

The Rumor Flying Around: The Alliance Making Game

Mengistu Musie (PhD)

mmusie@gmail.com

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Last week, the Ethiopian parliament opened its regular session, and Abiy Ahmed took prearranged questions as if he were answering them in real-time. However, it became apparent that the questions had been sent to him days before the parliamentary meeting, and he had studied them beforehand. During the session, when parliamentarians posed their questions, Abiy Ahmed took notes with a pen, giving the appearance of a spontaneous interaction. The Prime Minister meticulously planned and orchestrated this scenario to impress foreign observers attending the parliamentary session.

During this same session, Abiy Ahmed brought up the issue of an alleged coup d'état aimed at overthrowing his government. He spoke at length about the coup and implicated the involvement of friendly nations, though he did not specify which ones. The Prime Minister also accused some unnamed military officers of being involved in the plot to topple his administration. These accusations have led to widespread speculation and rumors.

One prominent rumor suggests that General Tsadekan Gebre-Tensay, a critical Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) commander, is the individual Abiy Ahmed referred to in his accusations. General Tsadekan is rumored to have planned the overthrow while in the United States on a work visit. Despite these rumors, no concrete evidence links him to the alleged coup.

Abiy Ahmed and his contemporary ally, the TPLF Adawa group, have exposed the alleged coup attempt. They claimed that General Tsadekan and a faction within the TPLF planned it. The Adawa group of the TPLF, which includes prominent figure Debretsion Gebremichael, has been identified as a source of the intended coup. The TPLF, or Tigray People's Liberation Front, has a complex history with the current Ethiopian government, marked by conflict and political rivalry.

The TPLF Adawa group, however, has distanced itself from these allegations, emphasizing that they are focused on achieving a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict in Tigray. The

accusations have further strained the already tense relationship between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF. International observers are closely monitoring the situation, as the implications of these developments could significantly impact the region's stability.

The session's dramatic display and serious coup accusations have generated uncertainty and speculation. It is yet to be seen how these allegations will unfold and what evidence will come to light to substantiate the Prime Minister's claims. The Ethiopian political landscape remains fraught with tension, and the international community watches with bated breath for any developments that could either stabilize or further destabilize the region.

In conclusion, the recent parliamentary session in Ethiopia, marked by prearranged questions and allegations of a coup, underscores Ethiopian politics' complex and volatile nature. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's accusations against General Tsadekan Gebre-Tensay and parts of the TPLF highlight the ongoing power struggles and the intricate web of alliances and rivalries that define the country's current political climate. The coming weeks and months will be critical in determining the direction of Ethiopia's political future and its impact on regional stability. The political landscape in Ethiopia is undergoing significant upheaval, marked by shifting alliances and intensifying internal conflicts. Despite appearing to maintain power, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration faces mounting internal and external pressures, suggesting a potential collapse. The constitution established by Abiy's administration and the TPLF is becoming increasingly unstable, reflecting the broader volatility within the country.

In response to this instability, Abiy Ahmed has formed a new front of cooperation, which includes anti-Amhara and anti-Ethiopian forces, notably aligning with figures like Debretsion Gebremichael and his Adawa wing of the TPLF. This strategic alliance represents a notable shift, aiming to counter the influence of Amhara FANO and strengthen Abiy's position.

The new coalition is perceived as a more formidable force than the previous coup attempts by the Raya and Enderta faction of the TPLF, led by Tsadekan Gebretensay. This alliance underscores the deepening divisions within Ethiopian politics, highlighting the complex interplay of power and allegiances. Abiy Ahmed's decision to collaborate with historically adversarial elements has sparked significant controversy and concern, further complicating the political scenario.

The TPLF's involvement in this new front is particularly significant, given their long-standing rivalry with Abiy Ahmed's government. Their participation signals a comprehensive strategy aimed at helping Abiy Ahmed and preserving the ethnic-based political system now challenged by Amara Fano. In recent interviews with local news, leaders from the Adawa wing of the TPLF have emphasized that they see the rising power of Amara Fano, not Abiy Ahmed, as their primary enemy at this critical juncture.

As this writer writes this article, US envoy Mike Hammer arrives in Addis Ababa. According to inside information, he has invited various political organizations to discuss the current situation and possible future actions. Hammer is a well-known envoy for the US State Department to Ethiopia, a nation of over 120 million people. Regarding regional stability, a peaceful Ethiopia is critical for maintaining peace in East Africa and the Gulf of Aden.

