

Get your facts straight Mr Tepperman!!

I must apologize to you in advance, Mr Tepperman, because I have got a great deal to say about your paper, [With a Friend Like](#), published in Newsweek April 11, 2009. Most of it, I must admit, is quite unflattering; so here I go. I doubt you will read it all, but whatever!

After reading your article, I was shocked and appalled by your litany of distorted facts. You're quite audacious to attach your name to a piece of writing inundated with nothing but lies. Goodness! I have never read as much garbage as I have in your writing, about Ethiopian affairs in general. I am disheartened that state of Journalism in this day and age has become a mock. It is obvious you know very little to nothing about what is happening in Ethiopia. You merely sounds like a mouth piece of the disgruntled and extremist Ethiopian diaspora, which by the way, despite their notorious uproars around the Washington and New York areas remain a small minority of our community, here in the US. Most of us know very well the truth about our homeland. However, we have thus far chosen to go about our daily lives and leave this sort of unethical distortion of the truth, to reveal for itself, but the rubble of lies that bury the truth seems to be getting too big to overcome with each passing moment. Therefore, it has become necessary to set the story straight from time to time, when ever it calls for it; and this is one such time. It is fairly obvious you were fed most of this garbage by some vindictive remnants of the old brutal regime, who find a rapidly progressing Ethiopia unacceptable. What saddens me is, in this age of mass media communications, Western journalist rely on manipulative and self-serving individuals to make their conclusion about events they choose to cover. As if that wasn't enough, some self-righteous and ill-informed journalist exploit this rather sacred responsibility of disseminating the truth to the mass, as a platform from which they can propagate their biased views and retribute personal vendettas. I am afraid that appears to be the very reason behind this particular paper, published in Newsweek on April 11.

It is rather sad that we as a society actually have to rely on biased and incompetent journalists such as yourself, to bring the news of a complicated world into our houses. It is obvious you have no expertise on Ethiopian affairs beyond repeating what many delusional individuals have made a habit of barking. However, you pose as one who does, and that in and of itself is disheartening. For starters, you presume to know what the Ethiopian government thinks. As you mindfully put it, "Few people outside [Ethiopia](#) have ever heard of Birtukan Mideksa. And that's just how the government wants it." Well sorry to burst your bubble, but what has happened to Ms Mideksa is happening in the open. You can politicize it as much as you like, but hers is a legal matter, and a making of her own stupidity and arrogance. It is apparent you haven't any clue as to what was about to transpire in the wake of the elections of 2005, but those of us that actually were on the grounds of Addis Abeba during those months, fully understand the danger and chaos Britukan Mideksa and her gang were willing to put our poor people and nation for their own personal gains; POWER! Whether you like it or not, she was tried in a court of law and found to be liable for her part in igniting the chaotic unrest that followed the historic elections, which those of you in the West ridiculously call "DEMONSTRATION". Destroying private property, targeting and killing people as well as police officers, vandalizing government property, and much more; all meant to bring down a legitimate government, which is illegal in the US, is also illegal in Ethiopia. You may believe it shouldn't be in the latter, but quite frankly no one gives a damn what you Western journalists think.

We all know, not everyone voted for the current Ethiopian government, but a clear majority did, **that is a fact!** Whether you want to believe it or not, the government enjoys tremendous popular support amongst the rural dwellers of our country, which by the way happen to be 85% our entire population. So this iron-fist, of which you speak of, is nothing

more than the slogan of our mediocre and clueless opposition parties. The sooner the opposition embraces reality, the sooner they can find a feasible and appropriate mechanism with which to challenge the EPRDF. With the exception of one opposition party, all remain oppositions for sake of opposition. All I can say is, God save Ethiopia from some of these power hungry idiots. Simple and wishful thinking isn't going to defeat the machine that is the EPRDF, with deep rooted foundations in all corner of the country. We, Ethiopians clearly want and need a viable opposition to transform and deepen our infant democracy, but just any won't do. So, please understand not all of us want nor support many of these opposition parties, who are devoid of any concrete objectives for our country. They haven't progressed in the past 18 year, not because the political landscape has narrowed as you appear to be claiming, but of their own incompetence. They have yet to offer the Ethiopian public an alternative political doctrine. No one can say for certain what they plan to do with our country if they all of the sudden found themselves at the helm of national decision making. That is very scary!

