



The Price of Ethiopia's Lawlessness

Four and half years! Four and half years of naked defiance of international law, by a regime that depend largely on the international community for its political survival! And what is the price of this lawlessness?

The minority regime ruling Ethiopia today has no credibility at home or abroad. The democratic cocoon it had carefully built around it to cover up its true criminal nature has withered away. That is why it has been working hard to sell the terrorism card and portray itself as the guardian against Islamic expansion in the Horn of Africa sub-region. What is disturbing is that some in the West are willing to buy what this criminal regime is selling and, as a result, they are giving it a pass on its criminal activities at home and abroad.

Let us look at how this plays out on the conflicts in the Horn of Africa. The outgoing UN Secretary General, in his report to the UN Security Council last week, in which he recommended an extension of the peacekeeping arrangement on the border between the countries, said: "Four years after the 2002 decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, I remain deeply concerned about the stalemate in the Ethiopia-Eritrea peace process. This is an untenable situation, which, if allowed to fester, could lead intentionally or unintentionally to events with disastrous consequences for the two countries and the whole region."

But, how does a regime get away with naked defiance of a ruling by an international commission that it signed to be "final and binding" before representatives of the bigwigs of the international community—the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, and the African Union, the guarantors of the peace agreement that led to the ruling? On the conflict, there seem to be three parties:

a) the compliant party (Eritrea), b) the defiant party (Ethiopia), and c) the defiant party's Western enablers who seem to be working hard to ensure the survival of the embattled minority regime in Addis Ababa.

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We see the same trend at a regional level, where we see three active players: the region's destabilizer in-chief (Ethiopia), its Western enablers, and then, we have the victim nations and peoples (Somalia, Eritrea, etc). The minority regime still occupies sovereign Eritrean territory, has invaded Somalia, and continues to intimidate some of its other neighbors. Yet, some in the international community continue to go out of their way to justify the regime's criminal acts because they see the region from the very narrow prism of terrorism. In other words, Meles Zenawi has found a good market for his bill of goods.

But, what is the price and who pays for this lawlessness? There is no question that the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples have been paying a great deal since the conflict erupted in 1998. However, this is not only about Eritrea and Ethiopia. Eritrea knows its borders, and, despite the Tigrayan-dominated minority regime shenanigans, Ethiopia also knows where the boundary

lines are.

It is about the terrible message such lawlessness sends to those who put their trust on the international legal system. It is also about whether this international system will play any meaningful role in the resolution or prevention of conflict in the world. It is about whether the persistent cries for justice from the small nations who don't have a lot of oil will be heard in the Western capitals.

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international community and its institutions as honest brokers of global conflicts. The international community has already lost a great deal on this issue over the last few years. Not confronting defiance and lawlessness may add one more nail on the coffin of international legal mechanisms put in place to contribute to the resolution and prevention of global conflicts.

So, we hope the guarantors of the 2000 Algiers Peace Accord, especially the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations, will fully realize the short-term and long-term implication of such lawlessness and put an end to it by demanding an immediate and unconditional implementation of the ruling.