

## **Have You No Shame?**

### **A reminder to Major Dawit Woldegiorgis (Part 1 of 2)**

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“If the facts are against you, argue the law. If the law is against you, argue the facts. If the law and the facts are against you, pound the table and yell like hell” Carl Sandburg

There are times that you can't just ignore articles you read without responding to it. Particularly articles published with ill-will and with a preconceived design to simply demonize leaders who work tirelessly to make a positive change in our nation. It is particularly difficult to keep quiet when you read false allegations of genocide against a person recognized on the world stage for his effort to make peace in the African continent. The allegation of genocide and complicity used by Dawit deviate so much from a universal standard of understanding what genocide is. Major Dawit's article titled **'Time for Machetes'** contains very dangerous components that force any reasonable person to respond to such false and dangerous allegations. The article contains no facts but too many noises. It is by far one of the most reckless and egregious allegations I have ever encountered in Ethiopian political landscape. Dawit never apologized for his false claim that Jawar Mohammed and Abiy are working together when in fact the opposite is true. Without any shame, with a straight face, he comes with his allegations that he knows to be untrue and baseless. It is for that reason I ask if he feels any shame at all for knowingly and willfully making false allegations that have no base either in fact or in law; it is, for this reason, Dawit is **"pounding the table and yelling like hell"**

Let us see the facts in the aforementioned article; Major Dawit alleges Dr. Abiy and his administration are engaged in genocide directly or indirectly. Dawit uses the Rwandan example, without any facts, to imply that Ethiopia is headed to that dangerous direction. In fact, reading between the lines, Dawit tries to tell us as if Ethiopia is the mirror image of former Rwanda. According to his article, his allegations are prompted because the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture provided about 36,000 machetes to farmers in Harrar. From this, Dawit tells us that the Abiy's government is aiding and abetting the "Oromo" extremist elements in their quest to commit genocide. Such empty rhetoric is a dangerous assertion; but, it is not made without a purpose. Dawit has a mission to derail the Abiy administration from its reform agenda at any cost to our nation. It is for that reason he uses terms like genocide and complicity without any merit. He is putting the cart first, hoping for the horse to follow. I can tell Dawit and his likes the "genocide horse" that they are waiting and dreaming for will never come to Ethiopia. The people of Ethiopia are God-fearing people and have proven their humanity and compassion time and again. So, don't hold your breath, Ethiopia is rising again and will never travel the dark roads that the people of Rwanda went through. What is puzzling to me, Major Dawit played a vital role for years to bring Eritreans and Ethiopians together; however, since Dr. Abiy came to power, Dawit has made every effort to entice extremist elements to rise up not just against Abiy but also against Oromos. It is not difficult to deduce what the intention of Dawit and his ardent supporters is from their "dog whistle" messages. We should not allow them to use our worst fears to divide us; we should work towards reconciliation and prove them wrong.

Let me address the current issue at hand. The first question is what is the primary function of a machete?

**Wikipedia tells us that machete is used in various tropical and subtropical countries, to cut through rainforest undergrowth and for agricultural purposes (e.g. cutting sugar cane).**

Since a machete is used for agriculture, why is it wrong for the Ministry of Agriculture to provide farmers with machetes? We know machete is used to kill individuals, but other tools farmers use can be used to kill individuals if the desire is there to do so. The fact that they have machetes does not make them killers. On a daily basis, we hear news about how smugglers are apprehended in their efforts to smuggle many machineguns, guns, and bullets. Some are arrested while transporting dangerous weapons in the middle of various cities. Dawit and his cronies will not tell you the government's effort to curb the use of illegal weapons in the country. One must ask how in the world you can get from a point of machete distribution to farmers to allegations of genocide. This simply requires common sense to understand the extremist elements are using everything they can to spread fear in the country. They can only survive and feel relevant in Ethiopian politics by feeding fear. However, such cowardly designed fear-mongering has consequences. Such false and dangerous allegations create mistrust between certain ethnic group and the government; their effort is paying off because we are witnessing such mistrust is growing in our country. These extremist elements have no concern for the nation at all. They spread their hateful propaganda to make the gullible believe they are the "saviors of Ethiopia" and everyone else is the enemy.

Dawit Woldegiorgis published his article to deliberately confuse what is taking place in Ethiopia today. He alleges, without any evidence, that Dr. Abiy Ahmed is guilty of "genocide" and getting rid of Abiy is the way to save Ethiopia. One may expect such a statement from a hateful layman but not from someone who set his foot in law school. As usual, Dawit is trying to confuse the gullible and incite the extremists who hate Abiy for his religion, his ethnicity, and the political position he took to reform Ethiopia. Dawit uses the title of the book "Time for Machetes". This book is about a Rwanda Genocide. One must wonder how anyone compares the 1990s Rwanda with current Ethiopia. This is not the first time that Dawit invoked the Rwanda genocide to describe what is taking place in Ethiopia. One might wonder if Dawit understands how the Rwandan Genocide began. Of course, he is well aware. He uses Rwanda as an example to instill extreme fear hoping that will lead to ousting Abiy Ahmed.

