

Ethiopia: Regains Control of Lalibela, Other Important News

December 5, 2023

EDITORIAL COMMENTS: www.DiGiNews360.com stands for strengthening of Democracy in the Global South so that the people can lead a life of dignity, with a critical pride in their respective ancient cultures. As such, www.DiGiNews360.com calls upon the people of Ethiopia, and in particular to the leadership of Amhara youth militia, FANO to give up the path of violence.

FANO did play a creditable role as a protest movement against the former Socialist Ethiopian Government. Although Fano is hailed for being instrumental in bringing about the fall of Socialist Ethiopian Government through both non-violent and violent struggles, their current fight for the territorial integrity of the ethnic Amhara “homeland”, centered around the issue of Western Tigray and the ethnic Amhara who lived there, must be conducted in a non-violent manner only.

www.DiGiNews360.com wants the people of Ethiopia to build a multi-cultural society, which has imbibed the **best traditions of the ancient Kingdom of Ethiopia** and the **finest and the most humane aspects of Oromos and the other ethnic groups**, which are included in today’s Ethiopia.

Besides other important news, www.DiGiNews360.com is pleased to publish news about the successes that talented Ethiopians are making.

www.DiGiNews360.com is also pleased to publish the news about a festival at Aksum, that has been celebrated for a long time. A Church in **Aksum claims to be the home of the Ark of the Covenant, which contains the 10 commandments handed down to Moses by God.**

www.DiGiNews360.com is not able to inform about the historicity and veracity of the claim. But as the news-item shows, thousands of pilgrims come to the celebration every year to mark the day when the Ark of Covenant was given to Moses.

In a similar case, the House of Savoy, Italy claims to have acquired the **Holy Shroud of Christ** in 1453. When the Savoys moved their capital to Turin in 1578, they built the **Chapel of the Holy Shroud in the Cathedral of Turin.** (It has been reported that

a test by Carbon dating has shown that the shroud is not 2,000 years old.) The Cathedral is visited by a large number of pilgrims and tourists every day.

*We also have a news-item about the 11 **ancient rock-hewn churches of Lalibela**, located in the Amhara region of Ethiopia. The area has gone through a civil war. In normal times, these Churches also draw a large number of visitors. The Churches have been declared a **UNESCO World Heritage**.*

www.DiGiNews360.com hopes all of us, and in particular all the Ethiopians, to whichever religion they may belong can take pride in the cultural heritage of the ancient Kingdom of Ethiopia.

----NEWS----

December 4, 2023: **Addis Ababa**, Ethiopia: “**Melatework Hailu** and **Tadesse Lemma** are the final candidates who run for the position of Chairperson of the **National Election Board of Ethiopia** (NEPE),” is the information from the office of the **Chairman of Candidates Recruitment Committee**.

The two candidates will be presented to Prime Minister **Dr. Abiy Ahmed**. The Prime Minister will name one of the two candidates as the Chairperson of NEPE and then the appointment will be approved by the **House of Peoples’ Representatives**.

(Ref:<https://borkena.com/2023/12/04/ethiopia-committee-makes-public-names-of-final-candidates-to-lead-national-electoral-board-of-ethiopia/>)

December 4, 2023: **Nairobi**: “Ethiopian authorities should unconditionally release **Belay Manaye**, Chief Editor of **Ethio News**, who has been detained without explanation for three weeks,” demands the **Committee to Protect Journalists** (CPJ) on Monday.

Belay’s wife Belaynesh Nigatu and **Belete Kassa Mekonnen** (@kassa_belete), the **co-founder** of **Ethio News** told CPJ that they feared he was being held under legal provisions introduced when a state of emergency was declared on August 4 in response to conflict in the Northern Amhara state.

Note: Please see the BACKGROUND on the news-item dated November 9, 2023 *in the following pages* about the **UNESCO World Heritage Center on 11 Medieval Cave Churches located in Lalibela**.

(Ref:<https://cpj.org/2023/12/ethiopian-authorities-detain-ethio-news-chief-editor-belay-manaye-without-charge/>)

In the weeks following the declaration of the state of emergency, CPJ has documented the arrest of at least **seven other journalists**, who had covered the Amhara conflict.

December 4, 2023: **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Gezahegn Tilahun** endured a "mysterious illness" for over two years, losing 21 kg of weight and experiencing sallow skin and eyes. He visited four hospitals without finding the cause of the pain. Recently, he was able to have an appointment at the **Armed Forces Comprehensive Specialized Hospital of Ethiopia**, where Chinese medical teams have been offering aid for nine years. Tilahun was diagnosed with a **pancreatic tumor**.

Wang Xiaojun, leader of the 9th medical team sent to Ethiopia, collaborated with local doctors to perform an 8-hour-long lifesaving operation on Tilahun, earning recognition from Ethiopian colleagues, since it was the **first such operation performed at the hospital**.

"My true gratitude is beyond words. The doctors have given me a brand-new life," said **Tilahun**.

(Reference: <https://english.news.cn/20231204/964d2a9ab9a04a878970a6a3c1e82adc/c.html>)

December 1, 2023: **Los Angeles, USA: Amain Berhana's** second Album, '**The Nomad's Dream**', blends the sounds from his first-ever trip to **Ethiopia**, along with his mother, who went back after 47 years, with melodies, which www.DiGiNews360.com feels, will appeal to the whole of the world.



The singer says, "The Album is a **deep dive in terms of my own self, my culture and my family**. It is a proclamation of acceptance, acceptance of everything life has to give."

