ABII AHMED, THE NEEDLE:
Some Solutions to the current challenges facing Ethiopians
Tecola W Hagos, 25 March 2019

PART I. ABIY AHMED
1. In General
Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed keeps messing up my logic-oriented brain with his beautifully crafted speeches and messages. His recent address/message of 18 March 2019, with his epochal symbolism of a needle threading through marking a new path that also pulls along a motley of unsavory characters of all sorts, is a metaphorical statement that is highly evocative and unforgettable. For that message alone, Abiy Ahmed deserves a second look, a reassessment of his circumstance of how he lives and survives surrounded and suffocated by individuals the likes of Lemma Megersa and the threat of Qeerroo Bilisummaa Oromoo (hereafter ‘Qeerroo’).

The mild-mannered Lemma Megersa turned out to be a vicious political viper who allowed hooligan Qeerroo and terrorist Oromo Special Forces to butcher and displace hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian citizens mainly Amharas, Gedos, Somalies, Southern Peoples, Tigris et cetera. The recent demolitions of homes of thousands of Ethiopian Citizens at Legatafo and the treat and markings in Sululta against mostly non-Oromos who have lived in the so-called Oromo Kilil all their lives or for years are the violent violations of the 1995 Constitution. The Qeerroos along with Oromo Special Forces have carried out some of the most barbaric murders and torture under the criminal genocidal goading of Jawar Mohammed, Dawood Ibsa, Bekele Gerba, Lemma Megersa et cetera who should be tried under the 1948 Genocide Convention and the Penal Code of Ethiopia Article 281 Genocide, Crimes against Humanity provisions.

In thousands of cases of the murdered and displaced Ethiopians from Oromo Kilil, we can find ancestors of hundreds of thousands such Ethiopians who lived in that Kilil even before Lemma Megersa’s ancestors showed up following the footsteps of Gragn, the brutal Ottoman sponsored marauder, in the 16th Century who devastated Ethiopia. The Kilil system is a legacy of Meles Zenawi, the vicious, divisive, narrow minded, and I-know-it-all political-sinkhole who was the spearhead for the Kilil system that is destroying Ethiopia right this moment. There is no one in Ethiopia’s long history that I despise the most other than Mengistu Hailemariam, Meles Zenawi, Sebhat Nega, and Jawar Mohammad, even Gragn is a distant fifth. For all I know, they may be psychopaths. How I wish their mothers had strangled them with their umbilical cords at the time of their births.

But that is not all in the address of Abiy Ahmed, nor this is the end of time for Ethiopia, for the rest of Abiy’s address is fully focused on the preservation of a free, prosperous and powerful Ethiopia. One may say that the address is an ultimate call for Ethiopians for unity and solidarity with him to counter the forces of ethnicism of destruction. Must we take a second look of Abiy Ahmed? Yes, we must. Thus, I requested Ethiopian Observer to post Abiy Ahmed’s full address last Tuesday the 19th of March 2019, which they did promptly. However, I am disappointed with most Ethiopians who owned Websites for not focusing their media outlets on that phenomenal address.

2. The Unfathomable Address
In order for anyone of us to fully grasp the scope and depth of this particular address of Abiy Ahmed delivered on 18 March 2019, one must read that short address in its original Amharic form. I must note here that the symbolism of the “needle” as used by Abiy Ahmed is in regard to third party participants,
but should be read to include Abiy Ahmed himself too. I have included this short address of Abiy Ahmed herewith:

I have read and reread this address from the Prime Minister countless times. I probably can recite it from memory. It is one of the most emotive but at the same time one of the wisest beautifully crafted political statement in sublime Amharic I have ever read in my life. From the acerbic opening sentence to the conclusionary compassionate and endearing blessing of Ethiopia and Ethiopians, Abiy Ahmed seems to have written this address with the essence of his very soul untainted with ethnicism or narrow self-interest. The greatness of a noble statement is that it ennobles all those that read it, for like a Tsunami it lifts up everybody.

The Gettysburg Address of Abraham Lincoln had similar effect on me when I read it for the first-time scores of years ago. The occasion for Abiy’s message may be considered to be drastically different from the occasion that Lincoln was facing in his Gettysburg Address. The Gettysburg speech was delivered by a victor not boasting of his decisive victory but inviting the losers to come around as members of a family, whereas in case of Abiy Ahmed his address is of anguish because his government (country) is in danger of great turmoil and evisceration. Here is my case in point. One can relate to this address by Abiy at three distinct levels:

a) on morality and ethics – the moral challenge dealt with in the message is the universal human condition and the universal principle to deal with such challenge. This speech could have been addressed to all kinds of communities in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America, and in each instance would have been understood in similar way correctly.

b) on social and political responsibility – the degree of responsibility expected in our political and social engagements must transcend the confines of tribal and/or ethnic limitations. Tribalism and/or ethnicism must not have any role in determining the rights of Ethiopian citizens. There are no privileged individuals in the political and economic engagements of Ethiopian citizens.