This is also a deliberate attempt to confuse his readers hoping his message will resonate and put pressure on Abiy's administration to take brutal action against those Dawit considers his enemies. He wants to weaponize the government for his vengeance against his "enemies" which he thinks will lead to a rejection of Abiy by the majority of the Oromos. Dawit and his "cheerleaders", in their ill-conceived scenario, they are hoping the Oromo politicians will "eat each other" hoping that will lead to a power vacuum where "the saviors of Ethiopia" will take over.

It is with this bizarre intention, Dawit wants to tell us that the machetes distributed to farmers in Harrar are intended to massacre a specific ethnic group, and in his dog whistle messaging, he is saying 'get ready for civil war'. It is for that reason Dawit alleges Abiy has the intention of destroying one ethnic group. He provides no evidence that this is the intent of the government. What is sad is a person of Dawit's caliber, who is a graduate of Columbia University Law School, does not seem to have any concept and understanding of what the required elements are for an act to be considered a genocide. For anyone who attended any law school, intent (*mens rea*) is a major component of any crime. Where is the intent of the Prime Minister to commit "genocide"? Maybe, it is necessary to remind Dawit and his likes how the Rwandan genocide began. It began because the rebel forces controlled Northern Rwanda and forced the president hand into a peace agreement. It was the killing of the Rwandan president that ignited the assassination of high officials by soldiers and police that led to civilian killings. On the other hand, Abiy's administration is fighting with Oromo rebels in Western Wollega to prevent an

escalating civil war to prevent what precisely occurred in Rwanda. How does Rwanda's situation compare to Ethiopia? Dawit is peddling unsubstantiated and baseless allegations to incite violence in Ethiopia hoping the extremist elements in our midst will listen to his dog whistle messages. Dawit quotes the following in his "Time for Machetes" article.

"Under Article II of the genocide convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: Killing members of the group; Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

Where in the world do Dr. Abiy Ahmed and his government fit here? Dawit is not only intellectually dishonest but he is misleading the "Anti Abiy" forces with a deliberate comparison of "apples and oranges". Maybe this is news to Dawit, Ethiopia is under a Federal system. Which means every region is responsible for law and order in its region. The federal government has no hand in what took place in Harrar, College, and other regions. The regional governments are primarily responsible for law and order in their respective regions as the Ethiopian Constitution prevents the federal government to interfere in their affairs. In 2018, 1,739 people were murdered in California alone; but, you don't see anyone blaming Donald Trump for it. Trump is the president of the United States not the governor of California; ergo, Abiy is not the Harrare or Oromioia Region President; he is the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. Maybe Dawit needs to share with us how the Eritrea policy that he was part of helped Ethiopia? He was part of the government when the regime persecuted Christians, where a civil war was taking place in four directions of the country, and in the middle of Addis Ababa. He was a part of a government that intentionally and purposely massacred innocent citizens. Using his own "genocide theory" we should ask why Dawit himself isn't charged with genocide. As one of the architects of the Eritrean policy, why isn't Dawit accused of genocide? Using force in Ethiopia never worked to deescalate any civil war or civil disobedience forever. Abiy's alternative approach needs time to be effective. Moreover, as many regional governments have reported, there have been many detainees who are apprehended by the police as a result of the crime that they have committed against innocent citizens and property. Dawit's fiction has no merit and it is a deliberate design to incite the extremist elements and create more instability in Ethiopia. Ironically, the OLF is also accusing Dr. Abyi of committing genocide because he is taking action against the so-called Oromo Liberation Army. Sadly, the OLF did not utter a word when the OLA engaged in the assassination of government officials and the massacre of civilians. Yet, the OLF has the audacity to call the action against the bandits in the Oromia region as genocide. Clearly, Dawit and the OLF are different sides of the same coin.

I find Major Dawit to lack an iota of integrity. In his previous article titled "A Country on the Brinks", he falsely asserted that Jawar Mohammed was working in conjunction with Dr. Abiy. It did not take long for this conspiracy theory to blow upon the face of people like Dawit. Even after such conspiracy was debunked, he did not show the courage to apologize to the people he misled; instead, he came up with a new reckless and dangerous allegations. It was in 1954 during a US senate hearing that Joseph Welch, special counsel for the U.S. Army, lashed out at Senator Joseph McCarthy on the US Senate floor asking him "Have you no sense of decency?" Senator McCarthy was notorious in promoting a conspiracy theory about the spread of communism in the US. His actions were reckless and he increasingly displayed erratic

behavior. This is the type of behavior and conspiracy theory that is displayed by Major Dawit Woldegiorgis. It is with that type of sentiment and sense of duty I say to Major Dawit have you no Shame? Dawit's cruelty and his dangerous propaganda must be gaged in the same manner that McCarthy's dangerous behavior was gaged. When I read articles from the likes of Dawit Woldegiorgis, I am always reminded what the former Night Line Anchor, Ted Koppel, said to Sean Hannity "you are bad for America". In my humble Opinion Dawit's conspiracy theory and his dangerous conflation of opinions that have no basis in facts and law makes Dawit not only bad for Ethiopia but a danger for Ethiopia.