

A brief account of criminal acts during the funeral of the two generals in Mekelle, Tigray, Ethiopia:

After General Seare Mokonnen, the Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian armed forces and his colleague Major General Gezae Abera were murdered in the home of the former by his own body guard in an attempted coup d'état on 15 June 2019, a funeral was arranged on 19 June 2019 at the city of Mekelle.

Representing my party, the Tigrian Alliance for National Democracy (TAND), I travelled to the martyres monument in Mekelle where the memorial service was taking place to pay my last respect for the slain generals who were my former colleagues during the struggle to oust the military dictators known as the Derg.

As I approached the site, a group of hooligans began shouting insults, like “traitor” “banda” etc. directed at me – chants which were being aired earlier on the Tigray Radio, also directed at Dr. Abiy Ahmed, P/M of Ethiopia, and Ato Abraha Desta, Chairman of the Arena Tigray Party.

The chants were followed by throwing stones at me and the police on the spot had to intervene to protect me. Right then, I was whisked away to a nearby police station where the situation seemed calm. After a while, I demanded to fly back to Addis Ababa from where I flew the same morning. The officer of the station, Commander Abadi Zegeye, seemed to heed to my demand and I began heading towards the airport of Mekelle escorted by four policemen.

The officer who appeared to escort me ordered our driver to continue to Kuha, about ten kilometers away from the airport. I asked why and the officer replied that it is an order from above. Soon, I ended up in Kuha police station and was locked in a prison cell with my personal belongings taken away. There was no explanation to my incarceration.

After I spent the day and the night in the prison cell, at about 10:30 in the morning, my captors set me free and drove me back to the airport from where I made my way to Addis Ababa harrassed, injured and without attending the funeral of my loved ones.

Meanwhile my close colleague, Ato Amanuel Wolde Libanos, who drove to Kuha looking for me was ambushed by a group of four policemen, and at gun point he was led to the outskirts of the town Kuha where the policemen forced plastic full of poison to his mouth. As he fought back, some of the poison went through his mouth while the rest was splashed over his clothes and body. Thanks to passers-by ladies who shouted for help, he survived the assault and now he is undergoing medical treatment at Addis Ababa hospital.

No doubt, these criminal acts were perpetrated by agents of the regional government of Tigray – acts which tantamounts to state terrorism. Using the funeral ceremony as pretext, it had assembeled over 3000 hooligans from all the sub-districts of Tigray (150 from each) and had used the sad occasion as a political platform, reminiscent of the defunct Fascist Derg. Such hideous acts, especially during funeral moment when eveybody is poised to mourn, are alien from the culture of Ethiopians and humanity at large.

With best regard,

Aregawi Berhe (PhD)

Chairman –TAND

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Note:

I, Aregawi Berhe, is a resident in The Netherlands since 1993 with Ä status. I did my Masters Degree in Politics of Development at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague and my PhD in Vrije University Amsterdam. I also worked as a research assistant at Afrika Study Center, Leiden University for over six years. I am also politically engaged in the struggle of transforming Ethiopia to a democratic system.