c) on redemption and calls for solidarity – one must acknowledge serious errors of past government officials and the unfolding errors of many of the present leaders of political organizations. We have crossed our political Rubicon, there is no turning back, the chips are down, the political cards are already dealt. We need be serious.

d) My first duty is to express my deeply felt remorse for insulting or demining countless political leaders often in caustic language that went beyond the descriptive language of their activities and characteristics. My recent targets were PM Abiy Ahmed, Ato Gedu Andarkachew, and Ato Demeke Mekonnen. It was not necessary at all to lower the political discourse to a degrading personal feud. I realize that we all love and care for our country in our own special ways. I apologize to the three leaders as well as to all those I offended. PM Abiy Ahmed is a special case that I do not mind defending at this point in the life of our Ethiopia, for I see no one else in EPRDF that commands as much acceptance with transcendental principles. Just knowing that a person waves such beautiful tapestry of Ethiopia in his addresses, fanciful or not, is enough for me. I urge him to coordinate his policies and operational actions with Eskinder Nega and Andualem Arage, two unique Ethiopians with depth of truthfulness.

I do not believe that an individual who could pen down such profound thoughts as presented in the address of Abiy Ahmed could be shallow. Recently, Dawit Woldegiorgis, a veteran political commentator, stated a form of devaluation of Abiy Ahmed that I disagree with. For Dawit, it seems that Abiy Ahmed is “either fake, incompetent or simply an extended arm of other interests”. I had similar views for some time, but things in Ethiopia are not that simplistic now, but corrosively complex and must be reevaluated fresh moment to moment. I wish Dawit would share his wisdom on how to solve the political dilemma we are immersed in at this very moment. I believe now that we should closely
reexamine the dynamics of the relationship of Abiy Ahmed with the zealot Oromo supremacists such as Lemma Megersa, Bekele Gerba, Jawar Ahmed, Dawood Ibsa and several others who are suffocating the Prime Minister and his Government. As a matter of fact, Abiy Ahmed might be in a life/death struggle against the forces of destruction right this moment in our history. What concerns me most and frightens me to my core is the possibility that if Abiy Ahmed is gone what might happen in our fractured country. It could be far worse than what is going on now. We should not deny the possibility that we might lose our country despite the fact that we hold that Ethiopia is God’s ward for most of us, indestructible.

PART II: SOLUTIONS

1. **Lower the voting Age to 16 years old**
   Ethiopia has become a nation of young citizens. I suggest that lowering the voting age is very appropriate in order to get the young generation of Ethiopians into responsible participation in the political life of the nation. Recognition in itself is a deterrent against hooliganism and perversion. When the political voting age is lowered it will create millions of new political voices that will lead to organic structures of political unities impacting the level of involvement of the political life of the nation. However, the age of consent and for treatment under the Penal Code must remain to be 18 years old.

2. **Create a Constitution Drafting Commission**
   The most important factor that shaped the current political situation, in the instrumentalist sense, is the 1995 Constitution. It created the Kilil system, wherein formally it totally disowned citizens of their Sovereign rights, and subordinated individuals to primitive ethnic system. What is totally juvenile about such system is the fact that over 65% of the population of Ethiopia is a mixed population of more than two or three ethnic groups. Even Meles Zenawi, the spearhead of the Kilil system, comes from Tigray, Gojjam Amhara, Kunama, Serai parentage and ancestry. In order to heal such self-inflicted wounds, the current Ethiopian Government must establish a new constitution drafting commission, post haste.

3. **Use the Courts to enforce Constitutional Rights of Citizens**
   I urge the Bar associations in Ethiopia and individual lawyers in all parts of Ethiopia to use the Courts to enforce and safeguard Constitutional Rights of Citizens against ethnic cleansing and demolitions of their homes and property. I am surprised that Ethiopian lawyers have not taken a clear stand against the ethnic cleansing and demolitions et cetera. I do believe the active participation of members of the legal profession taking up both individual cases and also class actions against the Kilil officials including officials of municipalities will push back the ongoing ethnic division and ethnic cleansing insanity.

4. **Arrest Jawar Mohammad, Bekele Gerba, and Dawood Ibsa**
   The most destructive individuals in the current Ethiopia political situation are clearly identifiable. The individuals I have identified here are simply the tip of an iceberg of destructive anti-Ethiopian individuals with selfish self-interests. I must stress the fact that It is wrong to condemn tens of millions of Oromos based on the caustic goading speeches of the likes of Jawar Mohammad and the ethnic cleansing ideology of Bekele Gerba and others. In the defense of the survival of Ethiopia, citizens should be able to kiss the foreheads of those destructive anti-Ethiopians.

