

Amina Mire

May 2007

**Menacing Somalia: Unholy
Trinity of U.S Global
Militarism, Meles's
Ethiopia and Thuggish
Warlords¹**

By Amina Mire

¹ Copyright © Amina Mire. No part of this work can be reproduced without receiving a permission from the author,



In December 2006, Ethiopian tanks supported by US AC 130 helicopter gun ships² invaded Somalia in order to install a puppet regime of the Transitional Federal Government (T.F.G.) by ousting the Union of Islamic Courts (U.I.C.). Six months earlier, in June 2006, the Somali people allowed the Union of Islamic Courts to take power to help end the anarchy that resulted from a 15-year civil war in the battered country. As a result, the Islamic Union Courts assumed centralized control over many parts in the South, including the capital city, Mogadishu. This move came about partly after it was revealed that the CIA was secretly working with Somali warlords and Ethiopia to invade Somalia. Despite U.S. cash payments to various warlords none was able to assert their authority over the population and bring law and order and security to the Somali people.

² Xan Rice. Somalia air strike failed to kill al-Qaida targets, says US. 11January 2007 The Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1988300,00.html>

During their short lived tenure, the Union of Islamic courts brought peace and security to the areas under its control. However, in the context of post September 11, 2001 political stigmatisation, the Bush Administration had identified the UIC as a terrorist group. The Islamic government denied this. Many Somalis saw such rhetoric as a thinly disguised pretext for the US's desire to avenge the 1993 defeat of US Forces in Somalia.³ A recently published report by the U.S. Military concludes that Al Qaida has failed to gain a foothold in Somalia.⁴

Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda has failed for more than a decade to establish an operational base in Somalia due to the country's austere environment and inhospitable clans, a new U.S. military report says. Fears that Somalia, on the Horn of Africa and accessible by land and sea, is ripe to become an al Qaeda hub have so far failed to materialize. "Al Qaeda found more adversity than success in Somalia," states the report by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. "In order to project power, al Qaeda needed to be able to promote its ideology, gain an operational safe haven, manipulate underlying conditions to secure popular support and have adequate financing for continued operations. It achieved none of these objectives."⁵

Despite lack of credible evidence linking Union of Islamic Courts to Al Qaida and other terror groups, the Bush administration went ahead to sponsor the invasion of Somalia by Ethiopia in the name of global war on Islamic terror.

³ Scarborough, Rowan. Somalia too tough for Al Qaeda. Washington Examiner. 1 May 2007. http://www.examiner.com/a-722180~Somalia_too_tough_for_al_Qaeda_.html

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.



“US backed Ethiopian forces Kill Civilians in Somalia”⁶

Ethiopian helicopter gunships pounded what the Somali government says are rebel positions in the capital Mogadishu, killing more than 11 civilians.⁷

In addition to sponsoring Ethiopia’s invasion of Somalia, the U.S. military has participated aerial bombardments in the mass slaughter of Somali fighters and civilians fleeing advancing Ethiopian tanks. In this way, Somalis were hunted down inside their own country by foreign forces as ‘alien fugitives’ and ‘terrorists.’⁸ Upon the Ethiopian/US invasion of Somalia, the lawlessness, rape, looting and general insecurity quickly returned.⁹ The federal transitional government comprises, primarily, the same group of warlords who terrorize the citizenry for the previous

⁶ http://www.aljazeera.com/me.asp?service_ID=13022

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Xan Rice. Somalia air strike failed to kill al-Qaida targets, says US. 11 January 2007 The Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1988300,00.html>

⁹ Sam Kiley. Looting troops prey on Somalia's refugees: Fugitives are forced to pay to shelter in the shade. Sunday April 29, 2007

[The Observer . http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,2067951,00.html](http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,2067951,00.html)

15 years.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the US was determined to restore chaos and lawlessness to Somalia rather than deal with peaceful Somalia ruled under Islamic law.



Confronted with fierce and widespread local resistance to the presence of foreign occupation forces in their country, the Ethiopian military and TFG militiamen have unleashed unmitigated death and destruction on densely populated neighborhoods of the capital city, Mogadishu, using helicopter gun ships, heavy artillery gunners and tanks, killing more than 1600 people, wounding another 5000 and making another 400,000 Somalis as refugees and internally displaced people(IDPs).¹¹

The chief targets of these brutal military aggressions have been women and children: as the two most vulnerable groups making up the bulk of the 400,000 Internally Displaced People in the country. Somali women and children are marked by the crime of aggression and crime against humanity in the contest between various resistant groups and foreign invaders. Reports out of Somalia by reputable journalists and published in mainstream media outlets show that the warlords and the mercenary Ethiopian occupying forces are using food as a weapon of war by blocking, delaying and delimiting the capacity of international relief

