

Jawar Mohammed and the act of terrorism

By Tibebe Samuel Ferenji 10/23/2019

Merriam Webster defines terrorism as **“the systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion”**. The act of terrorism is also defined as **“the calculated use of violence (or the threat of violence) against civilians in order to attain goals that are political or religious or ideological in nature; this is done through intimidation or coercion or instilling fear”** (emphasis added).

There is no question that Jawar Mohammed has become a formidable political force in Ethiopia. Thanks to technology, he is able to garner support from gullible, uneducated, and extremist elements of our society. Those responsible for the rise of Jawar in Ethiopian politics are media outlets and those who labeled themselves as activists. In addition, the Ethiopian government gave Jawar undeserved recognition and praise hoping to appease the about 300,000 of his core supporters. Although many media outlets have reported that Jawar has about 1.3 million Facebook followers, all his Facebook followers are not his supporters, In fact, some of them are multiple accounts opened using fake names and some are his opponents following him to counter his anti-Ethiopian rhetoric's. Nonetheless, he has followers who have been creating havoc in various parts of our nation. As has been reported, Jawar may also have supporters within the ruling party cadres and officials. Some reports have suggested he is groomed, financed, and supported with propaganda by the TPLF. These reports claim the TPLF is using the likes of Jawar to continue to be an obstacle for peace and stability in Ethiopia and challenge Dr. Abiy's leadership hoping to return at the helm of the EPRDF.

Sadly, some useful idiots in the “Ethiopian unity camp” has become instrumental in feeding the “beast” to make him feel he is greater than he is. Many have said that Jawar is a businessman and does not care about the youngsters who follow him. His action proves these assertions to be true. Jawar is making money by fueling conflict in the country; but, none of his money supports any charitable work. The type of “investment he is making” in Ethiopia is only for his own personal profit. Jawar does not seem accountable to anyone; his source of income is not accounted for and whatever earning he has from various donations and his spending is not checked. He acts more like a warlord in a “conflict zone” than “a political scientist” that he claimed to be. Time and time, he has proven to be a demagogue without any political intellect. Some have questioned his academic credentials. He often exaggerates his position and embellishes his ‘experience’. In one recent interview, he suggested being an “informal advisor” of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. His claim that he worked as an advisor and as a consultant to various international political figures is unchallenged and unchecked. When Jawar claimed to AFP that he is “an informal advisor of the Prime Minister”, AFP did not bother to fact check whether Jawar's claim is true or not and published what Jawar said. It is such a false claim that inflated Jawar's ego and made him feel that he is untouchable.

Jawar is a citizen of the United States and he should not be allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of Ethiopia. Like any human being, he has the right to express his opinions, but he does not have the right to be treated like a VIP and has no right to engage in the internal working of governmental affairs. What is more troubling is he has shown enormous contempt to

the rule of law in Ethiopia and has encouraged his supporters to engage in the act of terrorism. His supporters caused enormous destruction and contributed a great deal for the lawlessness in the country while the government law enforcement agencies failed to take action to curb this growing danger. Now, it seems, the act of these terrorists has reached the point of no return. It is because the Ethiopian government ignored the warning signs, this individual continued to spread his dangerous venom in the media outlet he owns and operates without any accountability. As the definition of terrorism clearly indicates the acts of Jawar and his supporters are an act of terrorism. Jawar and his ill-educated cronies are engaged in intimidations, threats, property destruction, and massacring innocent citizens. This must be stopped by any legal means that are necessary.

Jawar must be accountable for his illegal activities and for fueling a terrorist act. He has encouraged violence, led a group that has engaged in violence, he has provided material support to those who are engaged in a terrorist act to carry out his political objectives. Hence, he should be charged in a court of law in Ethiopia and the United States. If the Ethiopian government does not have the courage to charge Jawar in a court of law, the least that the Abiy led government could do is deport Jawar from Ethiopia and prevent him from entering Ethiopia again. In addition, the Ethiopian government could work with the United States government to close down Jawar's media using the United States terrorism law. If the Ethiopian government does not take drastic and meaningful action against Jawar, Ethiopian citizens in Diaspora should petition the Department of Justice to charge Jawar Mohammed and his supporters in the United States with the act of terrorism. Neither the Ethiopian government nor Ethiopian citizens should sit idle while the terrorist group led by Jawar Mohammed engaged in killing, intimidating, coercing, and destroying property to attain their ill-conceived political goal. As the saying goes time for diplomacy is over and it is time to take action to stop this homegrown terrorist group.

There are reports indicating Jawar is contemplating to give up his US citizenship. A couple of issues have been entertained why Jawar is giving up his US citizenship; some reports claim he is planning to run for office in Ethiopia; others indicated he is wanted in the US for tax evasion. Whatever the issue is, the Ethiopian government is under no obligation to give Jawar Ethiopian citizenship. Since Ethiopia does not recognize dual citizenship, Jawar's renunciation of his US citizenship does not automatically make him an Ethiopian citizen. Jawar voluntarily gave up his Ethiopian citizenship, he is no longer an Ethiopian. Hence, he has no business interfering in Ethiopian politics. If Jawar's intention is to avoid his financial obligations in the US, he is out of luck. Section 349(a)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) (8 U.S.C. 1481(a)(5)) is the section of law governing the right of a United States citizen to renounce abroad his or her U.S. citizenship. The renunciation of U.S. citizenship does not allow persons to avoid possible prosecution for crimes which they may have committed in the United States, or escape the repayment of financial obligations. Since there is no law that obligates the Ethiopian government to reinstate Jawar's Ethiopian citizenship, the Ethiopian government should deny any citizenship application submitted by Jawar.

It is time to put pressure on the Ethiopian and the United States governments to take action against this terrorist, his financiers, and his followers. This writer believes that deporting Jawar from Ethiopia is conducive to the public good, and barring him permanently from re-entering Ethiopia on the ground that he is "involved in terrorism-related activities" is justifiable action. Short of such measures, make the Ethiopian government complicit with the terrorist group led by Jawar. There is conclusive evidence, in various media outlets, which proves Jawar

is engaged in inciting violence ergo engaging in act of terrorism against the Ethiopian people. It is time to take serious action and uphold the rule of law!

God Bless Ethiopia and her people!