5. **Appoint Interim Mayor of Addis Ababa and organize elections**
   I have to be very careful in suggesting the election of new Mayor for Addis Ababa that could be considered by subversive political agitators as a move against Oromos in general. The problem is the appointment of Takele Uma, an Oromo supremacist but a conflicted person, in a city where over seventy percent of the residents are non-Oromos.
6. Arm all citizens with defensive weapon, but first minorities
I believe the best defense against ethnic abuse, dictatorial administration, exploitation of minority
groups et cetera is to arm citizens with defensive weapons and organize communities for self-defense.
The criticism against arming the public is the fact that society will simply succeed in intensifying the
degree of violence leading to civil war rather than decreasing violence and eliminating the possibility of
civil war. I disagree with that criticism. I have argued at length supporting arming the public for its own
defense over thirty years in books and commentaries, including writing a memo to EPRDF in 1991.

7. Supporting Abiy Ahmed to protect Ethiopia is a moral imperative
The current confined political space of vicious ethnic cleansing and destructions of homes of Citizens
because of their ethnicity on one hand and the relentless hands of Ethiopia’s historic enemies in the
region ever trying to destabilize Ethiopia on the other hand are the two extreme challenges facing us all.
But short-sighted local politicians, who are hanging on to the Kilil system designed some twenty-five
years ago for the purpose of creating fracture and conflicts, are perpetuating and intensifying the
fracturing of Ethiopia across fake ethnic lines. Foremost, the People of Gondar, Wollo, Shoa, Tigray are
as Ethiopian as any other Ethiopian People. I urge people of these regions to consolidate their social
and economic lives and stop attacking each other in public statements in social media. I find myself in a tight
situation supporting Abiy Ahmed after having been robust critic of him in several articles.

CONCLUSION
Ultimately, after all things are said and done, I am a believer that human beings are more inclined to do
good than do harm. I watched in the news media and on social postings the genuine goodness of
Ethiopian villagers from around Legatafo who brought food and comfort to the displaced non-Oromos. It
was a disappointment to the ethnic cleaners that so many Oromos were actually helping their fellow
citizens in distress. The same type of humane response of villagers I witnessed at the crash site and
some even coming from quite a distance paying respect according to their Oromo tradition on the 12th
day after death. Those villagers were simple folks dressed in their modest outfits and in their humble
ways profoundly expressing their feeling of sorrow for strangers they never met in their lives.

Numerous Ethiopians visited the crash site, which was a heart-warming act of kindness. What I
witnessed at such moments at a place where so many lives were lost, with almost nothing left of their
bodies, were individual acts of generosity and genuine concern for fellow human beings irrespective of
social or national identity that infused back to me my faith in my fellow man, which is a monument in
itself for all who died. On those days what I witnessed were simple and genuine people towering far
above all in moral imperative eclipsing the bickering and manipulations to save this or that corporate
entity from responsibility for the crash in the business world. God wept along with us.

However, we must not forgive or forget an irresponsible vicious woman called Selam Gebrekidan who
wrote a piece working for The New York Times that lacked proper research background and concern for
truth, wherein she passed some form of a verdict blaming the deceased pilot of the doomed 737 Max of the
Ethiopian Airlines. Although the training on a particular simulator could not have done anything to
avert the serious software problem because the simulator was not programmed to counter such problem,
the woman plowed through such nuances to make such bold assertion that does not tell the truth that
numerous pilots did not train on the latest Simulator for the 737 Max and instead were trained on what
is recommended by both Boeing and FAA on the difference upgrades. Tewolde Gebre Mariam, the
superbly efficient CEO of Ethiopian, stated with understandable indignity, “Pilots transitioning to the
Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft from older 737 models were required only to undertake a short computer-
based training program prescribed by Boeing and approved by the FAA.” The woman is probably of Eritrean origin harboring sinister motives to hurt the world-renowned Ethiopian industry leader.

Our God must be tearful seeing his favorite children shredding each other up/down over such inconsequential material possession that is not even theirs. Kilil/Land must not be a cause for fracturing Ethiopia. Ethnicity as a basis for political, economic, or social rights is unworkable and a truly primitive idea. It is truly difficult to go by ethnic identity to determine rights of any kind. Such ethnic based enforcement of rights violates international law principles and norms, moral imperatives, and the domestic and constitutional law regimes of Ethiopia. I ask you a rhetorical question you ethnicists, where would you place an individual whose immediate family members have direct ancestry in Wollo (Ambasel, Yeju); Shoa (Menz, Bure and Yifat, Efrata); Tigrai (Axum, Adowa); Begemder (Gondar, Debre Tabor).

The Oromo supremacist movement [of OLF, of Jawar Mohammad, of Lemma Megersa, of Bekele Gerba et cetera] is insanity. It must be stopped, and all Ethiopian citizens must participate in the social and political affairs of Ethiopia in equality and freedom. Law and order must be maintained by all. The Federal Government must enforce law and order in all parts of Ethiopia. Ethiopia will perceive as the ‘Shinning City on the Hill’.

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