

## **Our Muslim and Christian leaders must stand up for higher principles and avoid greater disaster!**

The SMNE has been alerted to a serious issue affecting Christians and Muslims in the village of Qoto Baloso, Silte province of Ethiopia. Reports allege that Christian's church was burned down on 29 November 2011 by Muslim students, accompanied by Muslim police officials. The students were shouting "Allahu Akbar" ("God is great"). Is it really a Christian and Muslim conflict or just another TPLF/EPRDF power scheme?

Please you must watch the video. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX9gILYFLkg&mid=555>

The SMNE calls Ethiopians to not seek revenge against Muslims or Christians for the recent religiously based killings in Ethiopia. Instead, Ethiopians are urged to exercise extreme caution as this conflict may not be about religion at all, but be about the TPLF/EPRDF. The SMNE warns that further religiously based violence could lead to such breakdown in the country that recovery would be difficult. Ethiopians need no further killing or revenge! Such actions would propel Ethiopia into further chaos; hate and suffering even worse than what we have been enduring for the last 20 years since the TPLF regime came into power!

*Such conflict comes as a shock to most Ethiopians who, despite ethnic and political divisions, have not seen serious religious conflict. Historically, Muslims, Christians, Jews, traditionalists and non-believers in Ethiopia have been able to live peaceably, side by side in this country of about half Christians and half Muslims. What is happening? Is a more radical form of Islam emerging in Ethiopia that will threaten the religious tolerance that Ethiopians have enjoyed for thousands years?*

*Well, in a more sinister direction, information reported to the SMNE points out a different possibility-- that the conflict has been created by agents of the TPLF/EPRDF, who have incited local militias, made up of pro-EPDRF government Muslims and allegedly, to kill Christians and burn their church. The common factor between the militants is their allegiance not to Allah, but to the TPLF/EPRDF.*

Reports are coming out from various sources that the attacks were instigated, supported by the TPLF/EPRDF and other pro-government militias. Some reports have been received that as the Christians grieve and try to get help, they have been urged by some in the TPLF/EPRDF to retaliate. Witnesses report being told to, "Stop your whining and do the same to them," meaning Muslims. Instead of being a bona fide religious conflict, the crisis has all the telltale signs of a purposely manufactured conflict meant to achieve definite political goals. Shockingly absent is any concern for the human lives lost as a result of these brutal and calculating methods.

Political survival of the TPLF/EPRDF is at stake. Increasing inter-ethnic unity amongst Ethiopians is causing increased difficulties to the current regime. An old strategy of fomenting conflict between ethnic groups has now come to the forefront to break down the historical religious tolerance between Christians and Muslims as Mr. Meles attempts to convince the West that the terrorists are here in Ethiopia.

These Christians and Muslims have lived amongst each other for years. This game of the TPLF/EPRDF should be exposed by everyone, including Muslims and Christians who refuse to be played with like pawns in a game, but this is not a game, it is life and death. Unfortunately, the history of this regime is mired in the blood of many. Unless more are aware of what is happening, it will continue to claim the lives and futures of the Ethiopian people.

*Ethiopians must not be blinded! Even now, some Christians may be planning revenge against innocent Muslim brothers and sisters. We must warn these people to not simply react with great emotion coming from their grief and anger, but to think before they commit crimes for which they will later be held accountable by God/Allah and man. We must realize that all the signs are there that the TPLF/EPRDF wants us Ethiopian kill each other. Do not become like the Woyane--- agents of death! Our pain does not justify killing of the innocent! Our Muslim and Christian leaders must stand up for higher principles and avoid greater disaster!*

*Do not fall into the trap set up by the TPLF/EPRDF to make us fail. Persevere, support and grieve through this until together, we see the light! As we speak, religious tensions are growing. You, and each of us, must stop this horrible brutality and join together to fight for peace, justice and the rule of law. Do not fight against yourself, ourselves and our brothers and sisters by joining in with actions that are sure to lead us to greater despair.*

*The SMNE calls on all leaders, especially in the religious community, to guide your people towards forgiveness and reconciliation. Let only the real perpetrators be held accountable for their crimes in courts of justice, not the innocent or you will become like "them!" Even if such justice is not available in Ethiopia right now, let us work together towards future justice for all Ethiopians. Know that God/Allah will ultimately hold all accountable for our actions.*

The SMNE expresses its condolences to the families who lost their loved ones in these conflicts. As we feel the pain of these losses, we remember those who have died. We cannot bring back any of their lives, but *we can work towards making a New and better Ethiopia where such things can never happen again. An Ethiopia where we put our humanity before our religion, ethnicity or any other difference and see each person as part of our greater Ethiopian family. When one part of our society like Muslims, Christians, Jews, traditionalists and non-believers is afflicted with pain, it affects the rest of us. When we afflict great sections of our people with pain, it will be felt by the nation for “no one is free until all are free!”*

All of us, Muslims, Christians, Jews, traditionalists and non-believers in Ethiopia can forgive, *we are in a better position to contribute to the future rather than becoming stuck in hate and anger. As a country, this is our plight. We seem to all be recovering from some bitter wrongs in the past.*

*We must advocate for a different future. As each of us makes a decision this day, choose to contribute and resist the evil plan of the TPLF/EPRDF that can lead to the destruction of our beloved country. Fear God/Allah and resist evil!* May we seek God's/Allah's comfort, strength and guidance in the difficult path ahead of us.

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Please do not hesitate to e-mail your comments to the SMNE Executive Leaders at: [SMNE@solidaritymovement.org](mailto:SMNE@solidaritymovement.org). You can find more about us through our website at: [www.solidaritymovement.org](http://www.solidaritymovement.org)