

# The Lords of Living Lies in Ethiopia

By Alemayehu G. Mariam

March 28, 2017



**Author's Note:** In this commentary, I take a careful look at the “very [sophisticated report](#) from the Embassy [of Ethiopia]” submitted for the record at the “Democracy Under Threat in Ethiopia” hearing of the Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives on March 9, 2017. The “embassy” report (“[Explanatory Note](#)”) designated by the unassuming title, “Explanatory Note”, is a piece of propaganda that simply boggles the mind for its outrageous lies, depraved indifference to the truth, brazen falsehoods, egregious distortions of facts, shameless attempts at manipulation, ludicrous claims and nonsensical arguments.

The “Explanatory Note” aims to whitewash the T-TPLF’s decades-old record of massive human rights violations, gloss over recent massacres as “disturbances”, sugarcoat martial law as a benign “state of emergency” and depict it as “stability” and “peaceful condition”. The “Note” ultimately aims to confuse, mislead, misinform and misdirect.

=====

*“We’ve got a very sophisticated report from the Embassy [of Ethiopia] which I suspect is prepared in whole or in part by their lobby organization which was set up and funded January 1<sup>st</sup> SGR LLC; and if the filings we’ve seen are correct, we’re talking about a \$1.8 million per year cost for the lobby. We all need to look at that submission [by SGR LLC] carefully, but the lobby firms are very adroit at putting together that obscure, very often, the heinous human rights abuses we are trying to highlight.”* Chairman Chris Smith, [“Democracy Under Threat in Ethiopia”](#), Hearing of the Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives on March 9, 2017.



**TPLF: Is the  
“LF” for liberation front or lie factory?**

John Milton wrote in *Paradise Lost*: “For no falsehood  
can endure/ Touch of celestial temper, but returns/ To  
its own likeness; -up it starts/ Discovered and  
surprised.”

Of course, Milton was writing about Satan's games of deception, and his "devilish art" of "forging illusions" and the Prince of Darkness' "explosion at the touch of truth".

I am writing here about the Thugtatorship of the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (T-TPLF) in kindred spirit and its ghastly aversion to truth and infernal life of complete mendacity on Planet Denial-istan Ethiopia. A touch of the peoples' temper, not only celestial temper, against a touch of evil is yet to come.

I have studied the T-TPLF in one form or another for over a decade. It is a study I began in earnest with intellectual curiosity and fascination. That effort has now become a decade-long "investigation" into T-TPLF crimes against humanity, massacres, corruption, genocide, abuse of power, election rigging and the rest of it in Ethiopia. It has also been a relentless campaign, indeed an endless weekly crusade, to expose T-TPLF lies, damned lies statislies (statistical lies), disinformation and the ever-changing games of deception on a global scale.

I have written numerous commentaries on the T-TPLF's lies, damned lies and statislies. Among such [commentaries](#) include one on September 5, 2016 in which I exposed the slick T-TPLF disinformation campaign to discredit and diminish the historic popular uprisings against it in Ethiopia. In my September 18, 2016 [commentary](#), I told "The Truth About T-TPLF Genocide Lies and Disinformation in Ethiopia".

In my August 2007 commentary, I offered the T-TPLF a [deal](#): “If they will stop telling lies about us, I will stop telling the truth about them.”

In May 2012, I wrote about the entertaining “[Bedtime Stories](#) of Meles Zenawi”. He said, “My view is that there is no direct relationship between economic growth and democracy historically or theoretically. But I don’t believe in this night time, you know, bedtime stories and contrived arguments linking economic growth with democracy.” He must have confused nighttime for nightmare.

In November 2012, I [wrote](#) about the “Tall Tales of Susan Rice”. Rice was Obama’s National Security Advisor who almost fell off the podium laughing when she declared the election of the T-TPLF is “absolutely – 100 percent democratic”.

In November 2015, I [wrote](#) about the World Bank of liars who will torture the truth to extract lies and massage the statistics to bury the truth six feet under.

In March 2015, in my [commentary](#), “A Tale of Tall Tales and “Ethiopia’s Diplomat-in-Chief”, I marveled how the T-TPLF’s foreign minister, the one time malaria researcher-turned-diplomat, was totally duped by a 14 year-old Ethio-Australian teenager who fibbed about a A\$20 million prize she planned to use in building schools in Ethiopia.