¹⁰ Xan Rice. Return of warlords as Somali capital is captured. 29 December 2006

¹¹ UN urges more help for Somalia. 22 May 2007. <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/93422199-9162-4EA3-B514-EE9B1217584C.htm>

workers to deliver urgently needed food and medicine to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced refugees.¹²



Group of Somali youth standing on the rubbles of their of home after it was reduced to bits during fierce fighting between Somali resistant forces and the Ethiopian mercenary army of Meles Zinawi and TFG militiamen.¹³

During a lull in fighting in Mogadishu yesterday, survivors picked their way through the post-apocalyptic landscape of Somalia's capital, quickly burying bodies. The floors and stairs of the filthy hospitals were crammed with injured civilians and slick with blood. Up to 350,000 refugees from fighting were camped in the bush - easy prey for armed thugs and warlords.¹⁴

¹² Sam Kiley. Looting troops prey on Somalia's refugees. 29 April 2007. The Observer. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,2067951,00.html>

¹³ BBC. 26 April 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6594647.stm>

¹⁴ Ethiopian tanks pound Mogadishu. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6587447.stm>



A group of Internally Displaced Somali women preparing food for their families at a makeshift camp.¹⁵



¹⁵ Somalia: Economic pressures rises with influx of IDPs. IRIN. 25 May 2007. <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=72317>

Thousands, including these orphans, have descended on towns outside the capital - fleeing battles between insurgents and Ethiopian-backed troops, looking for shelter and food.¹⁶

If widespread intentional policies authorized to withhold food and medicine from reaching refugees are proven, they constitute as acts of crimes against humanity. At present, there is clear evidence that Ethiopian and TFG authorities have not been assisting UN and other relief agencies to reach thousands of displaced refugees in timely manner.

There are already signs that the transitional federal government is using aid as a weapon - restricting food aid deliveries to hundreds of thousands of civilians, who are also being charged to shelter under trees on the road out of the capital to Afgoye, 30km away. According to the European Union's head of humanitarian aid, Louis Michel, Somalis fleeing the fighting have endured 'systematic looting, extortion and rape perpetrated by uniformed troops' - only the Ethiopian and the government forces have uniforms. And last week uniformed troops commandeered 12 trucks and helped themselves to tones of sugar and computers from the recently opened Coca-Cola factory in Mogadishu. Only after aggressive intervention from the Americans and EU did the government agree to allow enough food for 32,000, less than a tenth of the number in need, through its roadblocks heading west on Friday.¹⁷

And yet, the international community does not, as of yet, see the need to intervene on behalf of the vulnerable population of Somalia. It seems odd that, while the international community is pushing for punitive measures such as economic embargos, and some are suggesting the need to set up no fly zone in the Darfur region of Sudan in order to protect the people of the Darfur region from being attacked by government of Sudan supported militia, the same international

¹⁶ In pictures: Somalis adrift. 1 May 2007. BBC. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/6612673.stm

¹⁷ <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,2067951,00.html>

community is deliberately ignoring the death and destruction the TFG and Ethiopia mercenary armies are wreaking against the defenseless civilian population in Somalia. In other words, in the case of Somalia, the international community is backing foreign occupation force and the hated warlords terrorizing the citizenry in Somali.

It is pertinent to ask why is the international community is willing to give political legitimacy and financial support to warlords who command neither the respect nor the trust of its own citizens? Put differently, who is the international community supporting: the warlords who are killing and maiming their own Somali people or the hundred of thousand of Somalis who are now living as destitute and internally displaced people in their own country? According to recent media reports, the EU nations do seem to be concerned with the grave human rights violations taking place in Somalia in the hands of Meles Zinawi's occupying army and TFG. But EU concerns are motivated less by compassion for the suffering of Somali women, children and men and more but by fear that they might be legally liable in international criminal court since they give generous financial support to both the government of Ethiopia an the warlords of TFG.¹⁸



¹⁸ Xan Rice in Nairobi. 7 April 2007. EU given war crime warning over Somalia aid. The Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,,2052060,00.html>

Amina Mire

In Ceelasha Biyaha, 20km from Mogadishu, a woman's group distributes aid. This woman, who lost her husband in the violence, is given cash to help look after her five children.¹⁹



This family, 22km from Mogadishu in Lafoole, are living in the open air as they cannot find shelter. There are reports that some families are being charged for shaded areas.²⁰

¹⁹ In pictures: Somalis adrift. 1 May 2007. BBC.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/6612673.stm

²⁰ Ibid.



