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The Effect of Media Ownership on the framing of news: The Ethiopian Herald Vs. The Reporter on the Coverage of the ‘Oromo Protests’ from April 2014 – April 2016

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To

---Abe and Bee---

A research that looks into a selected nation-wide impactful news, as reported by the Ethiopian Herald (public owned) and The Reporter (private owned) to determine if media's ownership influences the framing of news, then investigates what that means for the public interest to suggest ways forward that could contribute to making sure public service is at the heart of media activities.

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Abstract

Media ownership has an immense effect on the framing of news. Especially in such a time where media's reach has increased, and its power to shape, influence and bring change in different aspects of individuals and nations, news has become primarily a commodity. This commodity brings the owner money, as well as power. Hence, media has been another front where political wars are fought. In the name of public service, media owners forward their ideologies, according to their needs and beliefs. This takes place through the influence ownership makes on media's content, especially on the 'objective' news. It deprives media of its independence, and the public of the ability to make well-informed decisions. This is evident in Ethiopia where a polarized type of ownership exists between the private and public owned media houses. Both the private, as well as government media have agendas they forward through their institutions. Yet research findings show that this truth doesn't necessarily mean they are not serving the public, but the degree of public service rendered is questionable.

While these ownership types will continue to live on, there are a number of things that can be done to insure that the media will work towards the public's interest. This first begins by setting up an atmosphere where the media are held accountable. The media, 'Fourth Estate', are set up to be watchdogs of government's activities, and keep the state accountable to the public. But if there isn't an accountability system for the media itself, then it becomes another uncontrollable giant. So who keeps the media accountable? It is the public itself.

A media scene that forwards political and self-gain ambitions doesn't only show of an ill-behaved government and private sector, rather it also points towards a dormant public that does not intervene. The fourth estate is a two way street, just like democracy, where active participation of the public is necessary. Through the formation of press council, and cooperation of civil societies and organizations such as Ombudsman and anti-corruption office with the media, an organized public opinion that can not only keep media accountable but also lead in agenda setting can be formed. It is only when this is realized that power truly rests in the hands of the public.

1. Chapter One

1.1 Background

In April 2015, Ethiopians were slaughtered and shot in Libya by the terrorist group ISIS. The families of the victims, and Ethiopia as a whole, were unsettled. The nation cried out. It was a sensitive issue, close to each citizen's heart. The victims of the Islamic extremists group, were later found out to be illegal migrants who had fled their home land in search of a better life.

The private media tried to voice out the hurt and cry of the citizens. It took the critical side against government and many newspapers and tabloids spoke of how such unfortunate incidents were results of unfavorable employment and political situations in the country. That it was such circumstances that forced the young people to flee the country, risking their lives. In other words, private media mainly reported saying that this atrocity pointed towards the bad governance, lack of opportunity and uncomplimentary political conditions which the government of Ethiopia was responsible for.

On the other hand, the public media, after stating its deep grief and condoned the terrorist act, used the news as a means to educate the mass to not work with illegal agents, who are responsible for the blood of the victims.

The framing of the news differed in the two media ownership types starting from the way they approached the issue. While the private media owed the incident to the unfavorable conditions the country is found under, ultimately shifting the blame to the government, the public media accounted the incident to be a result of illegal immigrations which the individuals and illegal agents were responsible for, again shifting the blame.

Both reports are correct. The reason for most illegal immigration is the unfavorable circumstances in the country for the youth. At the same time, illegal agents are held responsible for making money off trafficking immigrants into unprotected places. This raises the question, 'what brought such a difference in picking different angles?'

Public owned media houses (which are characterized by high state intervention) are often criticized by manipulating content for political gains. Private media houses on the other hand, are

criticized for not only being over-critical of the state, but also being gullible to commercial and money-driven motives. (Schultz, 1998; Street, 2001; Alterman, 2004)

If it weren't for the existence of Editorial Policy, one could claim that it only emanated from inevitable human subjectivity (which comes as a result of subconscious influences from experience, education, cultural background, socialization of the reporter). While this does play a profound role in influencing content, the policy of a media house also dictates the angling and reporting of news. This policy is an agenda crafted by the owner and other stakeholders of the company. The type and nature of ownership shapes the agenda, and in return, influences the framing of news.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) identify different sources of influence on media content such as the individual media workers (reporters and editors), media routines, the need to meet deadlines, organizational influences, external influences and ideology. In this paper, the researcher will be addressing the influence ownership has on the content by looking beyond editorials and columns, but in the news as well (Ibid: 267).

