is an observer or energy in us. It is what we call life... it is what continues after our death. It is a pure state of stillness and joy. We experience it whenever the mind becomes silent...

Different mental issues come with identifying ourselves with the thoughts in our mind... but if we look close enough we will realize that we are not the one who initiates the thoughts we think... they mechanically appear in to our consciousness

The most empowering thing we realize with observation is that we are not bound by the thoughts we think.



# Indepth

## The major highlights of the year 2022

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

Every year when it ends there is always the tendency to look back and see what has been achieved and what has failed and when it comes to governments or countries it is even more complex than what individuals may do. At the beginning of every year it is usual to make resolutions of New Year or pledges that we all commit to fulfilling. The land mark of the New Year prepares the ground to make changes and improve what has not been fulfilled during the just ended year. Likewise, Ethiopia has had positive sides as well as not so positive ones because things may not have gone as anticipated or desired or unpredicted events took place.

In any case, we can conclude that 2022 has been a very significant year for Ethiopia. The most outstanding event of the year is probably the reaching of the Pretoria Deal with the TPLF that practically ended the two- year old hostilities and violence in the north even if many critics say there may still remain even more challenging times of putting the words into practice. Many refer to the saying 'the devil is in the details' but for Ethiopians the fact that there has been a peace arrangement and this has completely changed the image of the country vis a vis the entire world is a huge victory.

As soon as the peace deal was signed what the premier announced was that it was 'a huge victory for Ethiopia' irrespective of which side one could be. It is the country Ethiopia that resulted victorious to the disappointment of all those who were arguing that the country would be 'balkanized' and there would be several weak states instead of one united country that is capable of raising the standard of living of its citizens to a new high if unity is guaranteed and peace is assured.

We all know how much the two year war between the Federal government and TPLF cost the country's resources and how the economy had to suffer due to the shift of attention from the economic projects and programs to safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of the nation. It was priority number one and practically every attention was directed to find a solution to the problem in the north. In the meantime only a part of the attention to other issues of the country was addressed. Particularly regional states such as Amhara and Afar were the ones that were in the frontline of the hostilities and suffered more than any other part of Ethiopia beside Tigray region which was practically run by TPLF.

The consequences of the conflict in the north had international implications as well because many of Ethiopia's traditional allies took a stand that was not palatable to the interests of Ethiopia. Even international organisations such as the UN were not very friendly with Ethiopia because they did not fully acknowledge the real facts regarding the

conflict in the north and only after the peace deal of Pretoria did things begin to turn Ethiopia's way. In fact Ethiopia resulted victorious because it once again regained its international status and it managed to solve its internal problem with internal means and only the African Union envoys were allowed to take part in the negotiations and help prepare the terms of the pact.

So Ethiopia avoided the imposition of the terms of outside countries and avoided the blackmail of certain countries who wanted to dictate the terms of the peace deal. For a sovereign country such as Ethiopia, with a history of rejection to any form of colonialism or dominion, the Pretoria Peace Deal was considered as another victory and this can be taken as one of the most important stories of the year 2022.

The year 2022 was also the year in which the all-inclusive National Dialogue Commission was first formed and launched with the members and commissioners selected and assigned with their respective tasks. The terms of this national dialogue have been described to the nation inviting all parties to take part in the discussions. In fact many believe this commission is the hope of the country's future so that all outstanding issues in the country would be faced and resolved. There will be no one interest group left out of this extensive discussion because as the commissioners explained efforts will be made to include every one and hear their point of view within the frame work of the constitution and the laws of the country.

There will be no limits of expression of ideas and healthy discussions would be staged until a sort of consensus is reached. There will be time to distinguish facts from opinions and activists' propaganda and preaching from the actual facts on the ground. History will be distinguished from the current reality and there will be no attempt to score points based on history. Like in any other country, it is admitted that Ethiopia as well has passed several epochs of wars, conflicts and violence in various parts of the country under the leadership of this one or that one from this ethnic group or that one. But this actually belongs to history and what we need to do is admit those events and the errors if any because it is also easy to see errors with the benefit of hindsight. But there should be the realization that there can be no fair judgment with the parameters or standards of today.

