

Betrayal and Resentment felt by the Amhara people

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About five years ago, when the Prime Minister (PM) took power, the vast majority of Ethiopians at home and abroad welcomed him with the hope that he is our “Moses” who will take us to the promised land. This expectation was not based on facts, but on pure hope and good wishes for our country, and for our people. At that time, the country was in grave danger, and some sort of reform was urgently needed to prevent further disaster and disintegration. Therefore, his rise to power, his tone of unity, reform, and justice was refreshing for all to hear. The Amhara people, the vast majority of whom preferred to be identified as Ethiopian, also extended their full support to the PM, hoping for a better day for their country. It is, therefore, fair to ask why they feel betrayed, and why they resent the PM and the so-called “prosperity” party.

To be fair, it was the so-called elites, political parties, and activists who imposed their own wishes on the PM and believed that he would be the catalyst to revise the constitution and the existing ethnic federalism, even though that was never his intention. As the PM clearly stated in his first book, *Medemer*, he believes that, under this ethnic federalism and existing constitution, we can strengthen our unity and the Ethiopian State can exist and prosper. Therefore, since he didn't promise to reform the constitution or the federal arrangement, it will be a mistake to feel betrayed or resent the PM in this regard. If we resent or criticize, it should be the so-called elites, political parties, and journalists who projected him as reformist, instead of another EPDRF disciple. The point I am trying to make is that it is not the PM's fault, if the rest of us projected him as “Moses” of our time. Therefore, in this article, when I talk about betrayal and resentment felt by the Amhara people, I will focus only on the last three wars with TPLF, and the failure of the government to enforce law and order to protect the safety of its citizens for the last five years.

Recently, I posted an article on this forum titled, “Before the Next Massacre Buried the Nation itself”, and it can also be found at, <https://ethioreference.com/archives/34171>. In that article, I addressed atrocities committed by the Oromo extremist groups supported by Oromo prosperity party members and the failure of the government to protect innocent people. In the same article, I stated the following: “Regardless, if the government failed to enforce law and order for whatever reason, and life remains ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short’, as Thomas Hobbes once said, then we should ask ourselves a simple question: what is the state for? What makes it a legitimate government for the citizens to recognize it as such? When and under what circumstances is an uprising or a resistance against the government justified, if not to demand for the right to live?” Now, feeling hopeless, when the Amharas living in Wolega organized to resist injustice, not even against the government, but against those who are killing them, the government not only used decisive action to crush them, but also the PM labeled them as “Amhara shene”. His attempt is to equate them with the Oromo extremist groups who are killing innocent people in daylight. Yes, these people not only felt betrayed, but also resent the PM for a good reason. Whereas resistance against injustice is justified regardless of what the PM thinks, it should be clear to the rest of us that it is the PM and his party who failed these people. It shouldn't be difficult for most of us to recall the support these people extended to the PM when he came to power. Now, shamelessly, he is trying to paint them as “Amhara shene” to divide the people more. Unfortunately, some mouthpieces, at EMS television stations and others echo what the PM said. As they say, don't eat

in the palace if you want to maintain your independence and professionalism. Even the philosopher didn't come out intact. My fellow Ethiopians, it is time to defend the truth and reject this pathetic allegation by the PM and demand the government to protect these innocent people.

During the first war, when the Ethiopian National Defense Force was attacked by TPLF forces, the government called the Amhara people to organize and fight to protect themselves and their country. Even though they are not organized and armed like the Oromo militia and TPLF forces, they did everything they could. Nevertheless, we all know the destruction and human loss this region experienced. Again, during the second and third war they fought side by side with the National Defense Force. When the government felt that they were in control and TPLF was no longer a danger to their power, they arrested about 12 thousand Fano members and disarmed them, even though the safety of the citizens in that region was not secured yet. So, if these people felt betrayed, and resent the PM in particular and the government in general, whose fault is it? In the absence of the government who is supposed to protect, if these people try to organize to defend themselves, how can a reasonable person equate this group with the Oromo extremist group and call them, "Amhara shene"?

My fellow Ethiopians, after we witnessed the destruction that TPLF caused, if we cannot imagine and try to prevent what will happen if the Amhara population who felt betrayed finally organize to resist, we are totally irresponsible, to say the least. Those in power and the Oromo extremist group should learn from their previous bosses that it is foolish to assume that the power they have now will stay permanently. In fact, if the situation is not corrected and addressed properly, the Amhara and Tigray people coalition can be a near future reality. In politics, as Americans often say, there is no permanent enemy and permanent friend, but permanent interest. The right approach is not to label this resistance as "Amhara shene", but to address their need and protect them from continuous atrocity committed by the Oromo extremists supported by the Prosperity party members.

It is also unfortunate to see that the Amhara prosperity party leadership miserably failed to be the voice of these people. Instead, they became an instrument to serve the dominant party as they used to do during the TPLF time. I hope they will wake up before it is too late. It is also my hope that other ethnic groups within the Prosperity party and other reasonable peace-loving Ethiopians regardless of their ethnic background will speak up. This situation is not sustainable and action is needed to stop Oromo extremist groups. How can barbarism in the Twenty First Century be tolerated? Where is our humanity? My fellow Ethiopians, in the name of these helpless and hopeless people, I urge you to speak up! With no ambiguity, we should respond to the PM saying, no! THEY ARE NOT "AMHARA SHENE." They are just resisting injustice and demanding a normal life.

On a side note, deep down inside, I strongly believe that the only identity that defines me is the Ethiopian identity and I refuse to be identified as Amhara. Therefore, when I am trying to be the voice of the voiceless, if others try to put me in this box and see me as Amhara, it is their own narrow mindedness that prevents them from seeing the issue I am presenting, which needs our collective attention as Ethiopians. I refused to be identified as such, not because I am ashamed to be called Amhara, it is because I refused to be trapped in this dirty politics which in my opinion is a growing cancer in our society. I can be reached at: shimelisamare@email.com