**The T-TPLF “Explanatory Note” of Lies: Defending the indefensible**

“Oh! what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.”

On March 9, 2017, the T-TPLF tried, and embarrassingly failed, to scam the “Democracy Under Threat in Ethiopia” hearing of the Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives.

George Orwell in his [essay](#) on politics and the English language wrote:

*“In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Political language...is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind...”*

The T-TPLF’s “[Explanatory Note](#)” submitted for the Subcommittee’s record is an exemplary demonstration of Orwellian pure wind. The T-TPLF uses political language to whitewash its bloody record of human rights violations and shamelessly attempts to cover up and excuse its crimes against humanity with fake facts and feigned humility.

The “Note” could best be characterized as a cross between a fairy tale, horror fiction and political fantasy. A more blunt person would describe the T-TPLF “Note” as a crock of \_ \_ \_ t! It is a poorly drafted and pathetically amateurish “Note” which aims to confuse, misinform and misdirect.

The “Note” is presumably a critique of [H.R. 128](#) (Supporting respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia), an attempt to correct the bill which “is full of factual errors” and a plea for future dialogue and discussions with the U.S. Government. Below are T-TPLF fictional accounts and the facts.

**T-TPLF Fiction:** H.R. 128 falsely claims “democratic space in Ethiopia has steadily diminished since the general elections of 2005” and that the ruling party “claimed 100 percent of the parliamentary seats” in the 2015 elections. “The claim that the democratic space has diminished in Ethiopia since 2005 is a claim often repeated without any basis of proof whatsoever.”

**Fact:** In May 2016, Human Watch Rights [reported](#), “Closing of political space in Ethiopia is the reality facing Ethiopians whom the government designates opponents of the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The government heavily restricts freedom of expression and association, and severely constrains political space, especially for civil society organizations.”

In July 2015, Barack Obama visited Ethiopia and held “frank discussions” with T-TPLF leaders and [told](#) them, “The governing party has significant breadth and popularity and, as a consequence, making sure to open additional space for journalists or media or opposition voices will strengthen rather than inhibit the agenda that the prime minister and the ruling party have put forward.”



In January 2016, the European Parliament passed a [resolution](#) condemning the “lack of space for critical or dissenting voices in the election process; whereas May’s federal elections took place in a general atmosphere of intimidation, and concerns over the lack of independence of the National Electoral Board.”

**T-TPLF fiction:** After reviewing the Ethiopian political landscape and the pre-election process in 2015, the African Union observers concluded that the elections had been free, peaceful, and credible and had provided an opportunity for the Ethiopian People to express their choices at the poll.

**Fact:** The so-called African Union election observer report is not only a whitewash, but also does not meet the requirements of the African Union “[Election Observation Manual](#)”. The Manual provides for a three-staged observation process: pre-election, election ad post-election observations.

According to the Pohamba Observers’ [report](#), a group of nine African Union observers arrived in Ethiopia on April 19, 2015. A group of 50 African Union short-term observers arrived in Addis Ababa on May 17 and 18, 2015 and held a three-day briefing and orientation program from May 19 – 21. Three days later on May 24, election day, a 29 two-person observer teams visited 356 polling stations in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa and 8 of the 9 regions of Ethiopia namely Amhara, Benishangul- Gumuz, Gambella, Harari, Oromia, SNNPR, Somali and Tigray. They returned to Addis Ababa on May 25 for a debriefing session and reported on their findings and share their overall assessment of

the elections. On May 26, 2015, the AU Observer Mission issued its official report certifying the election a “free, peaceful, and credible.”

The U.S. refused to participate in the 2015 election observation as did the European Observer Mission.

**T-TPLF fiction:** Political reform has which begun with the reshuffling of the cabinet.

**Fact:** On November 1, 2017, the T-TPLF reshuffled its cabinet of 30 [ministerial positions](#). In the reshuffle, 9 remained their posts and 21 new ones were appointed. It was all about reshuffling Tweedle Dees with Tweedle Dums.

The 21 “new” ministers that were appointed have been vetted for their loyalty and service to the T-TPLF. They have been waiting in the wings like buzzards over carrion. These “ministers” were not chosen for their fierce independence and courage to challenge the T-TPLF bosses. They were chosen because they were loyal T-TPLF lapdogs. The T-TPLF believes by throwing in a few Oromo and Amhara names in the cabinet reshuffle they can hoodwink Oromos and Amharas. It’s the age old game of tokenism. A token Oromo here and token Amhara will not make the T-TPLF democratic.