Aid agencies are having difficulties delivering food because of insecurity. Here, at Elasha camp, a displaced boy and his brother wait for trucks to arrive.²¹

In my view, US backed Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, and the conspicuous silence of the world community, in the face of the death and destruction by Zinawi's army and those of warlord militia are wreaking in Somalia, constituted the gravest crime against humanity in the modern history.²²

This is the most lawless war of our generation. All wars of aggression lack legitimacy, but no conflict in recent memory has witnessed such mounting layers of illegality as the current one in Somalia. Violations of the UN charter and of international humanitarian law are regrettably commonplace in our age, and they abound in the carnage that the world is allowing to unfold in Mogadishu, but this war has in addition explicitly violated two UN's Security Council resolutions. To complete the picture, one of these resolutions contravenes the charter itself.²³

²¹ Ibid.

²² Salim Lone. Inside Africa's Guantánamo. 28 April 2007. The Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,2067438,00.html>

²³ Ibid.



Above: (Reuters) Somali baby girl seen at a hospital after she lost her family in an Ethiopian attack.²⁴

Below: A girl watches as her family prepares to leave Mogadishu. Photograph: Mustafa Abdi/AFP/Getty²⁵



²⁴ Thousands Flee Mogadishu's Violence. 2 April 2007.
http://www.aljazeera.com/me.asp?service_ID=13522

²⁵ Xan Rice in Nairobi. EU given war crime warning over Somalia aid. 7 April 2007.



Group of Internally Displaced Somali Children.. According to the UN, displacement in Somalia was worse than in Iraq.²⁶

More people have been displaced in Somalia in the past two months than anywhere else in the world, the United Nations has said. Return of The Warlords and Brought Death and destruction. Stephanie Bunker, spokeswoman for UN relief coordinator John Holmes, said at least 350,000 people had fled fighting in Mogadishu since February.²⁷

As agents of foreign powers, the warlords have been brushing off each and every brutal violent action by the Ethiopian and US forces against the Somalia people as ‘justified self-defense.’ Thus, even after it was widely reported in the international media that the US AC130 aerial assault of the village of Rase Kamboni did not kill wanted Al Qaida terrorists, as it was first reported by the Pentagon, but that the victims of this illegal military aggression were innocent nomads at a bonfire

²⁶ Somalia is 'worst refugee crisis.' BBC. 27 April 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6598361.stm>

²⁷ Ibid.

celebrating a wedding. The chief of the TGF warlord regime, Abdullahi Yusuf, continues to insist that the U.S had "a right to bombard terrorist suspects who attacked its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania."²⁸ In deed, American war plans have been killing a lot of Somalis since December 26, 2006 Ethiopian invasion of Somalia.

America provided Ethiopia with secret satellite images and air support, including AC130 gun ships, during the original invasion over the New Year, hoping to net al-Qaeda agents who had been behind attacks on a Kenyan hotel and an Israeli airliner in 2002.²⁹

Most ordinary Somalis see TGF as an agent of foreign forces. In this way, empty rhetoric of war against Al Qaida terror cannot secure the consent of ordinary Somalis to accept the legitimacy of the hated warlords of TGF. In reality, war on terror and similar empty slogans are designed to deflect attention away from crimes of death and destruction these warlords are committing against the Somali people with total impunity. As Martin Fletcher of Times of London succinctly notes, it is not the Union of Islamic Courts but the warlords which brought death and destruction to the people of Somalia.³⁰

In the past month Ethiopian troops supporting Somalia's deeply unpopular Government have pounded residential areas controlled by insurgents. The civilian death toll has reached four figures. Thousands more have been maimed and injured. An estimated 320,000 inhabitants — nearly a third of Mogadishu's population — have fled in terror.³¹

²⁸ Xan Rice. 'Many dead' in US air strikes on Somalia. 9 January 2007 The Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1986350,00.html>

²⁹ Sam Kiley. Looting troops prey on Somalia's refugees. 29 April 2007. The Observer. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,2067951,00.html>

³⁰ Martin Fletcher. The warlords of death return to steal city's brief taste of peace. 26 April 2007. Timesonline. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article1706367.ece>

³¹ Ibid.



There is strong evidence to support that Meles Zinawi and TGF are open about their intention of systemically eliminating members of Ayr subclan, which is part of the Hawiye clan because of their resistance to the Ethiopian occupation and the warlords.³² Accordingly, Ethiopian soldiers have used helicopter gunships, heavy artillery shells and tanks in densely populated areas of the Somali capital city, Mogadishu, in order to purge, in wholesale, members belonging to clans and sub-clans perceived to be hostile to the Ethiopian and FTG forces. Since, mass displacement of these groups was the military objective of the TGF and Ethiopian forces; the TFG has been deliberately undercounting the number of internally displaced people who left the capital city since the escalation of hostility.