The evolution of media in the history of Ethiopia, stands witness to this. Before the 1992 proclamation which declared media freedom, media was mainly owned by the state, and served as its mouthpiece. In the imperial era, the time of Emperor Hailesilassie, the conventional news values were replaced by a sole qualifier: that the news somehow featured the emperor – in good light (Reta C, 2013: 108). This fact suppressed the thoughts and opinions of the private sector. Later in 1992, when freedom of expression was fully declared, there was a spring effect witnessed on the private sector where it became overly critical of the government as well as carried out the profession in a careless manner (Lulie, 2008:26). Because of this, a polarized media ownership came about in Ethiopia. This meant polarized framing of news as well between the private and government media.

This study will take a look into the influence of ownership on news, in the current media landscape where there are recognized private, as well public media houses. It will analyze the news contents in a privately owned newspaper (The Reporter) and a publicly owned one (Ethiopian Herald) to study, if in fact the ownership type influences the way news is framed and presented to the public. The paper then looks into the current media landscape and hopes to find suggestions that can contribute to ensuring that media works for the public interest.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

“I did not come all this way not to interfere.” – Rupert Murdoch, media mogul (as quoted in Harcup, 2004: 14)

Media is a tool: a tool that can be used to serve the public or gain financial benefits or spread political propaganda. As the fourth estate, the news media’s first and foremost objective is serving the public –as an independent political institution. The money-driven ambition of the private media, and the high intervention of government in content in the publicly owned media houses has ripped the news media off from being able to fulfill its role as the fourth estate. (Schultz, 1998: 5). In turn, the main functions of media shifted from being public oriented, to a sole reason of making money or consolidating political gains. Media falls into the hands of those in power, or those with money. Individual’s benefit and ideologies are reflected, and public needs fall secondary. The media has mostly become loyal supporter and fan of those who own them, instead of serving public interest (Meshesha, 2014: 15).

The editorial policy of any media house, which directly affects its content, illuminates the genre it works in, the value it upholds and the ideology it puts forward. This is decided by the owner/entity that has brought it into existence. Therefore, ownership influences media content.

Advocacy is one function of journalism – where a media house forwards its beliefs for the public to hear. This is done through columns, editorials and opinion pieces. But public interest is not kept when advocacy transcends from these pieces into the ‘objective news’. It is to keep news as objective as possible that journalists are required to stick as much as possible to universal standards (news values) when reporting events. Yet, news is reported differently from one media house to another. Especially based on difference of ownership, its framing varies.

In Ethiopia, there are two polarized groups of ownership in the newspaper – private and public owned. This has brought a certain predictable and stereotypical content where the private media forward their own ideology by overly-criticizing the work of the state, while state-owned media serve as mouth pieces to the government. In the middle, the public is left as an audience of the elite’s voices.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study will take an in-depth look at the relationship between media ownership and news reported in it, to see how the former affects the latter. Through that it hopes to fulfill the following objectives.

1.3.1 General Objectives

To study the ownership types and influence on framing of news in Ethiopia

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- Explore approaches that can be implemented in the country that enables for the public interest to be best kept through the media sector
- Take an in-depth look into the influence of the type of ownership has on news
- To leave a line of work for other researchers to study the media scene of the country at depth

Seeing that media is too powerful of a tool to rest in individual's hands, this research aims mainly to understand the influence of media ownership on news to then suggest solutions that could contribute to bringing about a media sector that works to uphold the public's interest.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Does ownership in fact influence the framing of news in Ethiopia?
2. Does ownership's influence on news mean that the public service is not kept?
3. What can be done to ensure that media is serving the public to the best of its abilities?

