

Kinijit is at it again – hate politics!

By Mekonnen Kassa

I just had a chance to listen, in its entirety, to another one of poorly delivered public addresses by the “vice chairwoman” of “Kinijit” Ms. Birtukan Mideksa in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

One particular segment of her speech caught my attention and I quote her verbatim:

“ከግንቦት ፱፯ ምርጫ በኋላ የኢትዮጵያን ዲሞክራሲያዊ እንቅስቃሴንና ቅንጂትን ለመርዳት የሌሎች ብሄር ተወላጆች ወደ ትግሉ ቢመጡ በአንጻራዊነት ሲታይ የትግራይ ተወላጆች ተሳትፎ ግን አናሳ ሆኖ አግኝቶታል።” “..በመንግስት የፕሮፕጋንዳ ሐይል ብቻ ተታልለው ወይም በመሬትና ቤት ነፍሳችው ወለድ አገድ ተይዞ ነው ብዬ ለማምን እጂግ አስቸጋሪ ይሆንብኛል በቅንጂታችን ስም የቅንጂትን አላማ ተቃራኒውን ሲናገር የከረመው Kinijit.org የተሰገኘው ድህረ ገጽ ላይ የተወረወሩ ጥቃቶች ያስከፋገፋቸው መሆኑን ከአንዳንድ ሰዎች ሰምቻለሁ”

Roughly translated, she is saying, while other Ethiopian ethnic groups are actively participating to bring about a democratic political system, it is her impression that compared with their counterparts; Tigrayans in general have contributed very little to the success of this struggle. Birtukan then continues and pretends to stipulate; again I try to translate, that she finds it difficult to believe the reasons for Tegar’s lack of participation is a result of propaganda dished out by EPRDF; or it is because their souls are being held hostage to the preferential land and business opportunity afforded to them by EPRDF administration. The real reason, she concluded, is defamatory and inflammatory items published on Kinijit.org website while she and the rest of Kinijit leadership were incarcerated.

We know this is deceitful and it is designed to score political points against one of her rival groups. First of all, her statement is bigoted as it presupposes Tigrayans are not contributing their share to the democratization process. It is also self-righteous and arrogant because it basis the belief that the only way democracy can be established in Ethiopia is by working with her Party Kinijit. Second, she is being evasive and not talking about the real reason why Tegar and other ethnics shun away from Kinijit: it is because Kinijit issued a decree towards the conclusion of election 2005 to isolate and discriminate against supporters of “EPRDF.” As there was no easy way to identify EPRDF supporters, Kinijit followers took it on their own and discriminated against and isolated anyone who looked or talked like Tigrayan.

This is Déjà vu and her Party is at it again playing to the tunes of the hateful minority Ethiopian Diaspora. As the saying goes, a singer sings a song liked by those who paid for the show. That is exactly what her entourage has been doing, performing songs and collecting funds just like a band of entertainers. And I am not surprised they sang a song that most appealed to their patrons.

Speaking of Kinijit patrons, the quintessential American milk cows (የአሜሪካ ላሞች); the vast majority of them came from the same area as the performers themselves: from Addis Ababa. I am not sure why this was not readily apparent to Birtukan, because if she looked closely, she would have found that others from different regions and ethnic groups were not in attendance. For example, as the largest contingent of the Ethiopian Diaspora, the vast majority of Gondereans are conspicuously missing. It would also have been very difficult for Birtukan to find Somalis, Afars, Harraris, and Oromos. Heck not even the diehard Anuak Obang Metho came to see their show.

If Kinijit leaders do not change their ways, I am afraid Ms. Birtukan and her Party may lose even more of their Addis Ababa supporters because the chairman of the former All Amhara People Organization, Hailu Shawel, is most likely going to take most of them with him. To make matters worse, EPRDF is also working hard to win the hearts and minds of the rest of Addis Ababans. That leaves her Party only with Kestedemena supporters, and I am not aware if Kestedemena has any sizable registered members. I have read from MP Lidetu Ayalew book that some registered Kestedemena members were misled into it by Birhanu Nega under the guise of supporting Kinijit.

If Ms. Birtukan and her Party are genuinely concerned about gaining support from other regions and ethnic groups, they first need to do the hard work. They need to go back to Ethiopia and travel to the highlands and farmlands of North, South, East and West Ethiopia, recruit members from the voting indigenous population that has so much at stake in the process. Believe you me, democracy gained through sweat, money, and blood of the stake holders will taste sweeter and last longer than the one packaged in the US Congress, paid by a hateful minority in America, and exported to Ethiopia.

So many families and individuals have been victims of defamation and personal attack by Kinijit supporters, and I tell you I am sad to see yet another opportunity lost for reconciliation and rectification. Ms. Birtukan and her Party could have made history had she apologized for all the wrongs done to all who support EPRDF by Kinijit leaders and followers right after election 2005. She could have simply said, "My Party and I are sorry and apologize sincerely for any real or perceived isolation and discrimination committed, articles and editorials published under my Party Kinijit's name. We have learned a valuable lesson to respect every Ethiopians democratic right to support a political Party of his or her choice. We are working hard to make sure the mistakes committed in election 2005 never happen again under our Party Kinijit's name."

I am afraid the countless lives adversely impacted by the actions of her Party leaders and supporters do not matter to her. She chose to play hate politics and perpetuate her Party's self-righteous and bigoted reputation.