This is partly to cover up their crimes of genocide against humanity.³³ The systematic liquidation of the Ayr subclan, rather than fighting Al Qaida terrorist is the primary military objective of Ethiopian invasion of Somalia. This military objective was recently revealed by the Ethiopian Ambassador to the United Kingdom on the British daily the Guardian.³⁴

³² Ethiopian tanks pound Mogadishu. Ethiopian tanks are pounding parts of the Somali capital, stepping up a week-long campaign against insurgents and fighters from the Hawiye clan. 24 April 2007. BBC. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6587447.stm>

³³ Mynott, Adam. Somalia's 'total nightmare.' 28 April 2007. BBC. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/6600027.stm.

³⁴ Berhanu Kebede. Somalia asked us to save them from this brutal sub-clan. May 3, 2007. The Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,2070944,00.html>

It stated: "The Islamic Courts government was popular in Mogadishu after bringing relative order." This glorification of the UIC, and claim that they represent Somali society, is highly misleading. The UIC leadership is one sub-clan, bent on protecting its own interests. The leadership can in no way bring peace, as it has never provided a political framework for doing so. In fact, it preached a hard-line ideology committed to promoting extremism. Its ultimate objective was to establish a fundamentalist government in Somalia.³⁵

To the western media consumers, the Bush's sponsorship of regime change in Somalia has been framed as part of America's offensive war against Islamic Terror. Recently, however, the Ethiopians have been telling the world media that purging specific Somali clans and sub-clans perceived to be hostile to the new US installed puppet regime of the TGF of Gedi and Abdullahi Yusuf, was the primary objectives of US sponsorship of Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia. However, it now appears that some EU member nations and public officials are getting a bit worried about Bush's sponsorship of unmitigated death and destruction in Somalia. However, these EU officials and member nations are concerned more with possible legal implications of their own complicity with the commission of possible war crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity by the TFG and Ethiopian army against the Somali people. This is because EU nations give generous financial support to both the Ethiopia and Somali regime of TFG warlords.

³⁵ Ibid.



Corpses of Somalis killed By Occupying Ethiopian Forces in Mogadishu.³⁶

Last week, the European Union called for an investigation into the excessive use of force used by Ethiopian troops, with vague talk of possible war crimes charges. However, there has been little progress towards an international probe, because of the complexity of the conflict and the fact that some Western states view the Ethiopian involvement in Somalia as a necessary part of the United States’ “war on terror”, according to an article on Relief Web.³⁷

Since the Bush administration has authorized the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, and since we now know that specific clans and subclans are being targeted for liquidation, namely the Ayr cubclan of the Hawiye, the Bush administration is clearly implicated in crime of genocide against humanity in Somalia.³⁸ There are also reports on widespread kidnappings, unlawful imprisonments, torture,

³⁶ Philippe Khan. Genocide in Somalia? 19 April 2007. http://www.aljazeera.com/cgi-bin/review/article_full_story.asp?service_id=13405

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Xan Rice. US military 'used Ethiopian base' to attack Somali militants.

interrogations and extraordinary renditions of Somali women, men and children by the Ethiopian and Kenyan authorities in collaboration with the CIA.³⁹

Rape: Weapon of War and Crime against Humanity

The US authorization of Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia represents the crudest expression of the banality of evil embodied in the neocolonial imperative of 'liberal imperialism'. Out of all the horrific crimes committed by the Ethiopia forces in Somalia, the most under reported by the outside media is the mass rape of Somali women by Ethiopian soldiers. By financing this illegal and immoral war of aggression, the international community is backing widespread rape, tortures, kidnappings and renditions of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons, mass killing of civilians, looting and generalized anarchy in Somalia under the grip of the twin evil of Ethiopian occupation forces and the TGF.

Make no mistake. Those who are currently supporting the world regime of Gedi and Abdullahi Yusuf and their mercenary army of Meles Zinawi, financially, politically or both are supporting the sexual violence against Somali women in the hands of Ethiopia soldiers, among other hideous crimes against humanity. The current mass rape of Somali women by Ethiopian soldiers is a direct result of the recent Ethiopian invasion of Somalia. As a result, the mass rape of Somali women is one of the immediate outcomes of George W. Bush's sponsorship of Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia. As we have seen in American use of sexual humiliation against Arab male prisoners at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere, the rape of Somali women by the Ethiopian soldiers is being used as a weapon of war deigned to demoralise and humiliate the Muslim population of both countries so that they break down and loose the will to resist the occupation forces in their lands.