1.5 Hypothesis

The difference of ownership, especially the polarized private and public media, in Ethiopia brings about variation in the framing of news, although this doesn't necessarily mean that they are not serving the public.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study will be carried out on two major newspapers existing in Ethiopia – one private-owned and the other state-owned. It will study and analyze the content of the newspapers: Ethiopian Herald and The Reporter. These two newspapers were selected based on their relative large readership and their coverage of topics in the socio-political sphere of the country. Examples and references will be taken from other countries to better support arguments, but this research is limited to Ethiopia.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

- There is a big issue of finding a well-compiled archive, especially after September, 2015. There were several gaps at the National Library where copies of every publication were supposed to be found, ready for research purposes. Fragmentation of archives was a big issue when doing a study that followed an event over the period of over two years.
- This paper considers only two newspapers, one from each ownership type, although more would have been better.
- The study will not include other ownership types such as community or alternative media set up by NGOs (private non-profits).
- When references are made to ‘media’, it will be referring to the conventional mass media – TV, Radio and The Press. In times it mentions the new media, it identifies it by specifically saying ‘social media’.
- Another great limiting factor in the conducting of this research is also time. Time dedicated to the research has been divided among seven courses in the semester and other projects the researcher engages in.

1.8 Research Methodology

A purposive sampling method was used in the making of this research. The researcher picked a current issue to analyze. The criteria for selection was the basis of national impact the news had. As a result, the issue that is commonly referred to as the ‘Oromo Protests’ in the country has

been selected. The protests started in April, 2014, following the ‘Master Plan’ for Addis Ababa. As the issue has a nation-wide importance, and has been coming and going in the news for over two years now, it is a topic that has been covered by several media – private owned, public owned, local as well as international media.

The research is carried out on two newspapers, one from private media (The Reporter) and government owned (The Ethiopian Herald). These newspapers were chosen because they have similar amount of circulation, are both in English and circle around political, social and economic issues. These two newspapers also have the biggest English circulation in the country.

The study employs content analysis as the primary method for gathering data. By taking an in-depth look at the content of the two parallel newspapers, the research will compare and contrast on the following aspects:

- Angle of reporting
Comparing how a single story/happening was reported by the two media houses, which sides they take.
- Stories reported
Analyzing if there are stories that are reported by one entity that is left out by the other.
- The tone of the headline
See how the headlines frame the issue – whether it is a descriptive headline, blame inflicting or emotion evoking.
- Agenda setting element
“The media don’t tell you what to think, they tell you what to think about.” – *Mccombs and Shaw, 1972*
 - Whether the story was a front-page news or not
 - If the news was an odd or even number page news
 - If the news was above, or below the fold
 - How much space (in centimeters) was allocated to the headline and article
 - If the story had sub-headlines (more ‘important’ stories have more sub-headlines)

All of the above criteria contribute to how news is framed. By analyzing, combining and weighing down each, the researcher will determine how the news is framed in both ownership types.

The research will utilize documents to gather more facts about the subject matter.

As a secondary method, the researcher will utilize interviews that will be conducted with media owners, experienced journalists and researchers to collect different and all-rounded views about the topic.

2. Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 News

News “is more unpredictable than the winds. Sometimes, it is the repetition with new characters of tale as old as the pyramids, and again, it may be almost outside the common experience,” defined Stanley Walker, city editor of the New York Herald Tribune (as quoted in Hough (2004: 2). Hough later defines it as ‘something that interests people’ (Ibid, 2004: 3). Mayeux (1996: 4) simply put news as what people need and want to know.

Shoemaker, (2006: 106) defined it saying, “News is a commodity. It can be bought, sold, and traded. Journalists manufacture the news. Advertisers pay to place their products next to the news...news is ubiquitous.”

And while news is a social construct, a thing, a commodity, newsworthiness is a cognitive construct, a mental judgement (Shoemaker, 2006: 105). This judgement is given in reference to certain perimeters such as proximity, prominence, timeliness, impact, conflict, controversy, uniqueness and human interest. But several factors shape news judgement, including background and experience of the reporter, the requirements of the news organization, the size of the broadcast market in which the station operates, and the needs and expectations of the audience...news judgment is adjusted to reflect these and other factors at a time (Mayeux 1996: 5). In attempting to fulfill these expectations, news may not necessarily reflect an ‘objective reality’. Shoemaker (2006:108) explained this saying, “In a democratic society, the role of the news media is not to mirror the world as it is, but rather to spotlight and draw public attention to problems and situations that need solutions and repair.”