However, instead of fostering lasting peace in Ethiopia and the broader region, the United States has made repeated missteps by aligning with ethnic organizations that promote division rather than unity. These organizations have contributed to ongoing instability by favoring the interests of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) under the guise of the Oromo Prosperity Party (OPP), while ignoring the Amhara Fano's potential role in bringing peace and stability.

In addition to this, the United States has failed to acknowledge the ongoing atrocities against the Amhara people in regions such as Wollega, Metekel, Wolqait, and other parts of Oromia while recognizing the Tigray conflict. It is unlikely that Mike Hammer's mission will achieve peace if it continues to overlook the root causes of Ethiopia's problems and the broader implications of ethnic tensions within the country.

The United States Department would be better served by recognizing and supporting a united and stronger Ethiopia, grounded in its rich tradition of unity, rather than aligning with divisive elements that seek to balkanize the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia, with its deep historical and cultural roots, has the potential to be a stabilizing force in the region. Working with groups that promote division only undermines this potential and exacerbates regional instability.

The United States can contribute to lasting peace and stability in East Africa by supporting a unified Ethiopia. This approach involves acknowledging and addressing the legitimate

grievances of the Amhara people, promoting inclusive governance, and fostering national unity. The US must shift its strategy from supporting divisive organizations to partnering with those who advocate for a cohesive and stable Ethiopia, such as FANO and other unity forces. To achieve peace and stability, the US must engage with all relevant stakeholders, including Amhara Fano, who can play a crucial role in maintaining national cohesion.

Ignoring the root causes of conflict and the ongoing genocide against the Amhara people in regions like Wollega, Metekel, and Wolqait perpetuates the cycle of violence and instability. Recognizing and addressing these issues is essential for Mike Hammer's mission and the broader US policy in Ethiopia to be effective.

The path forward

The alliance-making strategies of the TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front), OLF (Oromo Liberation Front), and OPDO (Oromo People's Democratic Organization) in various forms are often seen as defense mechanisms aimed at obscuring the harm inflicted on the Ethiopian people and the nation. These tactics are employed to distract from the underlying issues and perpetuate conflict, diverting attention from the necessity of addressing past grievances and injustices. The reality, however, underscores the pressing and urgent need for reconciliation and justice, moving beyond ethnic-based conflicts and divisions. For this vision to become a reality, Ethiopia requires significant change, beginning with the establishment of a transitional government that represents all sectors of society. This inclusive transitional government should be formed with the support of the international community and organizations, ensuring broad-based participation and legitimacy.

An all-inclusive transitional government would lay the groundwork for transitional justice, taking concrete steps to address past injustices. This includes holding accountable those responsible for the most egregious crimes against the people and the country. Justice must be served to heal past wounds and restore trust in the system. Additionally, the government should facilitate widespread reconciliation between communities and groups that have been victims of systemic oppression and violence.

Ethiopia should refrain from transcending divisive politics and instead foster a unified national identity. This process necessitates acknowledging past mistakes, addressing the root causes of ethnic tensions, and promoting inclusive dialogue among all communities. It involves creating platforms for open and honest discussions, ensuring that all voices are heard, and fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

Furthermore, the transitional government should focus on implementing political reforms that dismantle structures perpetuating ethnic divisions. Building a political and social framework that prioritizes national unity and cohesion is essential. Grassroots initiatives that promote solidarity, cooperation, and a collective Ethiopian identity should be encouraged, embracing diversity while striving for common goals.

The international community can play a pivotal and crucial role in supporting Ethiopia's transition by providing technical assistance, facilitating dialogue, and offering platforms for reconciliation. Their involvement is not just beneficial, but essential to ensure the process is inclusive, transparent, and aligned with international justice and human rights standards. Ethiopia's path forward must ultimately focus on healing, establishing trust among different ethnic groups, and creating a shared vision for the country's future. This vision should be rooted in justice, reconciliation, and recognizing Ethiopia's rich diversity as a strength rather than a source of division.

A concerted effort towards reconciliation involves:

- Creating platforms for open and honest discussions.
- Ensuring that all voices are heard.
- Fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

It is imperative to dismantle the structures perpetuating ethnic divisions and build a political and social framework that prioritizes national unity and cohesion.

The path forward must focus on healing the wounds of the past, establishing trust among different ethnic groups, and creating a shared and unified vision for Ethiopia's future. This involves not only political reforms but also grassroots initiatives that promote solidarity, cooperation, and a collective Ethiopian identity that embraces diversity while striving for common goals.