



AI Mariam

## May I have the favor of your reply on the op ed piece I submitted?

6 messages

Sat, Jul 11, 2020 at 8:47 AM

AI Mariam

To: Carla Bower &lt;BowerC@aljazeera.net&gt;

Greetings Ms. Bower: Hope all is well with you. After I submitted my op ed piece (see below), I was hoping to hear from you. I understand you are busy, but I would appreciate the favor of an acknowledgement or reply. Many thanks.

Regards,

AI

On Thu, Jul 9, 2020 at 4:49 PM AI Mariam

wrote:

Ms. Bower: Below please find my op ed submission. It is 1,088 words, excluding my bio statement and references to video clip locations. Please note that the videos included in the hyperlinks are in the Amharic language and I have provided the time stamp for the relevant clip sections. Feel free to have the translation verified by anyone proficient in Amaharic. I am not sure if it is your editorial policy to include hyperlinks in op eds but if so the hyperlinks are provided for your editorial convenience to make verifications. Please let me know if you have any questions. I am available on my cell if you wish to talk to me. Many thanks for letting me submit a draft for your consideration.

Best regards,

AI

### Road Bumps on Ethiopia's Journey to Multiparty Democracy

**1088 words excluding bio and video clip designations.**

Following the assassination of the popular Ethiopian singer activist Haachaalu Hundessa on June 29, 2020, some media pundits have been presaging deepening intercommunal political crises in the country. Others warned Ethiopia "will explode if it doesn't move beyond ethnic-based politics."

To paraphrase Mark Twain's quip, "Ethiopia's imminent political implosion and collapse into civil war are greatly exaggerated."

The targeted assassination of singer activist Haachaalu was part of a putschist plot to swiftly seize power by overwhelming, paralyzing and overthrowing the government of PM Abiy Ahmed in mob army invasion during Haachaalu's funeral in the capital.

As the saying goes, "The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry." The plot fizzled but not without significant loss of life and wanton destruction of property by misguided roving gangs seeking to effect ethnic cleansing. A grenade attack reportedly killed eight people in the capital.

Over three dozen suspects, including the self-styled leader of the Queeroo youth movement, Jawar Mohammed and his accomplice Bekele Gerba were immediately taken into custody.

Over the past two years, Mr. Mohammad had presented himself in public not so much as a political leader but a warlord. In a 2018 interview [video clip minutes 12:50-13:13 and 22:43-22:50], Mr. Mohammad boldly and presciently declared, "There are two governments [in Ethiopia]... The government in power now and the Queeroo government. If I wanted to break off [secede] Oromia, I could do it... We had the capacity to put a ring [surround] around Addis Ababa and within 24 hours bring it under our control. If we wanted. If we wanted to do it now, nobody can prevent us. The people in government know this!"

It appears the killing of the singer activist was the fuse intended to blow up the communal powder keg and expedite seizure of power in 24 hours.

On July 3, 2020, Ethiopia's federal police commissioner Endashaw Tassew reported [see clip 19:42-22:44] the putsch had been in planning for some time. He said the murder of was intended to spark communal violence and undermine public confidence in the government by creating the impression the country is rudderless, with a divided political, military and security leadership.

On July 6, 2020, Adanech Abebe, the first woman Attorney General in Ethiopian history, in a press conference stated the plot involving Mr. Mohammad and Mr. Gerba was guided by the slogan, "We will begin the insurrection in Addis Ababa and we will finish it in Addis Ababa in June." She said her office has gathered substantial evidence on the conspiracy on the suspects and their plans to create chaos in the country and seized weapons and communication equipment. PM Abiy's office has released a detailed update on the current situation.

The murder of singer activist Haachaalu must be seen in perspective. In June 2018, an unsuccessful attempt to seize power was made by assassinating Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. In June 2019, another violent attempt to overthrow the government was made by killing top military and political leaders. In June 2020, Haachalu was assassinated for the same purpose. PM Abiy has fingered the leaders of the former regime that ruled Ethiopia for over a quarter of a century as the invisible hands in the plot.