All the reshuffling was just a show. Who wields the real power behind these ministers? Who calls the shots? Who makes the real decisions in the shadows, in the dark, behind the ministerial thrones? The T-TPLF bosses, of course!



**T-TPLF Fiction:** The EHRC [Ethiopian Human Rights Commission] has started an independent and thorough investigation into deaths and injuries caused during the protests.

**Fact:** Claims of an independent and thorough investigation by the T-TPLF through its front organization EHRC are bogus. EHRC is a front organization of the T-TPLF with zero credibility. It is a T-TPLF tool set up to create the illusion of human rights monitoring and enforcement. It is an organization set up to game and play the donors and loans who are willfully ignorant of T-TPLF crimes.

In 2009, the “Ethiopian Human Rights Commission” [told Voice of America](#) that “Prime Minister Meles Zenawi’s government has designed good governance programs aimed at respect and protection for human rights. The late Meles Zenawi denied allegations that human rights abuses were committed against the Anuaks in the Gambella region of western Ethiopia and ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden. Wondimu Asamnew, spokesman for the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington told VOA his government considers the allegations as lies. “We don’t take seriously their allegations and fabrications. They are totally unfounded, fabricated lies.”

In 2007, after an [Inquiry Commission](#) established by Meles Zenawi returned an massive indictment against his regime, nothing was done to prosecute the hundreds of human rights violators in the T-TPLF security force.

The T-TPLF has failed and refused to prosecute the [237 police officers](#) directly involved in the Meles Massacres in 2005.

In fact, there is [no record](#) of any human rights violator being prosecuted by the T-TPLF. Ever!

An inquiry committee into the earlier phases of the protests in Oromia and Amhara regions organized by the EHRC early last year [released a report](#) which to a large extent absolves the excesses of security apparatus by asserting that the force used by the police were “proportional.”

Ethiopia has [refused entry](#) to all UN special rapporteurs since 2006. In June 2016, Ethiopia was elected to the UN Security Council and also as vice president of the UN Human Rights Council despite a history of non-cooperation with UN special mechanisms.

The T-TPLF has used its kangaroo courts to incapacitate and destroy genuine human rights organizations in the country by incapacitating them financially.

In 2012, the T-TPLF [froze](#) the bank accounts of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (HRCO), Ethiopia’s oldest human rights organization and froze its bank account.

In 2010, the T-TPLF [froze](#) the bank accounts of the Ethiopian Women Lawyers’ Association.

**T-TPLF fiction:** The ruling [T-TPLF] party has embarked on a dialogue and negotiation with 22 opposition parties.

**Fact:** A couple of days ago, the T-TPLF [shut down](#) the headquarters of Semayawi Party. The T-TPLF even confiscated the office furniture.

Ethiopia under T-TPLF rule is and has been for over 25 years a one man, one party state whose guiding motto is, “What is good for the T-TPLF is good for Ethiopia!”

The T-TPLF has violently suppressed or neutralized all opposition parties and parties through a sophisticated campaign and system of intimidation and persecution.

“Dialogue and negotiation” is the white rabbit the T-TPLF pulls out of its hat every time it is under pressure. Most of the so-called 22 political parties are T-TPLF shell parties with a handful of members that are created and funded by the T-TPLF.

Merara Gudina, leader fo the Oromo Federalist Congress remains in jail today for discussing political issues at a European Union forum.

Following the 2005 elections and a popular uprising against the T-TPLF for stealing that election, the European Union election group observer [noted](#) that “negotiations between the opposition and the government party broke down a few days ago after the government had refused to discuss what, in my view, was a quite natural desire for democratic reforms. When [the T-TPLF] reached to a point where it cannot

politically dictate terms of the agreement, the regime arrested the entire leadership of the then opposition CUD (coalition for unity democracy.”

The current “dialogue and negotiation” will amount to nothing. No one is fooled by the old T-TPLF games of deception by dialogue and negotiation.

**T-TPLF** **Fiction:** The second National Human Rights Action Plan has been adopted by the House of People's Representatives.

**Fact:** The T-TPLF’s “second National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP II)” was presented to the “parliament” in early November, 2016. In early October 2016, the T-TPLF declared a state of emergency and suspended the constitution and began a campaign of mass detentions. By mid-November 2016, the T-TPLF [announced](#) it had detained 11,607 people, including 347 women.