2.1.1 Power of News Media

“The power of the mass media to influence the way in which people view the world...makes the newsgathering processes involved in the “construction of news” an important knowledge area for anyone desiring to understand the public opinion/news media/ public policy process” (Johnson-Cartee, 2005: 31).

McCombs (1991: 1) describes the power of the news media as follows:

The power of the news media to set a nation's agenda, to focus public attention on a few public issues, is an immense and well documented influence. Not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news.

2.1.2 Commercialization of News

The term 'commercialization' has been associated with manipulation, consumerism, lack of integrity and lack of originality and creativity (Blumler, 1991, 1992). Because of this, the reality which was caused by 'heightened competition for audiences' is far from the long-standing public service expectation of media (McQuail, 1992: 138).

This is what the privately owned media are accused of as they are often criticized for being driven by commercial motives than public service. In private media, 'desire for the next dollar' causes them to lose their independence (Schultz, 1998: 5). This concern emanates from the fact that media is a lucrative business and that media institutions are businesses like all others, with the same functions (Burton, 2005). While privatization was aimed to realize freedom from demands of politicians, lobbyists and advertisers, it has rather opened up a way for elite to control media content. Franz Krüger (2005: 95) noted that "independence is one of the fundamental principles of journalism ethics because it sets up a defense against conflicts of interest and competing loyalties."

How does having such commercial ambitions work with the public service of media? As Burton (2005: 22) puts it, "media can purport to serve their audiences, but then we know that in operational practice, they serve the interest of their financial backers and of their governing bodies." He points out how this is an unfair possession of power by the private media because 'governments are, at least, elected.'

Does the fact that media are money-making institutions prohibit them from carrying out their main responsibility of public service – especially when reporting news? If media owners' main motivation and drive is profit, then isn't media working to accomplish their need – as opposed to the public's? Would this not mean that packaging of news is compromised from objective reporting to another end – pleasing sources of funds, or even more in Ethiopia's context, furthering their own political ideology?

Street (2001: 2) captures the effect of commercialization of media on news as having brought the 'dumbing down of politics.' This means that serious debate and discussion has been replaced by cynically crafted sound bites and photo-opportunities; politics has been trivialized, democracy has been damaged and news has been forced to be brought down to a level of entertainment. Such changes are owed to the 'changes in the contemporary media corporation.' Hence, the main downfall of private media remains to be the 'watering down' of news into entertainment. Where now, news is often judged on its entertainment value (Shultz, 1998:4).

One giant in the private media ownership of today's world is media mogul Rupert Murdoch, whom Forbes (2014) ranked to be the 33rd most powerful person in the world. The tycoon is often raised in media ownership and monopoly discussions, as a person who is 'not only the major purveyor of an aggressively right-wing political slant on the news, but he also degraded journalism and helped create the tabloidization of both news and information' (Kellner, 2012: 4). Murdoch's administration and influence on the news media can serve as an example of the claims of commercialization and down fall of private ownership of media.

As compiled Harcup (2004), many reporters and media workers have told of the intervention by the owner of Murdoch's media 'empire'. Jonathan Mirsky, former East Asia editor complained saying that his coverage was hampered by the Times' desire to stay in tune with Rupert Murdoch's business interests in China, so everything was done to avoid upsetting the Chinese authorities (p. 12). And it is 'nothing new' Harcup says, that media owners are accused of using their journalists to pursue certain agendas (p.13).

2.2 Propaganda in Media

Propaganda is defined in different ways by different researchers. According to Jowett and O'Donnell (2006: 7), propaganda is defined as the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist. Both private, and public owned media houses are accused of using news to spread their propaganda.

The growth of the mass media and improvements in transportation led to the development of mass audiences for propaganda, increasing its use and effectiveness (Jowett and O'Donnell, 2006: 93).

In line with this contradiction in media, spreading propaganda is what both the private, as well as the public media are often accused of. The media is often found at one of two extremes. Either it serves as the mouth piece of the state or it becomes a 'flawed watchdog' that has now been supplemented by a network of statutory organizations with an explicit brief to scrutinize those in positions of power (Schultz, 1998: 4).

McQuail (2003: 119) captured the irony in media through the assumptions and obligations placed on it.