In my view, the putschist made a move believing the government of PM Abiy to be weak due to internal and external pressures. Indeed, the killing of the singer activist took place on the very day Ethiopia was defending its right to build and operate the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in the U.N. Security Council. They underestimated the resolve and determination of PM Abiy, the 2019 Nobel Peace Laureate, whose mantra has been, "peace, reconciliation, dialogue and give-and-take" in setting Ethiopia on the pathway to democracy and prosperity. In his Nobel acceptance speech, P.M. Abiy explained his philosophy of Medemer as "a covenant of peace that seeks unity in our common humanity."

Over the past two years, PM Abiy has undertaken substantial democratic reforms by opening the political space to the opposition maximizing freedom of speech and of the press. He has embraced the free market system and accelerated privatization of key state enterprises. He has released political prisoners and replaced oppressive laws.

Various international human rights groups, including Human Rights Watch have criticized the government for heavy-handedness, and recently called for "lifting internet shutdown, avoiding force at protests and freeing unjustly held politicians."

Over the past couple of years, PM Abiy has been criticized at home for not upholding the rule of law in the face of atrocities and criminality taking place in the country. It has been a Catch-22 situation for him. When he takes firm law enforcement action, he is criticized for heavy-handedness. When he does not, he is criticized for being a weakling and appeaser of outlaws. In its 2019 human rights report, the U.S. State department reported, "Under Prime Minister Abiy, there has been an increased focus on the rule of law."

Ethiopia will not be another Rwanda. Those who criticize the Ethiopian government for taking action to enforce the law and preserve the country's integrity and peace should heed the lessons

of Rwanda.

Lawlessness, liberty and democracy cannot coexist. Human rights cannot be a fortress behind which criminals and terrorists can commit atrocities with impunity. Upholding the rule of law against the violent overthrow of constitutional government is neither a blow to freedom nor an abuse of power.

Paraphrasing the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, "The choice in Ethiopia today is not between order and liberty. It is between liberty with order and anarchy without either." To sit by idly is to become a party to a suicide pact.

Building multiparty democracy in a country that has suffered decades of dictatorial rule is not a bed of roses. There will be bumps on Ethiopia's journey on the road to democracy. Ultimately, building democracy is a labor of love and those who practice the politics of hate in Ethiopia will surely lose the battle for the hearts and minds of the people.

Abraham Lincoln said, "The ballot is stronger than the bullet." The idea that "power grows out of the barrel of the gun" is outmoded and has no place in Ethiopia. Power grows out of the ballot box, not the cartridge of bullets.

Nelson Mandela's observation about South Africa is equally true of today's Ethiopia. "It is not our diversity which divides us; it is not our ethnicity, or religion or culture that divides us. Since we have achieved our freedom, there can only be one division amongst us: between those who cherish democracy and those who do not."

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Bio: Alemayehu (Al) Mariam is Emeritus Professor of Political Science at California State University, San Bernardino, a constitutional lawyer and Chairman of the Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund.

On Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:51 AM Carla Bower <BowerC@aljazeera.net> wrote:

Thank you so much for getting in touch. I would love to see a draft, if you have one available. We usually ask that opinion pieces be around 800 to 1,000 words, but there is some flexibility.

With thanks and warmest regards

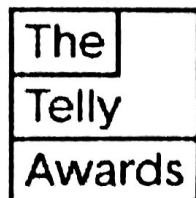
### Carla Bower

Senior Editor | AJE Online Department  
Digital Innovation & Prog. Directorate  
Digital Division

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**From:** Al Mariam

**Sent:** Monday, July 6, 2020 9:27:57 PM

**To:** Carla Bower

**Subject:** Request to submit an op piece on current situation in Ethiopia in light of Al Jazeera's not impartial coverage...

**WARNING:** External Email

تنبيه: رسالة خارجية

Greetings Ms. Bower: I am writing to register my disappointment over Al Jazeera's coverage of events in Ethiopia over the past several days and to inquire if you would be willing to consider an op ed piece that will offer a balanced view.

On July 4, Al Jazeera broadcast an interview (see link below) with three individuals which offered a one-sided view of the situation. The Human Rights Watch representative castigated the Ethiopian government for alleged human rights abuses. The former U.S. ambassador determined the suspects arrested in the recent assassination of a well-known musical artists were "political prisoners" despite the fact that the suspects were caught in flagrante delicto. A university lecturer also condemned the government with blanket accusations without much challenge by the interviewer.