The following story is a personal account of 37 year old Suuban Maalin and mother of eight children including six months old baby, whom she was still

³⁹ ---Africa's secret - the men, women and children 'vanished' in the war on terror. 23 April 2007. The Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,2063346,00.html>.

breastfeeding when she was raped by two Ethiopian soldiers as she was going to the market. In March 2007, Suuban Maalin was raped repeatedly and beaten by two Ethiopian soldiers at gunpoint. After they were done with her, they told her to go and never look back and never tell anybody what happened to her. Suuban Maalin went home and told her husband what had happen. Her husband took her to the nearest hospital. The medical authorities were able to corroborate Subaan Maalin's personals story. It is pertinent to note that her husband was beside here side when she told her horrific experience to the media.

“Last Saturday, as I was driving my donkey-cart loaded with grass near Elirfid settlement, two Ethiopians armed with AK 47 came straight at me suddenly after they come out of a detour. They stopped me under gunpoint and forcibly held me to the ground and then everything went against my willing” said Suuban, while weeping. Suuban said the Ethiopian soldiers did everything to her, including rape and beatings. “After they were done with me, they told me to walk off and not to look back, threatening they will kill me if I do glance back to take a good look at them,” Suuban said. Ahmed Ali Hassan, Husband of Suuban also spoke to the newsmen said, “My wife was raped and tortured by Ethiopian soldiers so that I am calling on everyone who can help to rush to our help”⁴⁰



⁴⁰ Aweys Osman Yusuf. Somali Woman accuses Ethiopian soldiers of rape and torture. 13 March 2007. Shabelle net. Media network. <http://www.shabelle.net/news/ne2537.htm>

The use of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women is not limited to the current situation in Somalia. Sexual violence against women works within patriarchal norms in all male dominated societies. In the current war against terror, Bush administration's and neocons's use of rape and other forms of sexual humiliation against Muslim women and men is predicated on the false belief of unique Muslim moral aversion to sexual humiliation. Thus, neocons believe, without evidence that sexual humiliation could be used to break down resistance of Muslims to dominations. This false belief is the basis of the widespread use of sexual torture by the US as interrogation tool on terror suspects of many known and unknown US rendition and terror prisons around the world.

On the contrary, Muslim societies, or at least the Somali society, which I am most familiar with, do consider rape as heinous crime but the victims of rape are considered blameless and do not face further humiliations by their society. Thus, no shame will come to innocent Somali women such as Suuban Maalin who are raped by occupying armies. Thus, in occupied Somalia, women who have been raped by Ethiopian soldiers are telling their stories without shame or fear of further humiliation. Suuban Maalin is a good example of the courage of Somalia women who are currently terrorized and sexually violated by twin evil of thuggish warlords and the mercenary army of Meles Zinawi. Unless stopped, there are greater potential that more Somali women and young girls may be still sexually violated since there are now over 400,000 internally displaced refugees in Somalia at this moment; many of them are women and young girls.

There is also potential for spreading sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS to these vulnerable hundreds of thousands of internally displaced population since Ethiopia has the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS cases in Africa, second only to South Africa. Published medical literature shows that the Ethiopian police and the members of the armed forces have the highest rate of HIV/AIDS incidents in Ethiopia.

“Ethiopia faces a mixed epidemic among sub-populations and geographic areas, with an estimated overall HIV prevalence rate between 0.9 and 2.5 percent among adults ages 15 to 49.⁴¹ While previous estimates were higher, expansion of surveillance data and improved analyses resulted in significantly lower estimates for 2005. Based on antenatal clinic surveillance data, HIV prevalence has declined to about 10.1 percent in urban areas and has stabilized to an estimated 1.8 percent in rural areas. The primary mode of HIV transmission in Ethiopia is heterosexual contact. Young women are more vulnerable to infection than young men; urban women are three times as likely to be infected as urban men, although in rural areas the difference between genders is negligible. Populations at higher risk for HIV infection include people in prostitution, police officers and members of the military.”⁴¹

Currently, there are over 30,000 Ethiopian soldiers in Somalia. They are armed, dangerous and menacing: knowing full well that their presence in Somalia is resented by the local population. There are is still ongoing armed struggle against the Ethiopian occupation of Somalia. As a result, the presence of Ethiopian troops and concomitant lack of security will continue to expose grave and present danger to the ordinary citizenry and Somali women and girls in particular. So, far, despite unleashing death and destruction on ordinary Somalis, the Somali people are resisting the occupation of their country by foreign armies and thuggish warlords.

By speaking out publicly about the sexual violence they have suffered in the hands of the Ethiopian army and the warlords, Somali women are showing their will to resist the immoral and illegal war of aggression against them, their country, and people. As I have been pointing out, throughout this work, the thuggish warlords of the transitional federal government of Yusuf and Gedi have demonstrated their failure to protect the Somali people. As a result, majority of the

⁴¹ <http://www.pepfar.gov/about/77699.htm>

Somalis see the TFG as an extension of the Ethiopian occupation forces. Somali women have also been the victims of kidnapping, extraordinary renditions and torture in the hands of the Ethiopian troops and, and Kenyan government in close collaboration with the CIA.