Furthermore, the misguided and contradictory theories some in the opposition and their supporters espouse about the majority giving way to the minority, lacks any logic or ethics. They should honor the wishes of the majority, instead of rioting whenever things fail to run in their favor. Addis Abebans; not speaking in general terms of course, but of those that seem to have captured the attention and sympathy of some misinformed Western politicians and journalist, do not speak nor represent the views of the majority of long suppressed and neglected nations and nationalities of Ethiopia, **that also is A FACT!!** I can say with some certainty, many source of your distorted facts happens to be citizens of our beloved Capital, but for God's sake, Ethiopia is a nation of eighty million people. Most journalists such as yourself never leave the comforts of Westernized Addis Abeba, whose population is 4% of the entire nation, at best. How is it possible you can make such ridiculous conclusions about the affairs of a country when you have the slightest clue as to what the majority of this nation's peoples think or want? What ever happened to objectivity and searching for the truth? Or does it only apply to the "civilized" West? If your intent was to search for the truth, hear-say was the absolute wrong approach, not to mention, an unethical journalistic practice. You should venture into the vast country that exists outside of Addis Abeba, if truth is at all important to the fabric of your thesis, but I get the feeling truth isn't what you're really after.

Your oblivion of the truth becomes even clearer as you go one step further, and say "the EPRDF rigged elections", as though, that is a fact. **Well, I beg to differ!** The Carter Center, which actually observed the elections in 2005 didn't think so. Albeit some imperfections, the election of 2005, as most qualified parties concluded, was a fair process. Yet, of course you know better, being that you're best positioned to be the best observer sitting in the comforts of your office, where ever it may be in the concrete jungles of the Western hemisphere. What you fail to understand is, the Ethiopian government didn't introduce democracy to Ethiopians for the sake of Western approval. If you're concerned about the democratic principles of African governments, I suggest you first look at the Egyptians and Nigerians, who actually receive more of your money than Ethiopia, and have yet to show any legitimate elections in many decades, not to mention their dismal record on human rights at every level. Even the United States with all its firmly established institutions, and two centuries of democratic practice isn't immune to political or electoral imperfections, so for you to be overly critical of Ethiopia's newly found electoral process, is a bit bizarre, but I am certain, it is calculated and self-serving. What I have not figured out is, what axe you're grinding?

I commend you for speaking on behalf of suppressed people, if that's what you're doing, but I am afraid your concerns are misdirected. There are many people suffering on our continent and beyond. In fact, if you want to be a voice for oppressed people, I suggest you

look to our neighbor, Eritrea, whose minuscule population is fleeing the country in all directions just to get a taste of what most Ethiopians enjoy today: freedom, peace, and stability. I say most because as you incorrectly mention in your biased paper, the Ogadenis have yet to enjoy full stability because of their proximity to Somalia, as well as the continuous terror they suffer for political expediencies' sake by the ONLF. It is interesting how your paper completely avoided these facts. And this obsession you have about Ethiopia's "invasion of Somalia", as most of you in the Western media keep calling it. The truth is just too slippery for you guys, ha? However you term it, the truth remains, Ethiopia, like any nation has a right to defend itself, if threatened, and that is exactly what it did. Secondly, your selected amnesia blurs the fact that a UN sanctioned government of Somalia requested the assistance of the Ethiopian government. Sir, you and your media colleagues have a responsibility to state facts not opinion, but whenever it concerns African affairs that is just what you do; state your biased opinions! That is shameful, and I reject the contempt and double standard you have for us Africans.

I can only imagine, you, clearly seeing the Ethiopian government terrorizing its people, from the comforts of your office; GIVE ME A BREAK! What you echo in your paper is nothing more than terrorist propaganda, but I am sure you already know that, so the question is why repeat it over and over to your unsuspecting and gullible audiences in the West? Why not be a power for good and expose the kinds of atrocities these terrorist rebels inflict on innocent people time after time in the Ogaden and the streets of Addis Abeba, while their leaders freely roam the streets of American and European cities? Or do you only consider it terrorism when it is inflicted on citizens of the West? There shouldn't be any double standard. The Ethiopian government isn't fighting terrorism for the US, as you cynically claim it is. It happens to be a shared problem of both countries, as they face similar religious fundamentalists. Ethiopia has its own interest in fighting this fight along side the US, but some how you make it about hand outs for alliances. That is SAD, and it is ridiculous!!!

In conclusion, what remains to amaze me is, that a biased article that lacks any objectivity and truth can be penned by someone who considers himself a professional journalist, let alone make it to the pages of a respected publication like NEWSWEEK. The fact remains, the Ethiopian government is a product of a peoples revolution, it isn't in the business of terrorizing its own people, but if you're clueless about the complicated political dynamics of Africans, I can see how you can make such foolish and baseless allegations as you do all over your paper. The Ethiopian government isn't perfect, but neither is the American or any other for that matter, but what it has done in the past 18 years is nothing short of a miracle, and that is the only truth that matters to most of Ethiopia's rural and formerly neglected societies. This is of course a hard pill to swallow for some in the Ethiopian diaspora, who amongst them are the sources of your distorted reality about the state of affairs in our country. However, the truth is a stubborn thing, you can distort it all you want, but it is elastic; it comes back into form one way or another.

thanks; not really!

Alemshewit Weldearegay
Proud Ethiopian