

The Essence of Ato. Lemma's VOA Interview and Its Potential Consequences (Analysis)

A day before I composed this piece, a bombshell event ripped through media outlets and social circles about the very public fallout between Mr. Lemma Megersa and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed that was revealed by a tell-all interview the former gave to [VOA's Afan Oromo program](#) in which he said that “he opposes the philosophy of MEDEMER and the merging of the EPRDF coalition into a single party.” After carefully listening to the full version of the interview, I decided to put my thought I share my thoughts with the public in this fashion. That is, I found his reasoning to be much more revealing about what Ato. Lemma has been up to until this point as well as what possibly is happening within ODP, one of the four parties that make up the coalition, EPRDF.

To begin with, there is no going back from this for Ato. Lemma Megersa. Regardless of what is true or not, his political position has been weakened beyond repair. Ato. Lemma himself supported this fact in the interview by saying, “I have long ceased to be heard by anyone in the party.” One would think that is one reason why Ato. Lemma took this desperate measure of going on air to voice his political defection from his boss and party at large. He wants the public to know he stood up for their demands unlike PM Abiy and his followers and that is the reason behind his fall if in fact the former ally moves to strip him of his position and even dear life. By the way, the public means only the people of “Oromia” in the terms of Ato. Lemma Megersa, who also revealed his only intention is to serve his own ethnic group and not anyone else.

However, what I found this interview to have revealed the most is the dynamics of the special relationship between Mr. Jawar Mohammed, a radical activist who is [directly linked](#) with

the recent massacres that took the lives of at least 86 innocent civilians, and Ato. Lemma Megersa. They both vehemently oppose the MEDEMER philosophy and the party merger PM. Abiy Ahmed and his allied have been pushing for and are in the implementing stages. In fact, listening to Mr. Lemma Megersa in this interview felt like listening to Mr. Jawar Mohammed as they simply echoed one another even in the alternative steps Mr. Lemma said were supposed to be taken before taking radical steps such as merging the coalition parties into one.

Mr. Lemma said “securing law and order and controlling the skyrocketed inflation should have been dealt with first before introducing new ideas.” This means Ato. Lemma Megerssa, too, has been behind the unrest that has gripped the Oromia region since Mr. Abiy came to power, including the recent massacre orchestrated by Mr. Jawar Mohammed himself. How can PM. Abiy restore order unless there is anarchy in the first place? Therefore, in order for the Lemma-Jawar duo to get their way, they had to order their KERRO followers, and other underground groups they may have under their command, to engage in brutal violence as a way of disrupting the reform measures being undertaken by PM. Abiy and his allies. The Lemma-Jawar duo through their followers may have sabotaged to increase inflation in the Oromia region for the same purpose as the utter violence described above.

Another similarity between the two this interview brought to light is the fact that they both attribute the philosophy and party merger PM. Abiy has championed to the NEFTEGNAS working along the Prime Minister. This shows the deep hatred and suspicion Mr. Lemma exhibits for the Amharas, which he showed through his cruel action of abruptly uprooting residents of Legetafo and Legedadi by destroying their houses, some while they were still inside their homes.

Finally, Ato. Lemma's situation is a major turning point in contemporary Ethiopian politics. What follows this will be to be seen. Will Ato. Lemma be removed from office and party? Will he resist any subsequent measures against him? Will PM. Abiy make up for time lost, as well as his long lost credibility, by moving away from tribalism and toward Ethiopianism by bringing anarchists responsible for all the crimes committed since the day he stepped into the premiership to justice? Will he and his new allies work swiftly to undo what TPLF did to leave Ethiopia in the position she finds herself in today, including by restoring law and order as well as by changing the constitution?

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