

The Pancea does not Lie in Externalizing the Conflict or Scapegoating Eritrea |



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In classical fashion, Ethiopia's former figure-head President, Mr. Mulatu Teshome, raises a false-flag alarm to accuse Eritrea for stoking a "new conflict in the Horn of Africa". Audacious claim is precisely intended to conceal and rationalize a war-mongering agenda. The facts are otherwise crystal-clear:

1. Contrary to distorted historical accounts that Mr. Mulatua attempts to project, Eritrea and Ethiopia went to war in 1998 precisely because the TPLF-led Ethiopian regime occupied sovereign Eritrean territories - including Badme, Adi Murug and other places - in flagrant violation of international law and the OAU cardinal principle on the sanctity of colonial boundaries.

2. Even after the costly war, Ethiopia continued to defy international law and occupy sovereign Eritrean territories in breach of the Arbitral EEBC Award for twenty long years. Mulatua endorsed – even if his authority was arguably nominal - the violation of international law as well as the "regime change" agendas of regional destabilization of the Melles regime during his Presidency in those times (2013-2018).

3. Eritrea normalized ties with Ethiopia in 2018 when the Abiy Government publicly announced its readiness for the full and unequivocal acceptance and implementation of the EEBC Award of 2002. Eritrea reciprocated in good-faith and worked in earnest to foster and nurture good-neighbourly ties with Ethiopia on the basis of full respect of each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

4. But soon, Ethiopia was embroiled in a deadly conflict with its Tigray region when the latter unleashed what was widely termed as a War of Insurrection on the night of 3 November 2020. Eritrea gave sanctuary to the contingent of the Ethiopian Northern Command who escaped from coordinated and massive assaults in the TPLF "blitzkrieg". The TPLF's war plans also included massive and phased attacks on Eritrea.

5. Eritrea's involvement in the imposed war was dictated by these circumstances as well as the request of the Ethiopian Government.

Shameful and unconscionable acts of backstabbing aside, the Ethiopian Government and its Defense establishments officially and publicly paid tribute to Eritrea's indispensable role during Ethiopia's dark days.

6. As underlined in previous occasions, the Pretoria Agreement is an exclusive matter for the Ethiopian Government and its internal protagonists. Eritrea has neither the interest nor the appetite to obstruct or tamper with a purely internal Ethiopian affair.

7. Indeed, Eritrea duly re-deployed its troops within its internationally recognized sovereign borders. Still, those who never accepted the EEBC Arbitral Award in good-faith, or harbour some intent in fomenting conflict, have and continue to peddle false allegations of Eritrean troop presence in "the border areas"— apparent euphemisms/references to Badme and other similar territories.

8. The ill-intent and provocations have not been confined to these acts only. For reasons that are difficult to fathom, the Ethiopian Federal Government has unleashed, in the past months, an intensive and unwarranted campaign of provocation against Eritrea through its "thinly-veiled" agenda of acquiring ports and maritime land "legally if possible and militarily if necessary".

9. The commotion and disquiet precipitated by Ethiopia's opaque MOU with "Somaliland" remains another element of regional tension. Ethiopia is also embroiled in another vicious internal war in the Amhara Region.

10. In a nutshell, the myriad problems besetting the region stem and find their fulcrum in Ethiopia; not elsewhere. And the panacea does not lie in externalizing the conflict or scapegoating Eritrea.