

IF YOU LOOK LIKE YOUR PASSPORT PHOTO, YOU ARE TOO ILL TO TRAVEL

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Wonders never cease in the Ethiopian Diaspora in general and the Opposition in particular. For example, this past several weeks, there has been much media (internet) hoopla over class of strategies—peaceful struggle or other wise—spearheaded by few vocal individuals. Even though one would dismiss these kinds of initiatives as useless and empty rhetoric, I decided to entertain some overriding questions for discussion purposes: These are: Who will be leading the armed struggle proposed by “Ginbot 7” and its proponents in the Diaspora? Are the Western educated individuals such as Dr. Berhanu Nega, and Professor Al-Mariam ready to exchange their well decorated office, and comfortable homes for a dusty shed in Ethiopia’s bustling country-side? Would they walk, barefoot, the parched areas while being thirsty? Do they know that there is sacrifice to be paid should they choose the armed confrontation over the peaceful struggle?

Of course, they know the undesirable consequences of armed struggle and they lack the courage and determination to walk the walk and talk the talk. They cannot even successfully perform a half-hour rigorous exercise on a tread-mill in nearby gym, let alone running for hours while carrying machine gun and ammunitions in desolate environments, often round-the-clock. They have neither audacity nor willingness to fight in the real sense. They know that they will be in their comfort zone where they will not hear a single shot being fired. Their children and close relatives are out of touch for any possible military recruitment for the newly proposed strategy.

So, what is all this fuss about it from afar? You asked. That is a million dollar question, and the answer can be found in the resumes of the advocates of the armed struggle. Dr. Berhanu, the cleverest individual among the Opposition, left Ethiopia after a failed Orange Revolution, per sources from the Ethiopian government, under the pretext of continuing fellowship studies. While in the U.S., he co-founded “Ginbot 7”, and is determined to fight the Ethiopian government via remote control. Another proponent of the Armed Struggle, Mr. Ephrem Madebo, had served as unofficial information attaché for the defunct CUD Party. How about others in the clique? They are acting as cheerleaders, following orders from their ever changing bosses.

Who is going to fight their war, then? Their plan is to use the poor children back home as sacrificial lamb for their ill cause. They hope that they can ascend to power by using the Ethiopian youth as pawns. All they care is about grooming themselves for a higher office in the land at any cost and by any means. To them, the end justifies the means. They preach about democratic ideals, but they practice the opposite. They believe in proxy war—to be fought by the children of Ethiopian farmers. Fortunately, the political climate is not conducive for their ill motives. In today’s Ethiopia, farmers appreciate the benefits they gained during the current administration and are not in anyway to be hoodwinked by clever Professors from the U.S.. They rather send their children to nearby schools than to war zones. The same is true for the rest of Ethiopians. To most peace-loving Ethiopians, the very term “armed struggle” is an outdated jargon and brings only bad memories of the past decades. This shifting dynamic has altered the expectations that people have from political leaders and the parties they run. Peaceful opposition is an indelible part of the Ethiopian political landscape, and is the only viable choice.

In conclusion, the whole talk of class of strategies is uncalled for, and no one is buying it. As usual, you are shooting in the dark, and, in the end, that dark will consume you. Your background speaks volumes about your dishonesty, and if you look like your passport photo, you are too ill to travel to Addis—and much less to the Simien Mountains. My advice: Stay in the States and don't forget to take your medication before your hallucination gets out of control.