

## The Clock is Ticking

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"Patience has its limits. Take it too far, and it's cowardice", George Jackson (1941-1971). Patience does have its limits. However, I disagree with Jackson that it ever becomes cowardice. It simply means that patience can be "tested" to its "outer limits". PFDJ's Isaias Afwerki is testing the limits of P.M. Meles Zenawi/EPRDF and the Ethiopian people's patience; but the alarm clock can always be re-set under the prevailing situation for the common good of both Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Let me start by stating that Eritreans *are* Ethiopians; and will *always* be Ethiopians. Eritrea (name given to it by Italia) was a victim of rivalry between Emperor Yohannes IV and the then Negus Menelik (who later became Emperor Menelik II), in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Ethiopians characterize the event(s) that took place as "the sale" of Eritrea to Italia by Emperor Menelik II in exchange for military hardware. Even after the victory at Adwa, Emperor Menelik gave up on Eritrea and signed various treaties with Italia, thus virtually sealing Eritrea's colonial fate. For the most part, those same treaties were used by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission as basis for the Delimitation of the Border.

Eritreans have shed their blood for Ethiopia during its invasion by Italia in 1935, and throughout the repressive five-year occupation that ensued (<http://www.tigraionline.com/marriage.html>). It is undeniable that Eritrea's history is part and parcel of Ethiopian history. Queen Saba gave birth to Menelik I (the son of Israel's King Solomon) on the banks of Mai Bela River in Asmara. Much of Ethiopian history happened inside "Eritrea"; and Ethiopians must never lose sight of *that compelling reality*. Therefore, the EPRDF government must take this reality into consideration, prior to launching any offensive that might jeopardize future considerations for the reunification of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

It is important to mention briefly the events that led to the "independence" of Eritrea. The "federation" of Ethiopia with Eritrea (1951-1961) was unilaterally terminated by Emperor Haile Selassie. The Emperor initiated the "reunion of Mother and Child" in 1962. The Eritrean Liberation Front which was born in 1961, referred to the reunion as the "annexation" of Eritrea by Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie's perfect intention was further complicated by his own ouster and subsequent murder by DERG's Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1974, which added fuel to the burning fire inside Eritrea. Mengistu also intensified his assault on the people of Tigray by using among other cruelties, starvation, during this period. Eritrea gained independence with the blessing of EPRDF and Meles Zenawi in 1993 after a less than credible "referendum" was held. This was followed by the invasion of Ethiopia by Eritrea's PFDJ under dictator Isaias Afwerki in 1998. PFDJ was dealt a humiliating defeat by the Ethiopian Defense Forces. Here we are today on the verge of another war that is likely to be initiated by Isaias Afwerki again.

Eritreans are being held hostage by Isaias Afwerki, who is 100% Ethiopian himself. It is prudent to rescue the hostages (Eritrean people) from the grasp of the hostage taker (Isaias Afwerki). Isaias doesn't care about anyone but himself. That is why he imprisoned and murdered his comrades after being defeated in the last war which he initiated. Isaias is a man without conscience. In my opinion, the EPRDF government should continue its present course of showing maximum restraint; and to aggressively pursue diplomatic solution to the prevailing stalemate. The last thing that Ethiopians want to see is carnage among our brothers and sisters in Eritrea. The Eritrean people are not our enemies. *Isaias Afwerki is our only enemy.*

Ultimately, Eritrea will rejoin the family of Nations and Nationalities of Ethiopia where she belongs. I believe this from the bottom of my heart; and time will prove me right. Therefore, the ticking clock must be r-eset in order to avoid any potential for lasting enmity between the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea. **"ለሃጥአን የወረደ ለጸድቃን ይተርፋል" የተባለው እንዳይደርስ የላቀ ጥንቃቄ ማድረግ ያሻል።**