

Tigray People's Liberation Front, Human Trafficking Ring By Amanuel Biedemariam

After the war of 2000 failed to do the job, the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) and their handlers developed schemes to yank Eritrean youth-out of their country, homes and livelihood. They targeted the youth to deprive Eritrea from the workforce necessary to build a nation and, to degrade the military's capacities in order to launch one major assault and decapitate the nation when opportune.

Eritrean youth are lured with incentives of access into the US, West and other friendly nations. As long as Eritreans are able to reach other countries, no questions are asked, they are granted asylums. At a time that human trafficking is lucrative business, by default, they made Eritrean nationality the most valuable and coveted citizenship in Africa and beyond. Today, there are countless political asylums granted to none Eritreans as Eritreans with minimum scrutiny.

Ethiopians from Tigray, TPLF members and officials are the key benefactors. In Washington DC and other major US cities, there are reports that former TPLF officials have been granted asylum as Eritreans. This is common knowledge and more Ethiopians are coming into the US using falsified Eritrean documents. But why are Ethiopian authorities allowing this blunt illegal-act to take place? Because it is all win-win and serves many purposes:

- Help their sinister ploys to demonize Eritrea. Exaggerated numbers of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia are used in reports by international NGO's and UN agencies to bolster their claims in manufacturing punitive actions against Eritrea through the UN.
- Lure Eritreans: Playing humanitarian by claiming to be assisting exaggerated numbers of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia. This however is ploy to justify sending thousands of Tigrigna-speaking Tigrayans as Eritreans into the US. After entering the US with lies and falsified documents, these Tigrayans try to damage the unity of Eritreans and advocate against Eritrea as Eritrean refugees all over the US. To appear that it softened its approach the TPLF also claims to be giving-back properties to those 80,000 Eritreans that it looted and deported after the resumption of war in 1998.
- Remittances: Since most of those going to US from Ethiopia as Eritreans are from Tigray the remittances they send benefits their families in Tigray.
- Diaspora Lobbying: The Ethiopian community in the diaspora presents the regime with the greatest challenge because wherever TPLF officials go they are met with stiff resistance. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn was prevented from moving freely during the recent Africa US leaders Summit. Meles Zenawi was humiliated in front of world leaders by a journalist that heckled him. In addition the vocal Diaspora's lobbying activities are placing TPLF at odds with leaders in congress and humiliating the TPLF in every turn. To counter what it calls "Extremist Diaspora," the TPLF is trying to bolster its presence in the US and, one way to accomplish is to enter as Eritreans.
- lessen attention on Ethiopian refugees: Hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian refugees are suffering in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and many places around the globe. It serves the regime-well to deflect attention onto Eritreans.

Hypocrisies, Failed and Backfiring Deceit

For decades, thousands of Eritreans have settled in Sudan as refugees that fled oppressive Ethiopian regimes. The people of Sudan have accorded the people of Eritrea incredible hospitality and brotherly

love. However, Sudan has never exploited the plight of refugees in a manner that the regime in Ethiopia shamelessly does. Illegal immigration is a global issue that requires unique attention. Nations should not engage in activities that encourage illegal immigration. Nations should cooperate and find ways to help bring stability to stem the flow of refugees and foster greater stability. To the contrary, Ethiopia is engaging in activities that the international community should condemn and hold to account. These deceits however, are part of a greater scheme directed by the Obama administration.

In a speech he gave at the Clinton Global Initiative Annual meeting on September 25, 2012, President Barack Obama said,

“I recently renewed sanctions on some of the worst abusers, including North Korea and Eritrea. We’re partnering with groups that help women and children escape from the grip of their abusers. We’re helping other countries step up their own efforts. And we’re seeing results.”

To encourage the flight of Eritrean youth many countries acquiesced to US policy that encouraged the acceptance of asylum seekers based on loose standards. Scandinavian, European and Israel etc... uncharacteristically loosened their standards to accommodate Eritreans. That meant open invitation that inadvertently encouraged floods of refugees to these destinations.

Initially most of them traveled to Israel through the Sinai desert. Israel, a Jewish State, that does not recognize the Right to Return of Palestinians uncharacteristically and as political move, started to accept Eritrean refugees, unabated. Eritreans started flocking to Israel. The State of Eritrea forewarned Israeli authorities of the repercussions and met deaf ears.

Immediately thereafter, Israel found the situation uncontrollable. Thousands entered into Israel forcing Israeli authorities to take stringent measures to stem the flow of incoming refugees and those already in the process. Israel was forced to commit tremendous resources and employ strict measures that led to rebuke by international rights groups.

These strict measures coupled by abrupt political changes in Egypt forced the refugees to seek alternate outlets and they started to flood the Mediterranean Sea into Europe, which led to horrendous atrocities like the Lampedusa tragedy. Today the streets of Europe are littered with refugees from Africa creating major issues and resistance from citizens in affected countries. These are countries facing economic hardships and unemployment. This backlash is forcing Europe to deal with the massive refugee problem urgently.