Facts that belong to a hundred years ago or even further in the past cannot be judged with the standards of today and that is what has happened in all other countries when new states have been formed. We can refer to the history of many European or American countries and the way they settled their nations is by coming to terms with the past no matter how unjust and violent they were against this nationality or that one. The scars of history might

remain but they should not be allowed to disrupt the lives of the current generation who have nothing to do with the events of a hundred years ago or even further back in time.

History is full of such episodes in every country but it should not be a factor that determines the lives of millions today. There is no doubt that the past belongs to the past and should only serve to teach us not to commit the same errors like in the past. The age of imperialism has come to terminate and now all peoples should be allowed to enjoy their freedom and equality in any circumstance. If we do not learn from the past errors and miscalculations, injustices and sufferings we are condemned to repeat them and the sufferings will continue even today. We will not be able to plan the future and do what is necessary to grow economically and reach where others have reached.

Nationalism may still be a key issue in every country where there are multiple nations or groups of people with their own natural features such as language, customs and beliefs but that has not prevented them from living together with others in equality and reciprocal respect. That is what the national dialogue commission is trying to do in preparing the platform to bring forward every idea and proposition that would help create a multinational country living in equality and justice.

Another huge success the year 2022 recorded has been the third filling of the GERD, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam with the Nile water and the continuation of Ethiopia's programs regarding this huge flagship project according to its plan. Ethiopians have continued to rally behind this major project because the Grand Dam is not only about generating electricity to light the houses of millions or any other benefits the project may deliver but because it is a question of sovereignty and national pride because the country of the origin of the Nile water cannot be deprived of its benefits on the basis of antiquated and colonialist pacts to which Ethiopia never gave recognition. The GERD is considered as a symbol of Ethiopia's renaissance and the year 2022 has been one step nearer to that objective.

There have been however huge challenges in the year 2022 that Ethiopians had to face. The issue of economic growth and inflationary tendencies that have been exacerbated by various factors that come from abroad is one. Admittedly inflation has become a key challenge for the entire world, but for countries such as Ethiopia with a fragile economic structure, the pain is deeper. Imported inflation has been even more painful to us because of excessive rises in prices of food, fuel and all imported goods such as electronic gadgets and pharmaceuticals with our foreign currency reserves suffering the consequences. Even if

food imports have been prospected to be limited or altogether stopped with the new irrigation projects of cultivating millions of quintals of wheat and thus stop dependency on imported wheat, it will inevitably take some time before this reality touches ground. The prospects however are definitely encouraging.

The inflationary tendencies have been hitting most the most vulnerable parts of society who have minimum resources to make ends meet even under normal circumstances and throughout the year the challenge has continued even in the face of every effort the government exerts to stop the trend. It has been trying to implement major economic measures to reduce inflation and there have been some macroeconomic measures adopted by the government. A special economic commission was formed to supervise over this particular issue and bring to a halt some of the inflationary tendencies that are artificially created by certain operators in the economy.

Another big challenge of the year has been the one that refers to the security of the nation in several parts of the country. There have been major counter operations carried out against terrorists here and there and in particular the attempt by the Al- Shabaab to penetrate Ethiopia and create havoc was halted by the security operatives of Ethiopia. Hence worse scenarios have been avoided but there are reports that the security situation in some parts of Oromia is still a major challenge to the country because there have been repeated raids of so called Shene terrorizing innocent civilians residing there for years.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has presented various reports on these violent acts and the casualties that have raised the outrage of many. There are calls for more determined and expanded action against these violent forces that do not abide by the rules of any warfare. The Ethiopian government says these are people without real and homogeneous leadership, no plans and objectives and cannot be taken as a group that fights for the rights of peoples as they claim. Many have been suggesting the government should prepare the grounds for peace talks just as it did with the TPLF, but the issue is no one knows who the real leaders of this group are and there cannot be any hope of peace talks until there are the terms that can facilitate such an event.

In principle, the Ethiopian government has repeatedly stated that it does not exclude peace negotiations with any group that is ready to disarm and sit down to talk within the framework of the laws of the land just as TPLF has finally done. Everybody hopes the year 2023 will be one that will see the security problems of the country resolved and the economic trajectory resumes its course with Ethiopia gaining its usual position in Africa and the world.