What a cruel joke on human rights!

What happened to the first National Human Rights Action Plan adopted in 2013?

Berhnau Hailu, the former minister of Justice said it failed [because](#) “We need[ed] a lot of proclamations and also guidelines for the protection of the rights of the people, for the accused persons, for the persons in prison and so on.”

How is NHRAP II different from NHRAP I? It is not different. It is old wine in new bottle. It is window

addressing human rights. NHRAP II will have the same fate as NHRAP I.

**T-TPLF Fiction:** Measures were taken on the Government officials who were engaged in corrupt practices, some were removed from office and the legal process is underway.

**Fact:** The T-TPLF's campaign against corruption is a joke. It is a three-ring corruption investigation set up for the benefit and at the command of USAID, The World Bank, the IMF and the other donors and lenders. The international poverty pimps demand an anti-corruption campaign to give them plausible deniability. They can turn a blind eye to massive corruption by palming off the responsibility to the T-TPLF's corruption investigators. Does it make sense to expect corrupt T-TPLF officials to investigate and prosecute corrupt T-TPLF officials? Corruption charges are the preferred methods of incapacitating political contenders and enemies with the T-TPLF.

On paper, the T-TPLF has "laws" to detect, prevent, prosecute and punish corruption. The "Federal Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission Establishment Proclamations No. 235/2001 and No. A33/2005" and provisions in the Criminal Code impose serious sanctions on a whole range of corrupt and racketeering practices. But these "laws" are not worth the paper they are written on. They are selectively enforced and used by T-TPLF leaders often to neutralize political opponents. The late leader of the T-TPLF effectively used the "anti-corruption laws" to jail rivals in his party including a former prime minister (Tamrat

Layne) and a defense minister (Seeye Abraha) and other disfavored civil servants. T-TPLF corruption arrests are a manifestation of the internecine struggle taking place within the T-TPLF and less of a demonstration of a sincere and determined effort to stamp out corruption.

In March 2013, the T-TPLF arrested and charged some two dozen officials and of the “Ethiopian Revenues & Customs Authority” (ERCA) and other businessmen. Many of the officials were released quietly while some of the businessmen who were ordered released by a court have remained in detention for over a year. If those accused of corruption in the Customs Authority sweep are guilty of corruption, then their accusers are equally or more guilty.

The World Bank’s voluminous 417-page report aptly titled, “[Diagnosing Corruption in Ethiopia](#)” offers a “clinical” diagnosis of the T-TPLF cancer of corruption.

In the past week, T-TPLF regime leader Hailemariam Desalegn [reported](#) to his parliament that 100 million birr allocated for development had been lost to corruption and used for private purposes by local and ethnic leaders. Desalegn refused to neither name the corruption suspects to “parliament” nor discuss what actions, if any, he planned to take to bring the offenders to justice.

Over the years, I have issued numerous well-documented [commentaries](#) on T-TPLF corruption.



**T-TPLF Fiction:** The peaceful protests in Oromia and Amhara regions were hijacked by violent elements last year. Militant opposition groups operating from a foreign countries including the United States have been trying to foment unrest and incite violence to advance their political agenda to dismantle the constitutional system.

**Fact:** Blaming the victims and diverting attention from the real issues is a specialty of the T-TPLF. In a speech after T-TPLF troops massacred hundreds of celebrants at the Irrecha Festival in October 2016, Hailemariam Desalegn gave a [televised statement](#) in which he claimed that “evil elements” (terrorists) had taken over the Festival and [wreaked havoc](#).

In December 2011, the T-TPLF mounted a [massive media campaign](#) and presented a fear-mongering three-part propaganda program entitled “Akeldama” (or Land of Blood) on state-owned television. The clear message was that anyone who opposes the T-TPLF is a terrorist; and implicitly a terrorist sympathetic to Jihadists.

In December 2013, the T-TPLF aired a televised program [“Jihadawi Harekat”](#) scandalizing, villianizing, slandering and vilifying Ethiopia’s Muslim community. It was intended to scare Ethiopian Christians into believing that the same Ethiopian Muslims with whom they have coexisted peacefully for hundreds of years have now suddenly been transformed into “Islamic terrorists” and are secretly planning to wage a jihadist war on them to establish an Islamic government.