Fatma Ahmed Chande, 25, who spent three months in detention Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia after being caught up in the war on terror. Photograph: Xan Rice.⁴²

George W. Bush and Neocon’s Attempt to “Internationalize” the Occupation of Somalia by Blurring the Line Between the Mercenary Army of Ethiopia and UN/AU Peacekeepers

By backing the US sponsorship of Ethiopia’s invasion of Somalia, the African Union (AU) and UN Charters are in clear violation of Security Council resolutions 1724, 1725 and 1744. This is because Ethiopia’s invasion of Somalia violates the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of

⁴² Ibid. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,2063346,00.html>

Somalia.⁴³ As a result, AU defense of Ethiopia’s invasion of Somalia, ironically so is to “protect” Ethiopia’s national sovereignty, AU forces currently in Somalia, as wells as those who may arrive at a later date are, by logical extension, part of Ethiopia’s occupation forces and will remain to be so even if Ethiopian. The fact which is clearly supported by US backing of long term occupation of Ethiopian troops in Somalia. .⁴⁴ Indeed, this has to be the case for the two simple reasons: there are enough African nations willing to send their soldiers to act as mercenary occupying force in Somalia and the warlords of the Transitional government cannot last a day without the protection of foreign forces.



The numbers simply do not add up for any meaningful AU peace keeping forces in Somalia. This is because four months into the Ethiopian occupation of Somalia, only 1500 hundred soldiers from Uganda have arrived in Somalia. More peculiarly, these 1500 “peacekeepers” have not been paid since they have arrived in Somalia right after the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia.⁴⁵ It is not clear how these soldiers are expected to sustain themselves, in the meantime. The thinly disguised conflation of the occupation with peacekeeping currently advanced by the US, backed by the AU,

⁴³ Sophia Tesfamariam. Ethiopian Air Strikes in Somalia: Violation of the Geneva Conventions. 10 January 2007. American Chronicle. <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/viewArticle.asp?articleID=18949>

⁴⁴ Ethiopia warned on Somali pullout. BBC. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/africa/6656753.stm>

⁴⁵ Row over Africa peacekeeper money. 10 May 2007. BBC. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6641707.stm>

but not supported by the EU and Arab and Muslim nations, seeks to blur the line between the use of mercenary forces with peacekeeping forces, a dangerous move with far reaching implications.

Nevertheless, the Bush administration is determined to mix and blend the large content of Ethiopian occupation forces in Somalia with few peacekeeping forces from AU nations in order to sustain the rule of the warlords in Somalia. The strategy is based, purely, on the geopolitical interests of the U.S. This policy shift is clear from the Bush administration's opposition to Ethiopia's troop withdrawal from Somalia. .⁴⁶ The Bush administration is determined to turn the Ethiopian occupation forces in Somalia to a "peacekeeping" force. But continuing presence of Ethiopian forces in Somalia, or any perception that AU forces in Somalia are the same occupying Ethiopian troops, will, most certainly, secure the failure of AU/UN mission in Somalia. In addition, this wrongheaded policy will lead to more violence and more bloodshed? But by blending expected few thousand AU troops from African nations with the large contingent of Ethiopian troops, the Bush administration cannot impose on the Somali citizenry the rule of ruthless thuggish warlords as US "friendly" puppet regime of TFG of Gedi and Yusuf.

The US and the African Union have warned Ethiopia not to withdraw its troops from Somalia before peacekeepers are deployed to replace them. AU commission chief Alpha Oumar Konare says it would be a "catastrophe" if Ethiopia pulled out too soon. US Africa envoy Jendayi Frazer said it would probably be several months before the full peacekeeping force arrived. Ethiopia's prime minister says he wants to withdraw all his troops, after they

⁴⁶ Ethiopia warned on Somali pullout. BBC. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/africa/6656753.stm>

helped oust Islamists. Up to a third of the population fled recent fighting in the capital, Mogadishu, and badly need aid.⁴⁷

It is clear from the current death and destruction taking place in occupied Somalia, that it is the very presence of the Ethiopian forces in Somalia which will continue to fuel resentment and resistance of ordinary Somalis.

Somalia's recent agonies are a direct consequence of the American-backed invasion by Ethiopia four months ago to topple Mogadishu's Islamic Courts Union and install the weak and largely secular transitional federal government.⁴⁸

Today, 29 May 2007, Ethiopia foreign minister, Seum Mesfin, revealed to the Media, in occupied Mogadishu, that Ethiopian troops will remain in Somalia in order to do that “Islamic elements will not disturb either the Somali government or the Somalia population.”⁴⁹ Indeed, this latest Ethiopian provocation spells both grave and good news for the people of Somalia. Grave news because it suggests there will more bloodshed and more struggle ahead. It is good news because, since the Ethiopian forces will leave soon or later, the warlords will go with the departing occupying army.