# Law & Politics

## Incumbent's self-initiated efforts-oiling the wheels of peace implementations

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Early this week, a delegation led by Tadesse Chafo, Speaker of the House of People's Representative paid a visit to Mekele aimed at overseeing the implementation of the ceasefire agreement. It should not be forgotten that the huge milestone taken by the incumbent has been playing a huge role in oiling the wheels of the peace implementation sooner rather than later.

After their arrival at Mekelle Airport, the delegation consisting of officials of National Dialogue, ministers, different institutions, and other government officials have been welcomed by the Tigray state officials. The delegates have held fruitful discussions with senior leaders of the federal government and the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) and residents of Mekelle city.

It is important highlight that on the heels of the firm stance of the government to let bygones be bygones and stop feeling resentful towards the devastating war that lasted for two years in Northern Ethiopia, the whole thing is registering positive outcomes and achieving positive results. The move being taken by the federal government in black and white bears witness the firm stance of the government to patch things up.

The thing that makes the positive gesture of the government unique is its readiness to avert the conflict on its own initiative without the involvement of any third party or third party's dictation. It is worth recalling that since the start of the war in the northern part of the country, Ethiopia has been making every possible effort to bury the hatchet bringing quite a lot of effective strategies that can get to the bottom of the problem in an atmosphere of calm.

In a similar vein, there is no denial with the fact that right from the beginning, the federal government has shown its unflinching stance to act in accordance with the rules and regulations of the African Union (AU) led peace agreement. In the present circumstances, following the successful implementation of the peace process, the wider international community has been taking their hat off to the federal government.

Given the current circumstances, Ethiopia has been achieving major milestones in taking the country in connection with the cessation of hostilities agreement to a whole new level. Quite a lot of positive accomplishments have been registered in the country, predominantly, subsequent to the signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement in Pretoria, South Africa.

Regardless of the fact, the peace implementation has been moving in the right direction since the signing of the peace accord, some groups have been making all possible efforts to distract the blossoming



positive developments. However, on account of the uncompromising stance of the federal government and Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF), the intended destination is being accomplished.

Right from the beginning some naysayers that abhor the successful journey of the African Union-led peace negotiation have been trying every trick in the book to mystify the global community with their usual spurious stories. In the fullness of time, the federal government and TPLF metamorphosed into taking all and sundry by surprise as a consequence of their firm stance to resolve their differences in an atmosphere of a calm and peaceful environment.

The two parties have been expediting the implementation of the cessation of hostilities agreement devoid of the interference and dictation of a third party. It is worth mentioning that the peace accord is attestation to Africans competence in getting to the bottom of their own predicaments in their own way.

Other than that the cessation of hostilities agreement has played a huge role in resolving unwarranted external pressure effectuating the mantra of African solutions to African problems. In the aftermath of the extremely far-reaching initiative of the incumbent, the whole thing is pointing in the right direction.

It is abundantly clear that the peace agreement brokered by the African Union (AU) in Pretoria is evidence demonstrating the fact that Africans can resolve their predicaments in their own ways in addition to playing a role in inspiring other African nations to share Ethiopia's experience.

In the aftermath of the positive gesture of the incumbent to make peace happen, the African Union Commission (AUC) has sung the praises of the incumbent and the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) and emboldened the two parties to continue their endeavors in restoring peace, security, and stability throughout the national territory.

Given the current circumstances, the determination of the two parties has been enabling to end hostilities all over the

country. It should be remembered that the Commission has enunciated their deep respect and appreciation for the continued support of the AU-led peace agreement for the governments of the United States of America, Norway, the People of Kenya, the African Development Bank, IGAD, and UN.

As the whole thing is in light of the current situation has been heading in the right direction ensuring peace and tranquility on a national scale would be as easy as falling off a log.

Government has showcased a firm commitment towards the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives said during his visit to Tigray regional capital.

Speaker Tadesse Chafo said that in accordance with the agreement reached in Pretoria, the government is committed to fully implement it as well as to do what is expected from it.

The delegation discussed a range of ideas with top TPLF leaders and Mekelle resident representatives.

During the discussion, Tadesse said that the arrival of the delegation laid a foundation for the full implementation of CoHA. There are concrete improvements in the state after the agreement.

"After various ups and downs federal government officials and TPLF officials met in Mekelle. Following the agreement basic services such as banking, telecom, electric and others have been restored in some areas. The leaders of various service sector institutions expressed their readiness to fully resume service across Tigray State," he said.