On July 5, Al Jazeera published an op ed piece by the aforementioned lecturer. See link below.

On July 6, on the Al Jazeera Stream (see link below), three individuals, including the aforementioned lecturer, were interviewed again, along with a known opponent of the Ethiopian government, and another person.

I fully respect Al Jazeera's editorial decisions in its interviews. Presenting the views of a government opponent on three successive days on a major international media glaringly questions Al Jazeera's fairness and impartiality in its global journalistic efforts. I should like to believe the last few days are the exception to Al Jazeera's subscription to universal journalistic principles of fairness and impartiality.

I would like to respectfully ask you to consider an op ed submission from me on the current situation in Ethiopia to balance what has been put out by Al Jazeera over the past few days. I would be glad to submit a draft for your consideration if you are interested. Please let me know the op ed word limit should you be favorably disposed to a submission.

7/21/2020

Gmail - May I have the favor of your reply on the op ed piece I submitted?

For your information, I am an "Opinion Contributor" to The Hill and maintain a blog page on the Huffington Post. I have published op ed pieces on different topics in various outlets.

If you inquire with Ethiopians in general or online, you will find out that I am, arguably, one of the most well-known Ethiopian human rights advocate. Since 2006, I have written widely read weekly commentaries, without missing a single week, on Ethiopian human rights and political issues. All of my commentaries are available at [almariam.com](http://almariam.com)

I am Emeritus Professor of Political Science at California State University, San Bernardino. I am also a lawyer in California with 30 years experience in criminal defense and civil litigation. I am also the chairman of the Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund.

Best regards,

Alemaychu G. (Al) Mariam, M.A., Ph.D., J.D., ESQ

Links referenced above:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2020/07/ethiopia-bridge-ethnic-divide-200704195012799.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKzmJNHE8J8>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/haacaaluu-hundeessaa-towering-musician-oromo-icon-200705121750500.html>

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Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (<https://www.ethiopiastrustfund.org/>). We're making history together!

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Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (<https://www.ethiopiastrustfund.org/>). We're making history together!

Mon, Jul 13, 2020 at 12:46 AM

Carla Bower <[BowerC@aljazeera.net](mailto:BowerC@aljazeera.net)>  
To: Al Mariam

Dear Al

Please bear with us - we're currently reviewing pieces and will get back to you very soon.

With thanks and warmest regards



7/21/2020

Gmail - May I have the favor of your reply on the op ed piece I submitted?

## Carla Bower

Senior Editor | AJE Online Department  
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Digital Division



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فخورون بحصد 35 جائزة  
من جوائز تيلي  
Proud Winner of 35  
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**From:** Al Mariam  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 11, 2020 6:47:00 PM  
**To:** Carla Bower  
**Subject:** May I have the favor of your reply on the op ed piece I submitted?

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### 2 attachments



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من جوائز تيلي  
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Mon, Jul 13, 2020 at 8:09 AM

Al Mariam  
To: Carla Bower <BowerC@aljazeera.net>

It is good to hear from you Carla. Many thanks.

Best,  
Al

7/21/2020

Gmail - May I have the favor of your reply on the op ed piece I submitted?

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Al Mariam**

Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 6:32 AM

To: Carla Bower <BowerC@aljazeera.net>

Hi Carla: Hope all is well with you. I am just following up on your email from Monday.

Thanks.

Best regards,

Al

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Al Mariam**

Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 9:48 AM

To: Carla Bower <BowerC@aljazeera.net>

Hi Carla: I am writing again to follow up. I would very much appreciate hearing from you. Thanks.

Al

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Carla Bower** <BowerC@aljazeera.net>

Tue, Jul 21, 2020 at 11:32 AM

To: Al Mariam

Dear Al

I do apologise - I thought one of my colleagues had been in touch.

Unfortunately, we'll have to pass this time.

With thanks and warmest regards

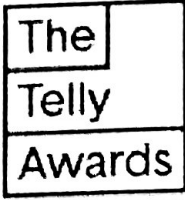
**Carla Bower**

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**From:** Al Mariam  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:48:35 PM  
**To:** Carla Bower  
**Subject:** Re: May I have the favor of your reply on the op ed piece I submitted?

[Quoted text hidden]

2 attachments

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