He premiered the **short feature film** he made as a **companion to the album** in the Ethiopian capital, **Addis Ababa**. It explores **the duality of his experience as a first-generation immigrant** living in USA.

Berhana now travels back to Ethiopia as often as he can.

November 30, 2023: Addis Ababa: **Devastating Floods:** Ethiopia Appeals for Urgent Assistance for more than 1.5 Mn people, affected by the floods.

After a field visit to affected areas, **Shiferaw Tekelemariam**, Commissioner of the Ethiopian government's relief commission, and **Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov**, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ethiopia, said that the flooding has affected 85 districts of 23 zones in seven regional states. The floods have caused extensive damage, affecting lives, displacing populations, and devastating crops, livestock, and vital infrastructure.

The floods after 4 years of drought have created severe food shortages, which require immediate relief.

Besides Ethiopia, **Kenya, Somalia** have also suffered severe floods. The UN **Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)** said nearly 1.6 million people throughout the Horn of Africa have been displaced by the severe climate-induced floods.

November 30, 2023: **Aksum, Tigrinya, Ethiopia:** Pilgrims flock to the **Ark of Covenant site:** After a gap of 2 years due to the civil war, the festivities for this important cultural-religious event are being celebrated with full fervor.

Aksum is said to be the home of the Ark of the Covenant, which contains the 10 commandments handed down to Moses by God.



*Aksum, Ethiopia: The sacred **Book of Miracles** in the Church of Our Lady of Zion*

November 30, 2023: District: Teltale, Region: Oromia, Ethiopia: **Twenty persons died and 18 sustained serious injuries in a bus crash**, reported from Southern Ethiopia. The bus was travelling from a small town Milami, **near the Kenyan border**. **Pan-African Payment and Settlement System** is scheduled to go live in 2024 **under**

November 29, 2023: **Pan-African Payment and Settlement System** is scheduled to go live in 2024 **under Kenya's leadership**. "This will reduce the cost of making cross-border payments on the African continent," said Development economist **Christopher Adam**, from the University of Oxford.

(Reference:<https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2023-11-29-africas-new-online-foreign-exchange-system-will-enable-cross-border-payments-in-local-currencies/>)

November 15, 2023: **US Agency for International Development (USAID)** announced that it would resume humanitarian food assistance in Ethiopia, where more than 20 Mn people require food support. USAID had announced a pause after irregularities in food distribution were discovered in the Tigray region.



Ref:<https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/15/politics/us-food-aid-ethiopia/index.html>

November 9, 2023: On Thursday, **Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF)** regained control of **Lalibela** from the **Fano fighters**, a regional armed group. Lalibela is a UNESCO World Heritage site in **Ethiopia**.

Lalibela is located in the Amhara region, which has been experiencing ongoing conflict throughout the year. The conflict has led to concerns about the safety of

the town's **ancient rock-hewn churches, which date back to the 12th and 13th centuries. These churches are important pilgrimage sites for Orthodox Christians.**



One of the UNESCO world heritage center located in Lalibela

The Amhara region has been experiencing regular fighting throughout the year, raising concerns among residents and Amharas in the diaspora about the safety of Lalibela's churches. **Lidetu Ayalew**, an Amhara politician based in the United States who grew up near Lalibela, said he feared the churches could be harmed. "The churches risk being struck and destroyed due to careless firing of heavy weapons," he said in a statement.

Designated a World Heritage site by the United Nations in 1978, **Lalibela's** 11 medieval cave churches were carved out of monolithic blocks to form a "**New Jerusalem**", after Muslim conquests halted Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

BACKGROUND: Although **Fano** fought alongside ENDF in the two-year conflict in neighboring **Tigray**, tensions have been rising since April 2023, when the federal government announced it was dismantling regional forces across Ethiopia. The move triggered protests by Amhara nationalists who said the move would weaken their region.

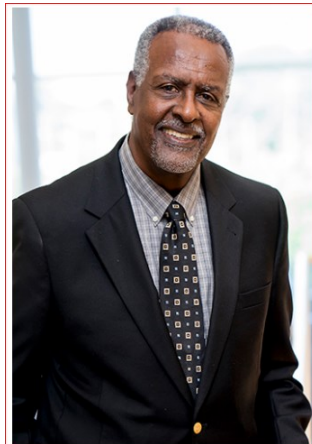
Prime Minister **Dr. Abiy Ahmed's** government had imposed a six-month state of emergency in early August after fighting erupted in Amhara, raising concerns about Ethiopia's stability just months after a peace deal ended the brutal Tigray war.

October 24, 2023: White House, New York: **President Joe Biden** awarded the **National Medal of Science** to **Gebisa Ejeta**. The National Medal of Science is the nation's highest scientific honor. Established by Congress in 1959 and administered by the U.S. National Science Foundation, it is bestowed by the

President of the United States on individuals deserving of special recognition for their outstanding contributions in service to the Nation.

“Gebisa Ejeta is one of the most impactful geneticists in the world,” said Mung Chiang, President of Purdue University in the US, where Ejeta has been a researcher and faculty member since 1984. At present, he is the Executive Director, Purdue Center for Global Food Security.

Ejeta was born in Ethiopia and has obtained his Bachelor’s degree in Agriculture. He came to USA for graduate studies in his field.



Gebisa Ejeta, Executive Director, Purdue Center for Global Food Security

Sorghum is the fifth most significant cereal crop in the world after maize, rice, wheat, and barley. It is produced in semi-arid zones in drought-prone and marginal locations where other crops fail to thrive. Sorghum is a key staple food crop in Ethiopia, coming in second after maize in overall production.

--By Abel in Burundi
