

# Who Stands to Benefit from Kenya's Invasion of Somalia? Definitely not Kenya's "Wananchi"!

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There are a number of Eritreans who made their transit through Kenya that fondly remember the country and its people. Indeed to know Kenya well is to fall in love with it. From its wonderful ethnic groups to a dazzlingly beautiful landscape, everything Kenya has to offer is full of superlatives. It is with this as a background that some of us, who consider Kenya as our other home, find Kenya's unfounded accusation against Eritrea shameful and inexcusable. On one hand we empathize with the "wananchi" (ordinary people, the masses) of Kenya whose lives is being threatened by kidnappings, bombings and killings, on the other hand, we are outraged that an innocent nation, our Eritrea, is unjustly being blamed. We pray that the real and perceived problems Kenya is facing will be rooted out from their sources. However, we also feel that the real source of the problem is not being identified properly and honestly dealt with. The Kenyan Government is telling the world and its people that the source of the problem is with Somalia and conquering Somalia will bring peace. Regrettably, the root of the problem is elsewhere. In other words, Kenya is barking up the wrong tree. Unless the real source is honestly admitted and dealt with, no lasting solution would be found for Kenya's problems. It is time to do an honest and independent appraisal of the problem based on concrete facts.

No question Kenya needs to be weary of the chaos in Somalia; otherwise it has a lot to lose. First and foremost Nairobi is home to many international organizations and a financial hub of many institutions that serve Eastern and Central Africa. Second Kenya is an "entry point" for every major corporation that seeks to do business in that part of Africa. In addition Kenya's tourism industry is its major source of foreign exchange. All these are sensitive to any real or perceived threat and if it is not careful, it could lose them all, particularly, when there are neighbors pushing and pulling Kenya to fail so that they can share the spoils.

## **Ethiopia: Somalia's Spoiler-in-Chief**

To be certain the political forces that jolted Somalia's core to its current state of disintegration do not have a single epicenter and their seismograph is a complex reading. However, it is not hard to notice that the key forces that spiraled Somalia into its current chaotic orbit did start in one place: Ethiopia! The first of these forces, Abdullahi Yusuf's *Somali Salvation Front* was formed in Ethiopia by Ethiopians in 1978. The armed wing of General Farrah Aidid's *United Somali Congress* was also formed in Ethiopia. The *Somali National Movement (SNM)* was also headquartered in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia. These three were the chief forces who engineered the current chaos in Somalia. This means Ethiopia remains the "spoiler-in-chief" in Somali since 1978.

Anyone who tries to put the blame for the Somali problem on anyone else other than Ethiopia is either ignorant about the history of the Horn or is deliberately attempting to falsify facts to suit his/her own agenda. The Somali problem was there for 13 years before a convenient scapegoat called Eritrea became independent, and for 20 years before Ethiopia declared war on independent Eritrea. In other words, all those who might be tempted to write off the Somali

problem as if it is “a proxy war between Eritrea and Ethiopia” better first account for the 20 years between 1978 and 1998.

### **Ethiopia: Somalia’s a Tangible Supplier of Weapons**

Everybody knows that Somalia is under sophisticated air and sea surveillance by the world’s most capable eyes and ears 24/7. Which country can then supply the Somali insurgents, undetected, not one but three plane loads of weapons? Reason tells us that this supplier must have some or all of the following:

- i. has stealth technology that can evade all forms of detection, or
- ii. is coordinating its efforts with those doing the surveillance, or
- iii. is one that does not need permission to fly over any airspace of other countries, or
- iv. is one that stands to benefit from having Somalia in a perpetual turmoil and chaos.

Is there anyone in the region that fits any or part of this profile? Yes. Ethiopia fits the last three of the four listed above.