Tadesse also explained that the government would work to resume other services in the state soon. He reassured government's commitment to restore facilities.

Meanwhile, representatives of the residents also requested the government to strengthen the current peace and resume other remaining services quickly.

On the occasion, TPLF Chairperson Debretsion Gebermikael appreciated the

efforts of the government to implement the cessation of hostilities agreement. "Today is a historic day for us." The arrival of the delegation to Mekelle is a milestone for the implementation of CoHA.

Tadesse also expressed his gratitude for those who contributed their share to the effort to make the agreement a success.

Ethiopian Airlines, the largest network operator in Africa, is pleased to announce the resumption of its flights to Mekelle starting from Wednesday December 28, 2022.

Regarding the flight resumption, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew said "We are truly pleased with the resumption of our flights to Mekelle. The resumption of these flights will enable families to reunite, facilitate the restoration of commercial activities, stimulate tourist flow and bring many more opportunities which will serve the society. We are ready to serve our passengers who are traveling on the route between Addis Ababa and Mekelle and play our part in the socio-economic development of our country."

With planned daily flights to Mekelle, Ethiopian will increase the daily frequency depending on the demand on the route. Ethiopian currently operates to a total of 20 domestic destinations currently and plans to increase this number in the coming years.

Passengers can contact our Global Call Center or the nearest Ethiopian Ticket Office for more information or booking their flights.

The visit made by a high-level delegation of the Federal Government to Mekele is another milestone contributing to the successful implementation of the peace process, commended Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Council.

The Council believes that the visit to Mekele by senior government officials indicates the progress of the implementation of the peace agreement and the continuation of the initiative to end the armed conflict in the region.

In this regard, the Council would like to recognize that the steps taken are of great importance to all affected by the conflict in repairing social cohesion and returning people affected by the conflict to their normal lives.

In connection with this, the Council also applauds the encouraging steps taken towards the restoration of public services such as electricity, telephone, and Banking in parts of Tigray. The Council believes that these are positive steps necessary to fulfill the basic needs of citizens and contribute to the sustenance of the peace agreement.

Finally, the Council stresses that all parties should work diligently to ensure that the peace agreement is implemented in good faith and in the interests of the country and the people of Ethiopia.

# Women in Focus

## “I choose not to place ‘dis’ in my ability”

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Her name is Meselech Jatano, and she is 20 years old. Her story begins when she was a grade eight student at Durgi School. In 2013, she was attending in grade eight and getting prepared for a regional exam. As part of the preparation, she and her friends have been taking a model exam in the school. During the middle of the model exam, she, suddenly, lost her vision. After the horrific incident, she and her family got confused and were visiting different health centres to get her vision back.

Unfortunately, all the efforts were in vain as it did not bring any progress on her vision status. As a result, she became disheartened and had to stay at home. For years, she lived in darkness with no hope. “I always cry as I think of the school I withdrew from, other children go to school but I did not go there because of my blindness. On top of that, at that dark and hopeless time, my parents died and I became orphaned”, she said with deep sadness.

She then started living with her two brothers. After a few years, one of her brothers joined the National Defence Force which led her to continue to live with the other brother. She went on saying: “At that time I used to cry a lot, even one day I tried to commit suicide because of the bitterness of my life. I suffered a lot in my life due to my visual impairment. During my darkest time the church people visited and encouraged me to have hope and have been praying for me.”

In 2019, one of the church members connected her with Zeleke Kefamo, who is a special needs teacher. Then, he brought her to the school and got registered for grade eight nevertheless she was not able to register since the registration time had already passed.

Zeleke was one of the cluster based special needs coordinators who got an inclusive education training facilitated by Water Education Economic empowerment and Medical Alliance (WEEMA). During the training, he fortunately remembered Meselech, and helped her to get the opportunity to join school. He visited her after the training and connected her with Durgi School.

Next year in 2020, she got registered in grade eight at Durgi School. The School Director, Abeje Achiko, who has been encouraging her to succeed in her study, supported her.

She then took the regional exam in 2020 and became one of top scorers in Durgi School. During that time, she came to Mudula Primary school twice a week and trained in braille in an inclusive centre that was established by Water Education Economic empowerment and Medical Alliance (WEEMA).