⁴⁷ Ethiopia warned on Somali pullout. BBC. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/africa/6656753.stm>

⁴⁸ Looting troops prey on Somalia's refugees. The Observer. 29 April 2007. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,2067951,00.html>

⁴⁹ Aweys Osman Yusuf. Ethiopian foreign minister says troops will stay in Somalia. 29 May 2007. <http://www.shabelle.net/news/ne3007.htm>

Equally pertinent is the question of who is going to pay for the Ethiopian occupation of Somalia. This is because, even though it's, primarily, EU member nations who have pledged financial support for peacekeeping troops to Somalia,⁵⁰ nevertheless, the Bush administration is determined to acts both as a "free rider" and actively and covertly curtail the goals and the mandate of the peacekeeping forces in Somalia in ways which meets the U.S strategic objectives.⁵¹ The Bush administration has shown its immense capacity to ignore international law, the UN, EU conventions when these rules conflict with U.S. political or economic objectives. For example, right after Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia, in clear violation of UN arms embargo against Somalia, the Bush administration covertly helped Ethiopia purchase new tanks and other military hardware from North Korea. These tanks and other weapons are being used to kill, maim and terrorize the citizens of Somalia.⁵²

⁵⁰ Italy presses Ethiopia to pull troops from Somalia (AFP). 20 May 2007. The Middle East Times. <http://www.metimes.com/storyview.php?StoryID=20070520-070601-8870r>

⁵¹ Ethiopia warned on Somali pullout. 15 May 2007. BBC. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6656753.stm>

⁵² Michael R. Gordon and Mark Mazzett. Ethiopia bought arms from North Korea with U.S. assent. 8 April 2007. International Herald tribune. <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/04/08/news/arms.php>



”Ethiopian tanks in Somalia. Ethiopia bought much of its military equipment from the former Soviet Union and relies on North Korean parts.” (Michael Kamber: The New York Times)

Three months after the United States successfully pressed the United Nations to impose strict sanctions on North Korea because of that country's nuclear test, officials in the Bush administration allowed Ethiopia to complete a secret arms purchase from Pyongyang in what appears to be a violation of the restrictions, according to senior U.S. officials. The United States allowed the arms delivery to go through in January in part because Ethiopian troops were in the midst of a military offensive against Islamic militias inside Somalia, a campaign that aided the U.S. policy of combating religious extremists in the Horn of Africa.⁵³

While the Bush administration is aggressively seeking the support of the UN, AU and EU in his attempt to prop up the very warlord regime of TFG, and occupation Ethiopian forces which are currently wrecking death and destruction in Somalia, the Bush administration wants the UN to authorize series of measures,

⁵³ Ibid.

including authorizing the invasion of the Sudan, in order to “protect” the civilian population of the Darfur. And, when the security council has failed to meet Bush administration’s demand for issuing strongly worded resolution against the government of Sudan, which the administration could then use as a pretext for invading Sudan, in the name of “protecting the people of Daruf”, the Bush administration went ahead and imposed, unilateral, new economic measures against the government of Sudan.⁵⁴ Note that the Bush administration is bullying the same SC, EU and AU bodies to back up the Ethiopian forces and criminal warlords who are current menacing the citizens of Mogadishu, and elsewhere in the Southern Somalia.

In this way, the genuine suffering of both the people of Sudan in the Darfur region and the people of Somalia has been used as political capital by the Bush administration. In the case of Somalia, mass killing, maiming and continuing menacing of the civilian population by used thuggish warlord and mercenary foreign army of Ethiopia has been celebrated by the Bush administration by giving full backing to the chief perpetrators of these crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity. However, in the case of the Darfur conflict, the Bush administration wants the necessary international backing for the eventual US invasion of Sudan. Hence, while the suffering of the people of the Darfur have received the effort of Google, Jewish Holocaust Museum, the neocons, Hollywood celebrities and bellicose regime of George W. Bush, the death and destruction the warlords of Abdullahi Yusuf, Ali Mohamed Gedi and Meles Zinawi are currently wreaking on the Somali people seem to merit the sympathy of “Save Darfur” bridges nor the international community’s obligation to protect the basic human rights of the people of Somalia.