- **First**, the Pentagon has admitted that it has surveillance over Somalia using unmanned drones from a base in Ethiopia: Arba Minch. According to the Voice of America, *“U.S. officials have acknowledged they are sending drone aircraft from Ethiopia to conduct surveillance in Somalia.”* It is thus very hard to believe that let alone three planes, even a bird would slip undetected into Somalia. As Ambassador Girma Asmerom, Eritrea’s Ambassador to the African Union, aptly asked why don’t the *“Kenyan fighter jets and U.S. drones”* that are ruling Somalia’s airspace destroy or intercept *“if they see planes loaded with arms?”* Unless of course the supplier is working in close coordination with the powers that are doing the surveillance. As the good Ambassador said it well it is indeed *“an insult to the intelligence of the international community.”* Either there were no planes supplying weapons; it was a fabricated story; or they cannot be from anywhere else but Ethiopia or the African Union in Muqdisho: the two known suppliers of arms to both sides of the Somalia conflict.
- **Second**, Other than Kenya, Ethiopia is the only country that can fly into the town of Baidoa without requiring permission to fly over another country’s airspace. Ethiopia is also the only country that can reach Baidoa by flying low and within minutes. The Ethiopian border town of Dolo Bay is only 130 miles from Baidoa, Ethiopia also has several major airports within 500 miles from Biadoa: Gode (420 miles), Harar (440 miles), Dire Dawa (460 miles), Arba Minch (465 miles) and Debre Zeit (500 miles). Even Addis Ababa is only 530 miles from Baidoa. On the other hand, the air distance from Baidoa to all other cities in the region is as follows: Nairobi, Kenya (555 miles), Mombasa, Kenya (565 miles), Djibouti (585 miles), Arusha, Tanzania (660 miles), Aden, Yemen (670 miles), Assab, Eritrea (685 miles), Sana’a, Yemen (740 miles), Dar es Salam, Tanzania (745 miles), Entebbe, Uganda (800 miles), Asmara, Eritrea (900 miles), Massawa, Eritrea (905 miles). See how ineptly forged the story about Eritrea is!
- **Third**, Ethiopia is the only country that thinks it can benefit by keeping Somalia in a perpetual state of chaos. Ethiopia is also the only country that thinks it can lose by the

reconstitution of Somalia. Ethiopia was a player in the breaking up of Somalia, and now no one in his right mind should expect it will lift a finger to reconstitute it.

### **Ethiopia: At the Forefront of the "Jubaland Initiative"**

US cables indicate that the Kenyan invasion of Somalia is not something that came instantaneously. It has been in the planning as the "Jubaland Initiative" at least since 2009. A November 30, 2009 US cable tells us that Ethiopia was for it from the get go:

*"Meles said the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) has recently informed Kenya of its support in principle for Kenya's Jubaland initiative and **has agreed to share relevant intelligence.**"*

What kind of "relevant intelligence" was the Prime Minister of Ethiopia willing to share with the Kenyans? It can only be the fabricated information that is designed to frame Eritrea.

Even though no one should put it beyond the Ethiopian regime to kidnap and kill tourists, all in order to pull Kenya into the current war at Ethiopia's own timing, it looks the Kenyan authorities are willing players in this well calculated timing as well. There was no "straw that broke the camel's back." Why is it happening at the time the UN Security Council is discussing a resolution that calls for "more sanctions" on Eritrea? By coincidence, not at all! The Resolution before the Security Council was drafted and circulated by Ethiopia in July on behalf of IGAD. As players in IGAD Kenyan leaders have been co-conspirators on this timing. But why? As intelligent and as crafty politicians Odinga, Kibaki, and Wetangula are, why are they shamelessly repeating Ethiopia's disinformation about Eritrea? Why are they choosing to bear a false witness on behalf of Ethiopia? I am certain they are well aware of the 9th commandment of the Decalogue which in Kiswahili reads: "*Usitoe ushuhuda wa uongo dhidi ya jirani yako*" ("*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour*"). Why? Did they fail to see how canny and mischievous the current rulers of Ethiopia can be? No, no one should underestimate the capabilities of any of these able Kenyan career politicians. No one should also say "they don't know what they are doing", quite to the contrary. Why? Are they under pressure from some powers they cannot dare say no to? Powers that might be threatening them with the stick of the ICC indictment for the post election violence that claimed many lives in Kenya? No question.

While Kenyan leaders might have their own motives of invading Somalia, the Ethiopian regime in its devious calculations is also happy to entangle Kenya in a well orchestrated trap. Kenyans should have thought carefully before jumping into this trap. Everyone from Johnny Carson, to Yoweri Museveni to the international media are predicting that Kenya is not going to fare any better than others in its invasion of Somalia and things would backfire. Are Kenyan leaders that willing to sacrifice the well being of their citizens to appease Ethiopia and other powers?

### **The Ethiopian Regime: A Habitual con artist**

In 2006 the Ethiopian Government told the world that a bomb that exploded in Addis Ababa "*contained parts sourced from Eritrea and were consistent with bombs used in previous terrorist attacks*", but as an October 6, 2006 cable reports it, a US Embassy "*source, as well as clandestine*

*reporting, suggests that the bombing may have in fact been the work of GoE [Government of Ethiopia] security forces.”*

This is also the very same regime that is trying to convince the Security Council to impose additional sanctions on Eritrea by claiming “an Eritrean intelligence officer named ‘*Gemachew Ayana*’ had tried to mastermind a plot to bomb an African Union session in Addis Ababa in 2011”. However, Gemachew Ayana was not in fact an Eritrean. He was an Ethiopian army colonel. This Ethiopian disinformation was peddled to the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring group, which sadly tried to sell it to others as its own finding. Anyone familiar with Eritrean languages could, right away, tell that a “Gemachew Ayana”, a typical Ethiopian (Oromo) name, cannot be Eritrean. Ethiopian leaders fully knew of this, but they were arrogant enough to think outsiders would not be able to pick on this obvious, yet vital, clue in their fictitious story. Ambassador Herman Cohen, former US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, knew very well what Ethiopian leaders are capable of doing. Here is how he characterized Ethiopia's mischief for PBS:

*“There are friends in the region, like the Ethiopians, who probably are **feeding false intelligence about terrorists being hidden and that sort of thing**, because the Ethiopians are deadly afraid of Moslem control and also they have their own Moslem problem among the Oromo ethnic group in Ethiopia. So they want to keep the Islamists out of power, and they will bring the U.S. into it, if they can.”*  
—[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/jan-june06/somalia\\_06-06.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/jan-june06/somalia_06-06.html)

If there are any terrorists in Somalia today it is only because Ethiopia wished them in. In most cases Ethiopia is facilitating their free transit to Somalia. After all isn't Ethiopia openly hosting some battle hardened, Afghan-trained, terrorists in its capital? The safest route for any terrorist into Somalia, it looks like it is through the channels the Ethiopian government is providing. Unfortunately, many in the west are blindly buying into Ethiopia's disinformation about everyone of its enemies, chief among the victims: Eritrea.

One thing is certain; no outsiders, including seasoned Kenyan leaders, are capable of seeing through the quintessential Abyssinian mask of double play. While telling the Kenyans they are on their side, they are arming both sides of the Somalia conflict to keep it going. Yes, Meles and Co. are capable of pulling such a diabolical scheme. At the same time Meles, with his promised “intelligence sharing”, is purposely feeding the Kenyans all sort of false information about Eritrea. This is the intelligence (rather the disinformation) that Meles promised to share with Kenyan authorities if they go ahead with their “Jubaland initiative”.

Remember the chaos in Somalia came because of Ethiopia. Al-Shabaab came to be what is now as a result of Ethiopia's invasion. Piracy is wrecking havoc in the Indian Ocean because of Ethiopia. These are just few examples on how Ethiopian authorities cry terrorism or commit acts of terrorism and yet they try to blame it on the Somalis, the Oromos, or the Eritreans.

### **Ethiopia's Real Motive: Economic Hostage Taking**

The Ethiopian regime that is desperately trying to hold on to power is encouraging Kenya into a war with Somalia because it has several ulterior motives. Here are few:

1. If the Kenyans continue to buy into Ethiopia's disinformation of "Eritrea is supplying weapons to the Somali", Ethiopia can comfortably make a "puppet" out of Kenya. Making it the lead singer in its well orchestrated chorus of calling for more sanctions on Eritrea at the UN Security Council, while it pulls the strings from above. This is Ethiopia's short term motive.
2. If Kenya feels threatened enough to make life hostile to every Kenyan Somali and Somali refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia, anyone that remotely resembles a Somali, the Boran (Borana Oromos of Northern Kenya) as well as all the Oromo refugees from other parts of Oromia will be targeted. This, in Ethiopia's calculation, will deny the OLF (Oromo Liberation Front) and the ONLF (Ogaden National Liberation Front) a popular base in Kenya. This also is Ethiopia's short term motive.
3. Of course if "Kenya's Jubaland Initiative" succeeds, and Jubaland becomes another Somaliland or Puntland, a permanently severed part of Somalia, neither Djibouti nor Kenya, among Somalia's neighbors, and definitely not the Somali people, stand to benefit from it. Ethiopian rulers and Ethiopian rulers alone are the ones who can benefit from the destruction of Somalia. This too is another of Ethiopia's short term motives.
4. If Kenya's invasion of Somalia backfires, as Museveni, Johnny Carson and many others are afraid it will, Ethiopia hopes many of the international organizations and financial institution that now call Nairobi home will feel it is no more safe to do business in Nairobi and it can woo them into Addis Ababa, which is already home of the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa. In other words, Kenyans need to understand that not only is Ethiopia attempting to impose economic sanction on Eritrea, but is also maneuvering to deny Kenya from continuing to be the financial hub of East and Central Africa. This is Ethiopia's main motive. What one could term Ethiopia's "economic hostage taking." It has done it to Djibouti. It has been attempting to do it with Eritrea. It is now Kenya's turn.

Again who stands to benefit from Kenya's Invasion of Somalia? Apparently, neither Kenya nor Somalia; only the Ethiopian regime stands to benefit a lot. It is the only life line it has left for it. That is why it is making Kenya bear false witness against Eritrea for its short term goal, and attempting to turn Kenya into an economic wasteland for the long term. Should the Kenyan people be made to pay such a heavy price that doesn't benefit them? Make no mistake Ethiopia is trying to take Kenya as an economy hostage! Is this what Mwai Kibaki, Raila Odinga, or Moses Wetangula want? What about the Kenyan "Wananchi"?