

MY STORY!!

Thanks to the PM:

You know it has occurred to me that the capacity that this country has grown, at least within the past 12 years since I have been travelling back and forth, has been quite immense. It is quite amazing to say the least.

My story is no different than any other immigrant in the Diaspora, except to say that maybe I was a little more privileged in the life style I had prior to leaving Ethiopia in 1983. Although my parents did not have much growing up, they made sure that that was not my story. I went to kindergarten, then to an American school, until Derg came and took it over. So in 4th grade I entered a British school. At the same time my father went to prison, and subsequently house arrest for a very long time, until he left for Europe in the early 80's. I was 12 years old.

It was at this time that I was introduced to a lifestyle unbeknownst to me. My Mother was handling the house affairs with five mouths to feed, and not surprisingly there was tension every day, but, in retrospect, she managed it very well. Friends and family of ours steadily and at a pace faster than Jamaican Bolt seemed to be disappearing from our house that usually was pretty much a fun house, or so it seemed to me, not to mention the daily harassment by the Derg soldiers entering our home at their will and taking whatever they want, including the livestock and property within our own backyard.

Going to and from school was an ordeal in itself. Parents, including my mother, always worried if they would ever see their kids again once they kiss them goodbye in the morning. Going to the store to replace the daily diet of chocolate I was used to with a Desta caremella, from Gebru's souk two doors down, was an ordeal in itself. I could get verbal licking, or time out at best, as well as losing my caremella. Apparently walking out of our high-walled fortress of a house sporting a fashionable afro was in itself life threatening. I could have been merely kidnapped off the streets and sent to be the in front line of Derg's atrocious and vicious crimes against humanity. Nothing to brag about but I could have been a child soldier.

Well since it was my rebellious years, I actually was arrested with my 7 year old brother at that time while we walked to our neighborhood milk store. Until this day I still haven't been able to understand what my seven year old brother or I could have done to have guns pointed at us and arrested. After some clever negotiations, a 12 year old could muster, and with the aid of the milk money, I got them to release my brother and take me, which they agreed to. At this point my brother ran home, got my mom, and alas, after some tense negotiations, bribes, and the promise of future kickbacks, I was a free kid, but never free again from that experience. Overall, my parents made sure I wasn't too psychologically damaged by the dramatic change in my lifestyle overnight, although, I am not so sure.

Three Years later, in 1983, my entire family and I left Ethiopia to join our father. I did not return until after 18 long years in the Diaspora, in 2001.

At this juncture I can go on and on, but the point I am trying to make is that in this day and age, kids that were born in or around the time Derg was overthrown, are in their late teens or a little older. They apparently have no clue of what kids like myself or, even sadly, older ones went through. They have no idea that to go to Langano we had to get permission from the Kebele's. People would wake up to hear mothers crying, and forced to pay for the bullet that took their child's life at the hand of Derg and their cohorts daily. One cannot walk around and enjoy your God given right to see the sunrise or sunset. I can go on again, but I know you get the point. NO LIFE!! Period!

Let's fast forward to 2011 now. Kids/adolescents nowadays have no idea of the human sacrifice by a few honorable men and women that is allowing them to enjoy the freedom that they have now. I do not see any difference with kids in USA, Europe and Ethiopia. They party, they dress in the latest fashion, they are immersed in the latest music and films, they have the latest gadgets in technology, they enjoy travelling within Ethiopia and abroad, and they have as much fun as they possibly can, with no fear or retribution of any kind. Parents don't worry about their kids coming home from school, and have no fears that their kids may be conscripted forcefully, or shot merely because you look, or say something different. Ethiopia's people today are smiling, kids are being kids, and student's are studying and parents parenting with no fear. These are the best times for Ethiopia and Ethiopians.

Does anyone remember the days of the Derg?? Exactly!! There were tears, frowning, more tears, fear of each other amongst friends and family, bloodshed and death every day. Yet again I can go on, but you get the picture.

It seems to me that everyone has forgotten, the bad since the good times are here. I believe we have to remind ourselves how bad things really were in the past, and the sacrifices that were made by a few brave heroic people and saved the legacy of Ethiopia which still remains to grow in such a positive way.

I have always believed that a person without a home is like a tree that had been cut at its roots, and just floating around the world. One can only be at peace when they come back and settle upon their own roots. For this I would like to profoundly thank the Prime Minister, to have brought upon this peace to the people of Ethiopia, and for his vision and great leadership. For allowing Ethiopians in the Diaspora, such as me, to return back home to our roots, even for the simple fact that we get the peace of mind of being HOME, thank you! For allowing kids to be kids, and grow up knowing nothing but fun loving peace and happiness, and for them to grow and pursue that happiness forever in our beloved country, Ethiopia! For them to grow in a country where they can remain without any fear and inherit a country they can be proud of, not only in the history of Ethiopia, but in her place in these interesting times as well as in her path towards the future.

I truly believe history will judge our PM as one of the most enlightened leaders of our time.

Thank you for your leadership and sacrifice!

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