Today Europe is no longer pretending that their refugee problem is Eritrea specific. They have come to realize that they have opened the floodgates inadvertently and decided to deal with it by meeting with the source countries directly. “On November 28, The EU Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative was launched in Khartoum Sudan that representatives of 28 EU member states and 10 African states, namely Eritrea, Libya, Republic of Sudan, Egypt, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and Tunisia participated.”

Scandinavian countries are grappling with these issues in the same manner. The floods of refugees that claim to be Eritrean asylum seekers skyrocketed and presented major social, security and economic issues beyond their control forcing them to seek for alternative solutions.

Norway placed restrictions on Eritreans from going back to Sudan because they found that Eritreans were in fact using Sudan as backdoor into Eritrea after receiving asylum. They also found that Ethiopian and Sudanese citizens were returning to their countries for visits after receiving asylum as Eritreans.

Denmark sent a delegation into Eritrea on a fact-finding mission in order to help them make decisions on how to handle the influx of asylum seekers. After their visit The Danish delegation refuted all the

human rights abuses claims against Eritrea and said, “That international reports of up to 10,000 political prisoners in Eritrea “is difficult to harmonize with the reality on the ground.” As a result Denmark will grant asylum “Under much tougher criteria than before.”

These major developments point to culpability of the collaborators; exposes their racist and sinister agendas that aim to destabilize not only Eritrea but also the entire region in order to exploit the rich resources and strategic locations using corrupt mercenary puppets.

The Key

Why the backtracking and sudden change? Why scramble to return these refugees to their home countries? Why now, after they opened the flood gates that drowned countless lives into the sea?

Their greed, ignorance and short sighted outlook; their misguided belief that Eritrea will fold in short time and, their acquiescence to US policy-direction led them to grant blanket-political-asylums to anyone that claimed to be Eritrean. They failed to understand that this policy was indirect invitation to all citizens from the region to flee and ask for political asylum as Eritreans leading to corruption, human trafficking and international crime rings as direct consequence.

Europe is inundated with refugees from all over the world. The geopolitical global seen is fast changing. Developments in Yemen and, fear of major instability in the Horn of African that can generate millions of refugees-coupled with economic downturn in Europe is compelling these countries to seek long term solutions.

The EU and others are trying to untangle their policies from US's because US policies are standing against their interests. The US is also too busy with problems everywhere and unable control agendas the way it has in the past, weakened influence. The situation in Yemen is making Saudi Arabia and Israel weary and they are urging US to reconsider its policy on Eritrea.

However, the number one reason these countries are forced to address these issue is Eritrea's unflinching commitment to march forward despite so many obstacles thrown her way. The brilliance of the Government of Eritrea, the steadfastness of the people, the commitment and ability of the people to withstand these pressures have frustrated Europeans and others and compelled them investigate on their own, the realities inside Eritrea. It is because Eritrea foiled their sinister ploys with patience and time. Eritrea foiled their ploys by assuring those who left the country that they are free to come back without fear of persecution. Eritrea brilliantly exposed their lies while-still giving them room to get-out of the conundrum if they so-chose and many have chosen that way-out. Hence, all those sending fact finding-missions are trying to find ways to untangle their countries from the messes.

New Eritrean ID in the Mix

The government of Eritrea is set to issue new Identification Cards soon. This ID is a game changer because it will put a stop to criminal activities that takes place in Ethiopia that encourages forgeries of Eritrean documents. Those that falsely claimed to be Eritrean will be exposed. It will halt asylum seeking based on false Eritrean ID's. It will help host nations sift through applicants easier because they will ask for Eritrean ID's or, as the Danes have announced, asylums will only be granted “Under much tougher criteria than before.”

These are the new realities and the Europeans are determined to chart a new course in cooperation with Eritrea and others in the region that want to find real solutions to the problem.

As far as Ethiopia and those that have exploited these issues as Eritreans, there is saying, "A servant is no greater than his master." Hence, what the masters decide will ultimately reign. For example, it is laughable to see how Danish authorities rebuffed a professor, supposedly Eritrean, when he tried to dictate what the report should state.

Conclusion

People will always try to find better living conditions where they can. Nations should refrain from encouraging unnecessary human flight and work to find ways that foster stability. Youth flight whether it is from Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia or Eritrea is a setback and big loss for a region that is trying to get out of primitive existence. However, the TPLF have managed to create a criminal niche whereby it can manipulate these realities and have taken full advantage with the hopes of controlling the dynamics abroad particularly the US.

It is a new phenomenon to see a nation engage in facilitating illegal transfer of people in this case Ethiopians from Tigray disguised as Eritreans and for sinister motives. The reality however, these criminals have lied under oath. It is therefore the duty of all those from the region particularly Eritreans and Ethiopians to expose these criminals. It is incumbent upon all concerned to ensure that these criminals go into hiding, to jail or deported.

Awetnayu@hotmail.com