In the long term occupation of Somalia by forces loyal to the US, the Bush administration, is counting on its newly installed US friendly UN chief, Ban Ki-Moon to put together, what Salime Lone aptly calls, “coalition of the willing” to make the occupation of Somalia forces loyal to the United States legitimate and

⁵⁴ Bush toughens sanctions on Sudan. 29 May 2007. BBC. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6699479.stm>

permanent. The dubious collusion between the UN and the Bush administration on Somalia's future must be utterly rejected. Salam Lone stressed this point forcibly when he said the following:

A huge campaign must be launched to press western governments to end this slaughter, which is almost entirely the work of those in control of the country. The European Union warned a month ago that war crimes might have been committed in an assault on the capital last month - in which the EU could be complicit because of its large-scale support for those accused of the crimes. Human Rights Watch has documented how Kenya and Ethiopia had turned this region into Africa's own version of Guantánamo Bay, replete with kidnappings, extraordinary renditions, secret prisons and large numbers of "disappeared": a project that carries the Made in America label. Allowing free rein to such comprehensive lawlessness is a stain on all those who might have, at a minimum, curtailed it.⁵⁵

Salim Lone notes the role of the Ban Ki-Moon in the current disastrous situation in Somalia, which if not reversed immediately could lead even greater slaughter of the Somali people. He suggests that the UN must vigorously insist Ethiopia's immediate troop withdrawal from Somalia, followed by the sponsorship of genuine reconciliation process among various Somalia groups without interference from outside forces.

Work must begin to derail the astounding proposal from the United Nations secretary general, Ban Ki-Moon, which is to be discussed by the security council in mid-June. He would like to mount a UN-sanctioned "coalition of the willing" to enforce peace and restore order in Somalia - in other words, the UN would help Ethiopia and the United States achieve what their own illegal military interventions have failed to accomplish: the entrenchment of a client regime that lacks any popular support. Such an operation is unlikely

⁵⁵ Salim Lone. Inside Africa's Guantánamo. 28 April. The Guardian.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,2067438,00.html>

Amina Mire

to succeed in any event, but it could further threaten the turbulent Horn of Africa, which is already teetering on the brink of chaos. The Somali government is busy crying "al-Qaida" at every turn and offering lucrative deals to oil companies, in a bid to entice greater western support. But this war was lost long ago. In turning to the arch enemy Ethiopia, the transitional government's fate was sealed: the nation will not abide an Ethiopian-US occupation. Only a political solution will resolve this crisis. Africa must step up to the plate and show spine and leadership in a drive to protect its civilians, and work with Europe and the UN to convince the US to swiftly terminate its latest destabilising adventure.⁵⁶

I want to end this essay with this: for the Somali people the message is clear. We must continue to resist the Ethiopian occupation of our country and the return of the thuggish warlords, who are currently wrecking death and destruction on our people, raping our women and dismantling our collective national identity. Retribilization, fragmentation and the use of force is their weapon of choice. We must rests the occupying forces until the occupation is no more and victory shall be ours!

Amina Mire

Amina Mire (Faculty: Department of Sociology and Anthropology)

Email: amina_mire@carleton.ca

Ph.D. candidate (University of Toronto)

Research interests:

Anti-racist/anticolonial research; women and health; feminist sociology and political thought; critical race theory; sociology of knowledge; bioethics and racialization and biomedicalization of women's bodies and skins; interdisciplinary analysis and research and methods to critically examine the production of scientific knowledge for destructive and oppressive economic ends such as skin-whitening biotechnology and militarism.

Amina Mire has a pharmacy diploma (The Somali Institute of Health, 1980), A B.Sc. in Chemistry and B.A. in Philosophy (University of Winnipeg, 1994); and M.A. in Philosophy (University of Toronto), with strong emphasis in the philosophy of science and

⁵⁶ Ibid.

political theory. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education (OISE-UT) and the Women's Studies in the Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Studies of the University of Toronto. Amina's many publications include: "Skin-Bleaching: Poison, Beauty, Power, and the Politics of the Colour Line" in the Canadian based feminist journal Resources for Feminist Research (RFR/DRF/Vol.28.No.3/4/2001/winter/spring issue). Since its publication the work has been included in prestigious databases, such as The Wellcome Trust History of Medicine and CSA BiblioAlert . 28 July, Amina has published critically researched paper "Pigmentation and Empire" in a very popular online site Counterpunch.org.

<http://www.counterpunch.org/mire07282005.html>

. Since it is publication, "Pigmentation and Empire" has been picked by around the world.

Her doctoral dissertation "Soaping the Cells: Poison, and Skin-Whitening Biotechnology" examines the social, political and economic implications of the emerging practice of skin-whitening, and will be defended very soon. Amina Mire is currently a professor of contemporary Sociological Theory and Race and Ethnicity Studies at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of Carleton University.

Links to Amina's work on Somalia:

<http://www.counterpunch.org/mire01022007.html>

<http://www.counterpunch.org/mire07312006.html>

<http://www.comedonchisciotte.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=368>

http://www.progressive.org/media_mpmire010407