The various theories about the social obligations of mass media all turn on two assumptions. (1) Media, beyond their immediate goals of satisfying audiences and making money, have a number of roles that are important for society, especially in relation to democracy, social order and social change. For the most part, these secondary objectives are not separate from, or incompatible with, their primary goals. (2) Media are (and should be) free to choose their own role, express their own views, and publish the views of others, without external pressure or subsequent penalty. This is widely regarded as a necessary condition for achieving both primary and secondary objectives, even though it excludes the notion of obligation.

2.3 Media Ownership

Mcquail (1994: 162) divides media ownership types into three categories: commercial companies, public sector and private non-profit bodies. Commercial companies are those owned by the private sector, either a large media chain, conglomerate or small independent. Non-profit bodies can be neutral trusts, designed to protect the independence of operations, political parties, religious organizations etc. And public ownership refers to a ranging forms of state administration, from direct to more elaborate and diversified constructions designed to maximize independence of decision making about content.

While all three ownership types exist in Ethiopia, this paper will focus on the former two ownership forms in the case of newspapers. According to the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (2016), there are currently 17 privately owned newspapers that are published and distributed in more than one region in Ethiopia. There are a total of 13 public owned media houses, while four of them, which are published by the Ethiopian Press Agency, are the ones that are distributed in more than one region.

Since March 2016, according to the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, the publicly owned Amharic daily newspaper, Addis Zemen, has the highest number of readers, 15, 317. The privately owned Amharic bi-weekly newspaper, Reporter, comes in as the second biggest circulation with 11,000 average number of readers.

On the English newspapers front, the Wednesday output of The Reporter has the highest average number of readers with 9,740, followed by a close number of readers by the daily publicly owned newspaper, The Ethiopian Herald which has 9,165 average number of readers.

2.4 Theoretical Inputs: Public Ownership Vs Private Ownership

Over the years, several researches have been done and theories formulated to realize an ownership structure for media that best minimizes bias in news media. However, most of studies yield mixed results partly because of limited definition of diversity, and partly because of

researchers' political positions. (Cho, Kong, & Lin, 2004) Hence, researchers haven't been able to come to a consensus on the topic.

The economic theory of Arthur Cecil Pigou (1932) is one that is often raised while discussing the political and economic aspect of media. His public interest theory holds that state ownership acts in response to the public's demand to correct the inefficient and inequitable market practices. Believing that if left alone, market forces are too vulnerable to be inefficient and inequitable, the Pigouvian theory suggests that a benevolent government is an indispensable neutral arbitrator. According to this theory, state ownership of the media, perhaps even as a monopoly, is desirable for three reasons. First, information is a public good—once it is supplied to some consumers, it is costly to keep it away from others, even if they have not paid for it. Second, the provision, as well as dissemination, of information is subject to strong, increasing returns: there are significant fixed costs in organizing information gathering and distribution facilities, but once these costs are incurred, the marginal costs of making the information available are relatively low. Third, if consumers are ignorant, and especially if private media outlets serve the governing classes, then state ownership of media can expose the public to less biased, more complete, and more accurate information than it could obtain with private ownership. As a result, Pigouvian theory believes that the state intervention in media ownership is better in serving the best interest of the public.

In contrast, The Public Choice theory (Duncan Black, 1948) holds the opposite. It modeled government as made up of officials, who, besides pursuing the public interest, might act to benefit themselves – that a government-owned media outlet would distort and manipulate information to entrench the incumbent politicians, preclude voters and consumers from making informed decisions, and ultimately undermine both democracy and markets. This theory suggests that private ownership provides diversified content, which enables the public to make better-optioned decisions while also upholding its watchdogging role. According to this theory, pluralism and diversification of content is vital in public service, and the way to achieve it is through less state intervention. It believes that market forces which endorse better competition are the needed regulators in media – hence making private ownership the best way to ensure that the public's interest is kept.

While both approaches aim to realize an independent media, having the public interest at heart, deeming one as the best remains an ongoing debate. However, there will never be an absolute answer to this as there are different dynamics for every country.