She got all the necessary support to get braille training at the centre from a special needs teacher. Moreover, many of the



**Training teachers and principals in inclusive education, establish and equip inclusive centres in four schools, provide materials for students with disability, aware the community on inclusivism mobilize community members and school community to outreach the children with disability and bring them to the school, provide school material for Children with Disability were the major activities of the project**

WEEMA staff has been also supporting her in different ways to continue her education.

Throughout the year, she was able receive orientation and mobility training, counselling, material support to ensure her success. She also got a recorder, braille stencils, braille paper, cane, and batteries for the recorder, etc.

After passing grade eight with good results, she joined grade nine at Hodo High school. Now she stands in a better situation where she has developed a great hope to succeed in her education. Through all the support she got from her teachers and students in the school, she consisted in her education.

After accomplishing a great score and became one of the rank students and got prizes in her ninth grade last year,

she has entered grade ten. Owing to all the support she got from WEEMA and the people around her, she is very enthusiastic about her future. “I want to be a teacher and advocate for persons with disabilities.”

Meselech finally expressed her gratitude for the organization that supported her to continue supporting children who are locked at home because of their disability. “I am very thankful for all the support you provided in my life and restored my hope. You continue creating awareness in the community to not discriminate against children living with disability.”

Currently, she is in a good position to succeed in her education through the encouragement and support she got to reach her life goal.

In the last couple of years, WEEMA has been implementing an Inclusive Education project in schools in Tembaro Woreda. Training teachers and principals in inclusive education, establish and equip inclusive centres in four schools, provide materials for students with disability, aware the community on inclusivism mobilize community members and school community to outreach the children with disability and bring them to the school, provide school material for Children with Disability were the major activities of the project.

Currently, over 250 students with disabilities came to school and started class. Four schools become disability friendly, inclusive and equipped to serve the students with disabilities.



# “Being a human is quite enough to support human”

BY ELIZABETH MENGISTU

The moment I started watching a documentary film that was displayed by the Center to show the before and after status of the people and the extent of their past pains to the management team and employees of The Ethiopian Press Agency, my mind was interwoven with a multiple of lines of thought. I was wondering about the big hearted man who has given of himself unselfishly and shouldered the burden of others; sacrificing his own personal life.

Without exaggeration, the compound is a miniature version of the biggest Ethiopia and a reflection of its people. Regardless of any differences, people who came from different parts of the country with a variety of backgrounds - age, ethnicity, gender, religion, place of birth, socioeconomic status, education level, physical appearance (able bodied and disabled) - have sheltered under the same roof seeking to get support from the Center for the reason fate has turned its back on them. Those who were once rich, dearly respected experts and heroes, businesspeople who had been leading adventurous lives, the miserable one, the weak and the isolated have made the Center their sanctuary; they can be treated well and protected from any harm.

Among others, a young man who was once a welder, but later lost his two arms and a leg due to electric shock, an elderly street man badly injured by hyena's bite while he was sleeping, a man lived on the streets for many years and suffering from mental illness, a trader who faced severe accident and ended up on the streets after finishing all his money for treatment sheltered in the Center, Truly speaking, in this selfish world where most of us could not see beyond our personal interests; and make every effort to fulfill our own wishes, being considerate to others, paying the necessary price and beam ray of hope on those who are seeking our generosity is indeed a blessing. Unless it is a call from the Creator to fulfill some type of mission; who can dare to carry the cross of other people and exert energy day in day out to lessen their load with sustained dedication and enthusiasm?

“Biniyam is my son, my father, my brother and my family. In the darkest moments of my life while no one else was around me, he saved my life lifting me from the dust,” a testimony offered by a person awoke me from the myriad of thoughts I was taken up with. “I did not have any idea about the Mekedonia Home for the Elderly and Mentally Disabled Center and Biniyam Belete, the founder of the Center until I heard



him giving an interview to local media” continued Awasa Ajelo who received the necessary support, and treatment from the Center.

“I was bedridden for three years for the reason both of my kidneys failed as a consequence of falling off the motorbike. However, Biniyam, by sending his people to my place where I was living and bringing me to the Center, he saved my life. In time I almost gave up and lost my hope, it is him who makes me live again. If it were not for him, I would not be here today.”

