



Ethiopians: Let us Prepare Ourselves Before the Peoples' Revolution to Oust an Ethiopian Dictator Reaches Ethiopia (Part I)

February 5, 2011

For thousands of years, life in Egypt has been greatly sustained and nurtured by the Nile waters coming from the rivers of Ethiopia and beyond; flowing through the beautiful land we all share. The Nile is like the blood of our shared humanity that passes through the veins of every human being; preserving life through generations past, present and future.

Yet, over the last days and weeks, the ingredients for renewed life are coming from Egypt to Ethiopia; as if the great river has reversed its flow and is going upstream to nurture a land where hopes of a better future had dried up. As it flows, the winds are also blowing seeds of change to and fro in the world; some of these seeds will find life in the fertile soils of discontent.

The inspiring message that comes from seeing masses of people stand up with courage and in solidarity as they demand freedom and justice after years of repression will find some of that fertile soil, ready for planting, in Ethiopia; tilled to perfection by the strongman himself—Meles Zenawi—who rightfully fears that Ethiopia will be next.

Like Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, when cornered, Meles—like any other typical dictator—will likely use the “same-old” tactics (see below) both he and others have used before, but to a more intense degree now; especially division, all of which should be publically exposed, especially to the western donors, and immediately countered. We anticipate he will:

- 1) ***strengthen his power-base in Ethiopia through “strongman techniques”—bribes, threats, intimidation—harshly clamping down further on democratic and civil rights***
- 2) ***close down communication lines further; particularly the Internet, social media and outside sources of radio and TV broadcasts like the VOA, Deutsche Welle or ESAT***
- 3) ***lobby himself and his regime in the international community by falsely claiming they are the only ones capable of maintaining stability and fighting terrorism; particularly should new threats emerge from these uprisings in Egypt, Yemen and beyond, despite many gifted, capable and moderate Ethiopians from diverse groups who are committed to stability and security in the country***
- 4) ***loot Ethiopian assets and resources (particularly land and mineral rights) at an accelerated pace, while he can still do it; stashing investments and profits in foreign banks and companies***
- 5) ***Play the ethnic card through new campaigns of propaganda and government sponsored ethnic attacks and/or events meant to:***
 - a. *create fear among Tigrayans like he did in 2005; claiming that allegiance to him is their only option for security*
 - b. *spread propaganda to Oromos and minority groups that the Amhara are coming to dominate*
 - c. *incite conflict or government-sponsored violence; including where there is peaceful protest, in order to justify draconian counter measures against the people*

The irony is that if Meles takes such steps to prevent an uprising of the people, he may find he is simply better preparing the soil for a broad-based, massive peoples' movement. His actions may all backfire, making the people more determined than ever to resist.

What Meles does not understand is that Ethiopians want a NEW ETHIOPIA that has room for all its beautiful and diverse people; not the Ethiopia of Menelik, Haile Selassie, Mengistu or his own ethnic-based apartheid government of the TPLF, which has not only ruled with an iron hand, but has poisoned Ethiopian society by promoting ethnic-based hatred, division and alienation among the people. This has included an attempt to isolate his own ethnic group from the mainstream through favoritism, isolation, scare tactics and repressive measures against dissenters in an attempt to maintain their support; however, much of this support is superficial and will disappear once the people rise up and demand the end of any ethnic-based **governments. Only then will Ethiopians live in greater peace for “no one will be free until all are free.”**

With this in mind, and as we receive reports of great discontent in Ethiopia, we believe it is only a matter of time before there is a peoples' movement in the country that rises up to demand freedom, justice, equality and respect for human and civil rights. The SMNE is not in a position to make that call—for it will come organically from within Ethiopia—but instead, the SMNE seeks to give guidance, a manual to all Ethiopians as a whole, for how to help such actions produce a better Ethiopia rather than costly efforts that end up being hijacked, sabotaged or worse yet; become another force of destruction to Ethiopians. Ethiopians have had enough misery, suffering and pain. Periods of change can be for good or for bad; regardless of what we have had before. Honoring God and principles that value all human life should be primary. Greed and thirst for power have no place.

In **Part II**, we will more directly address seven different groups; giving more specific recommendations for how different sectors of our society might contribute to the overall success of a movement for freedom once the people of Ethiopia rise up.

The following are some suggestions for how we might counter some of Meles' efforts to block the people. Please do what you can and come up with your own ideas. Here are some:

- Expose Meles; letting others know that Meles is one of the worst dictators in the world—get this information broadcast through the media, social networks, Alejazeera, BBC, CNN, Fox NEWS, bloggers, Tweeters, public radio, faith organizations, human rights organizations and any others who are interested in democratic movements.
- Support others who are also standing up for their universal human and civil rights; letting them know that the people of Ethiopia stand in solidarity with them.
- Ethiopians who are skilled in IT, this is your movement and your time! You are needed. Call us!
- Join one of the active and well-known tweeters to inform them about the brutal dictatorial regime in Ethiopia
- Others.

Please do not hesitate to e-mail your comments to Mr. Obang Metho, Executive Director of the SMNE, at: obang@solidaritymovement.org . You can click at the following link <http://www.solidaritymovement.net/index.cfm> and filling out the required fields to be added on our mailing lists or to subscribe or to suggest material for inclusion. For a full archive and other resources, see <http://www.solidaritymovement.org/> You can also join us on the Face book page.