

Eritrea 2023: New Year, New Reality

Eritrea, for the first time since its border war of 1998-2000, has become the master of its borders. The declaration of cessation of hostility between Ethiopia and Tigray entailed cessation of threats of war between Eritrea and Tigray of Ethiopia. As such, because there no threat of war, no need for war preparation.

In the past, during the lull of hostility with Ethiopia in years 2000 to 2018, Isayas declared ‘no peace, no war’ on Eritreans. In the name of ‘no peace, no war,’ the regime dismantled all Eritrean industries and business as well as demolished the Eritrean economy and abolished normal/peaceful life for Eritreans.

Because Ethiopia was illegally occupying Eritrean lands, Ethiopia was left to become landlocked denying it usage of Massawa and Assab of Eritrea. Similarly, because Isayas was illegally violating Eritreans’ right to dignified life, Isayas has become people-locked compelling him to live in seclusion (Adi Halo and Massawa). As a result, Isayas lost his grip of power to the military rulers of zones.

The competition among the military rulers of the zones is in the form of accumulating wealth. For years, the military rulers of the zones scrambled for stripping bare the Eritrean people of their land, properties and wealth, not to mention the Eritrean families of their children. With their amassed wealth, the military rulers of the zones are leading lavish lifestyles and enjoying luxurious houses and cars. Those luxurious and lavish lifestyles have made the Eritrean people feel like they are the serfs.

In the eyes of the Eritreans inside Eritrea, the military rulers are responsible for ruining Eritrea and tearing down its economy. And, in the eyes of the Eritreans in the Diaspora, Isayas is responsible. However, in order to judge who is actually responsible, it is necessary to understand the mechanism of the regime.

It appears the regime is structured in the same way the PLF [of Saba and Isayas] was functioning, where Saba was responsible for foreign office and Isayas was responsible for the military affairs in the field. The two belonged to the same faction and yet any signed agreement with a third party was not binding on the other. Similarly, although Isayas is the person that the world leaders’ pointing-fingers at for violations committed against Eritreans, it is the zones’ military rulers that are totally responsible for what is going on inside Eritrea.

In foreign affairs, whatever Isayas enters into agreements with foreign countries have no bindings on the zones’ military rulers. Yet, whatever damages the military rulers commit on the Eritrean people, the blame falls on Isayas. That is why the military rulers don’t care because their actions tarnish and damage Isayas’s name and not theirs.

Isayas and the military rulers share strong hatred and fear of the TPLF. It is only here that the zonal system and the foreign office find their unity in rejecting co-existence with the TPLF. Otherwise, the zones' military rulers are committed to undermining the government of Isayas and keeping Isayas secluded. Thus, Isayas remains the nominal leader and yet the world defines him by his past and not his present. The military rulers of the zones are always suspicious and non-comfortable with each other in their respective entrenched zones, where they are supported by their nepotistic and peripneral players.

It will be politically wise of the Isayasists in the Diaspora to realize those facts and not to stand by and watch the conspiracies of the military rulers against their leader. Yes, it will be politically wise of the Isayasists to save the face of their leader by condemning the intense round ups and evicting the elderly and babies by sealing houses in Eritrea.

It is time the Diaspora Eritreans, the pro-justice and Isayasists, to join hands and be the voices of those who are made homeless because their houses are sealed and made inaccessible. The elderly with tears welling up in their eyes are said to be missing the provincial system or the rule of the people by the people.

Eritreans are well aware that the zonal system is designed to function and engage in the militaristic way: Strict obedience, requiring submission to the commands of the military rulers. To end 'no-peace' and in order for peace to take shape in Eritrea, the military rule must end.

Zonal Rule vs Provincial Rule

The zonal rule is a military rule serving the despotic system, whereas the provincial rule is a civilian rule serving the people. The zonal system, as a military rule, is designed to tighten the regime's grip over Eritrea. Accordingly, the zones' rulers are governing in the tradition of Isayas, ruling with iron-fist.

The arbitrary rule of the zones by the military rulers is governed by the despotic guidance of the regime in that each subject is regulated by strict self-confidence crushing to become always servile. Food rations and restriction of movements are means to make the people or their subject accept with resistance the repression of the regime.

Some encouraging news is emerging from inside Eritrea nowadays. Due to the imposed intense roundups and sealing of houses, people have started to show their indignation. Indeed, pro-provincial rule forces are surfacing as a way to condemn the zonal rule by comparison.

The pro-provincial rule are calling on their family members and others to remove themselves from saying 'yes' to unacceptable orders and get rid of all fears. It is believed that removing fears will help to create space to standup for their rights.

To check the mounting public discontent, the military rulers have unleashed their goons to freely rampage Eritrean houses and intimidate parents against hiding draftees. Using the expression

“the straw that broke the camel’s back,” the impact of sealing houses on the patience of the Eritreans inside Eritrea can be explained to show how the indignation of the people resulted in joint actions of the pro-justice and the recently surfaced pro-provincial forces.

The zones’ military rulers are said not to be paying attention to the resistance of the people. The blind military rulers still believe that their subjects love being indecisive about all their demands. Because the people or their subjects live in fear of their own family members, the military rulers still believe that on their orders the subjects can harass other subjects or be harassed by other subjects.

Isayas and Abiy: Their Dreams and Fears

The greatest wing-spreading of Isayas through the tri-level political endeavor to accomplish his dream to become the most powerful man in the region was forfeited upon voting out the Somali Formajeo by the Somali people and Abiy’s abandonment of allegiance to him (Isu). The lost dream of Isayas, with Abiy’s agreement for Isayas to trespass the Ethiopian sovereignty at will still holding, was to become the ruler of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan from Adi Halo and to declare IGAD irrelevant.

Abiy abandoned allegiance to Isayas’s endeavor after the international community’s resistance. Knowing the endeavor was a failure and far from being a total success to rid Tigray and its people of the TPLF, Abiy succumbed to the international community’s pressure to sit and negotiate peace with Tigray. Thus, Isayas was excluded and also shocked to see Abiy stopped singing “Tedmernal songs,” and instead singing “You say hello from Adi Halo, I say goodbye from Mekelle.”

In the absence of Abiy, the abandoned Isayas is trying to blow life into his lost dream. And, the Amhara region, with the intention to divorce from Abiy, is planning to become the defacto Isu protectorate region. In return, the Amharas’ Fanos are there in Eritrea to protect Isu from Abiy’s retaliatory actions.

While Isu is known to the Amharas as supportive, kind and generous, Isayas is still known to Eritreans as oppressor, exploiter and abuser. To the international community, Isayas is considered as engage-able who self-condemned all war mongering policies following his 2018 agreement with Abiy. Isayas is now awaited to give his blessing to the Ethio-Tigray peace agreement. It would be wise move of Isayas to comply in order for the USA, UK and the EU to get involved and bear their responsibilities towards reparation to the victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Otherwise, Isayas would be pushed back to square one and labeled, once again, as persona against stability and good neighborliness of the region.

Long live Eritrea

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