As Awasa stated, he was living around Arba-Minch Town, 640kms far away from Addis Ababa. He was also serving at the town's water bureau. However, on one of the unfortunate days while he was riding to the remote area for an assignment, he fell off his bike and got injured badly. During the time even if he went to the nearby medical facilities and received treatments, he could not get relief from his illness. Worst of all, his health deteriorated from day to day. Let alone returning to his job, getting out of his bed became impossible. It was at this time he heard about Mekedonia.

Awasa had spent three and a half solid years with that situation. He was also advised by a team of the medical board to go abroad and conduct a kidney transplantation. However, miraculously, after he was taken to different hospitals and received the necessary treatments and care, he started recovering from his illness. Currently, Awasa has fully recovered from his illness. He did not end there, following the advice he received from Biniyam and his companion to pursue his education, he obtained his first and second degree in Accounting and Finance. Presently, he is serving as Trade Regulation and Inspection Director at Trade and Industry Office of Arba Minch

Town Administration. Awasa is thankful for all of Mekedonia's community who helped him while he was in the blues. He is always indebted for their kindness, understanding, affection and forbearance.

“Many people, who can recover from their ailments and can contribute a lot, passed away for lacking little support and help from others. I am lucky to have Biniyam and his fellow men in my life. Without their help, I wouldn't have reached this particular state,” he added. He also urged all Ethiopians to help the unfortunate ones in every possible way.

Mulugeta Tesfaye, is the other beneficiary of the Center. Hewas engaged in selling clothes in Metema Town. However, in an accident on a horse pulling carriage, he got injured on his back. Horrendously, he faced additional challenges that led him to skin infection and serious health problems. When the treatment in his place failed to have a significant effect, he came to Addis Ababa for further medication. However he ended up living on the streets for the reason he ran out of money. As luck would have it, after he came to the Center by friends of Mekedonia, and received the needed support and care from healthcare providers, the wounds healed within a few days.

Now, he is in good health. “I was serving as a welder in one of the welding houses herein Addis Ababa. However, on one of the odd days while I was on duty along with my friend, an electrical shock occurred and caused severe injuries on my arms and leg. Sadly enough, the accident snatched my friend's life and left me with permanent disability. Two of my arms and leg amputated,” said Yismaw Jemberu.

Yismaw was born and raised in Gondar, AmharaState. As he stated, the accident ensued when he was trying to put up a billboard on the building. Even though

he survived, the injury was too severe. Thus, amputating his arms and leg was a must.

After he went through treatments for three consecutive months at Yekatit 12 Hospital, he came to Mekedonia by volunteers. At present, Yismaw is moving from place to place supported by artificial body parts. Engineer Berhanu Guta, was born and raised in an area customarily known as ‘Ferensay’, Addis Ababa. He pursued his education in Addis Ababa, and furthered it in Cuba and East Germany and graduated in Cybernetics Mathematics and Engineering respectively. He also served at Timbaho Monopol (Tobacco Monopoly), Black Lion Hospital, Agriculture Research for over 28 years at various levels and responsibility. However, following his wife's death, who was pregnant but died due to delivery/labor related complications, he lost his mind and made his life on the street. Because he couldn't accept her death, he went out of his mind.

As it is learnt from his story, he remained for three years on the street. “After I came to the Center, I have received several treatments and care from Mekedonia's community. Now, I have recovered from my illness and am serving the Center as a Tele Operator,” said Engineer Berhanu.

Currently, Mekedonia, Home for the Elderly and Mentally Disabled Center shelters several people. As the founder of the Center Biniyam Belete stated, the Center spends more than one million Birr per day to perform its daily activities. Mentioning that the income is collected from generous, compassionate people who are willing to help people in great need, he added.

“Being a human is quite enough to support a human,” is Biniyam's firmly embedded principle. This maxim has also won the hearts and minds of millions of people and is driving them to help and serve in every possible way. However, the ever increasing number of people supported by the Center, the severity of the situation, its daily cost among others is calling for more help and support.

Obviously, it is not always necessary to be rich to support others as making cash donations is not the only way that makes a difference. Equally, there are a number of ways that do not demand money; but can create some value inside them. Visiting, feeding and spending time with them also creates the feeling of belongingness and acceptance. Thus, apart from the financial support we are providing, serving in our own little ways - sacrificing our time, expertise and energy to those people who need our assistance is a must.