The T-TPLF has [accused](#) “Shabia [Eritrea]” and the “foreign supporters” including “Diaspora extremists”, “anti-peace” and “anti-development” elements for fomenting uprising in Ethiopia.

The whole aim of externalizing the source of guidance and direction of the popular uprising is simply to discredit the massive local opposition and resistance to the T-TPLF rule and re-write the true story of valor and courage by the Ethiopian people with systematic lies and deception. The T-TPLF specifically aims to discredit and disparage the role of young people in the resistance to its rule. Of course, the T-TPLF’s all-consuming existential concern is discrediting what they believe to be an “Amhara-Oromo alliance” against them.

**T-TPLF Fiction:** The Government has allocated over 500 Million USD to provide opportunities to the youth to engage in productive activities.

The T-TPLF talks big, talks the talk and walks straight to the bank with the cash.

**Fact:** If the “government” has “over 500 million USD” to spare, why is it begging the international community for 948 million dollars in famine aid?

In January 2017, the T-TPLF Disaster Commissioner Mitiku Kassa [yelped](#) to the international community to cough up “USD\$948 million in aid” because “we are facing a new drought”. That is the same Mitiku Kassa who in 2010 [declared](#), “In the Ethiopian context, there is no hunger, no famine... It is baseless [to claim

hunger or famine], it is contrary to the situation on the ground. It is not evidence-based. The government is taking action to mitigate the problems.”

Which one is more important: Saving five million Ethiopian youth from death by famine or creating make-believe jobs for youth to buy their silence and loyalty?

**T-TPLF Fiction:** The reference in the preamble [to H.R. 128] regarding the weakness of Courts in Ethiopia, the prison conditions, the Zone 9 bloggers, the villagization and the CSO law are irrelevant and outdated.

**Fact:** Human Rights Watch [reported](#) in 2014, “Since 2009, when the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation and the Charities and Societies Proclamation (CSO Law) were passed, freedoms of expression and association have been severely restricted in Ethiopia. The CSO law is one of the most draconian laws regulating nongovernmental activity in the world. It bars work on human rights, good governance, conflict resolution, and advocacy on the rights of women, children, and people with disabilities if organizations receive more than 10 percent of their funds from foreign sources.” HRW [reaffirmed](#) the same findings in its 2016 report.

In my January 2015 [commentary](#), “World Bank-ruptcy in Ethiopia”, I have demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt that World Bank bureaucrats in Ethiopia have been playing “Deception Games” of displacement, deracination, forced resettlement and a kinder and gentler form of ethnic cleansing in the Gambella region of Western Ethiopia.

Freedom House [reported](#), “Conditions in Ethiopia’s prisons are harsh, and detainees frequently report abuse. CPJ and Ethiopian sources reported that former Feteh editor Temesgen Desalegn, who was convicted on defamation charges in 2014 and sentenced to three years in prison, has been denied medical care and family visits.”

Col. Michael Dewars’ [secret study](#) remains the most definite examination of Ethiopian prisons to date.

On March 22, 2017, [Habtamu Ayalew](#), a young prominent Ethiopian opposition leader who was jailed by the T-TPLF and recently released arrived in the U.S. reported shocking revelations of widespread torture (including pulling fingernails with pincers and forcing prisoners to defecate on themselves) practices at “Maekelwi Prison” in Addis Ababa.

### **The T-TPLF lobby and PR strategy**

The T-TPLF strategy is to put out lies which they believe cannot be fact-checked and challenged. They know there are very few Ethiopians who will take the challenge of fact checking them. They do not believe U.S. House staffers will spend the time to challenge them on the specific facts. So they spread their lies, damned lies and statislies like horse manure. Their lies are calculated to achieve not only misinformation but also misdirection. They avoid the devils in the details (no pun intended) and want to paint a blurry and opaque picture to deceive and misdirect. They aim to focus on motivations rather than actions. They want to talk about how well-intentioned they are, not how

criminal their conduct is. Simply stated, the T-TPLF leaders are demonic liars. They are the kind of vicious villains who lie as they murder and murder as they lie, to paraphrase a line from the Bard of Avon.

In Paradise Regained, Milton wrote:

... But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave  
Peaceable Nations, neighbouring, or remote,  
Made Captive, yet deserving freedom more  
Then those thir Conquerours, who leave behind  
Nothing but ruin wheresoe're they rove...

Nothing but ruin wheresoe're the T-TPLF roves.

**To be continued...**