Findings in a research conducted by Djankov, McLiesh, Nenova and Shleifer (2003: 373), which covered 97 countries, found that data actually supported the second theory – that government ownership of media undermines political and economic freedom. The research showed that countries that are ‘poorer and more autocratic’ and that have higher state intervention in the economy also have greater state ownership of media. It also went to point that such countries have less free press, citizens had lower political rights, inferior governance, and less developed capital markets and inferior health outcomes. It concluded that the data revealed no benefits of state ownership. In the Ethiopian context, Reta C. Meseret (2013) agrees, claiming that government’s role should be limited to dispensing taxpayer’s money to publicly-owned media outlets.

2.5 The Ethiopian Media Landscape

The roots of the mass media in Ethiopia maybe as old as the history of printing. In fact, the practice of publishing religious books of Ethiopian origin began in the 17th century. Ethiopia is among the first countries that benefited from the invention of the printing press. The publishing of newspapers began to take place several centuries later, around 1900. At the turn of the 20th century, *Le Semeur d’ethiopie* and *Aemero* appeared on the literary scene. (PMC Ethiopia, 2006:2)

The development of modern journalism in Ethiopia began with the introduction of modern or formal education, during the last years of Emperor Minilik’s reign in the late 18th century. The first hand-written newspaper done by Blatta Gabre Egziabher was said to be highly critical of the feudal officials at the time and consequently, he had lost royal favor by the time of his death in 1914 (Ibid: 6). This shows how from the beginning of mass media in the country, state scrutiny has also been there.

During the Emperor's reign, he had an interest in the establishment of a printing press as well as the publication of newspapers and educational materials. During World War I, with the help of the allied powers, he disseminated the news to counter the German propaganda through an Amharic newspaper called 'Yetor Wore' or "War News". Berhanena Selam, an Amharic newspaper was also founded in 1923 with its circulation to 500 copies. The first monthly magazine consisting different European Languages including an Amharic section was founded by Mr. Weizinger. Until the invasion of Italy, many small hand presses were continued to be imported from various countries of Europe. (Abeje, 2004: 8)

Meshesha (2014: 80), quoted Getachew (2003) and Ellene, Mesfin and Alemayehu (2003) as they argued that later, the Italian five years occupation of Ethiopia (1936-1940) during World War II had its own influence on the development of media in Ethiopia though it was used to propagate fascist ideology.

During the post Italian occupation or WWII and after that, a number of press related developments were observed. *Addis Zemen* (New Era) appeared in Amharic on May 5th, 1941 and later in 1942, the Press and Information Department was established under the then Ministry of Pen. In the same year, while *Sendek Alamachin* (Our Flag) appeared in Amharic and Arabic, the *Negarit Gazeta* appeared in Amharic and English. In the following year, in 1943, *The Ethiopian Herald* started as a weekly English newspaper. More newspapers also came about in subsequent years. (Meshesha, 2014: 81)

Following that, the period of communist military dictatorship of the Derg from 1974 to 1991 was one of total government control of the media and the flow of information (Lulie, 2008: 21). Lulie goes on to say (2008: 22) that although it became the worst regime regarding media independence, the first two or three years of the Derg regime were promising and there was hope of freedom of the press. Due to the sudden lifting of censorship from the state-controlled media the public press began to report fairly accurate and for the first time in their history, Ethiopians were able to read something other than soporific propaganda in their newspapers. Yet, the imperial government of Emperor Haile Selassie I, who ruled the country for half a century, had relatively more newspapers as compared to Mengistu's socialist regime (Meshesha, 2014: 83).

Through the government's nationalization efforts, it was 'completely unthinkable' to have private press in this period because everything was owned by the government, and that the works of the newspapers had socialistic orientations and, as a result, were the forerunners of the socialistic ideology.

Press freedom in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon. Ethiopia has been led by totalitarian socialist government, which did not allow the expansion of free press. It is since 1993 G.C. that free press started to flourish in the country following the proclamation for registration of press organizations (G/Selassie, 2006: 38). Before 1991, media owners were able to influence the content of 'their' media, and as the Ethiopian media have mostly been owned by the government it has also been the sole authority in the industry (Lulie, 2008: 19).

2.5.1 Public Owned Media in the Current Ethiopia

The now public owned press, found under The Press Agency, gained its semi-autonomous status in 1995, when the transitional government of Ethiopia restructured the state media. (Reta C. Meseret, 2013: 238) The Press Agency was a result of a merger between two organizations that were operating under the Ministry of Information; namely, Press Division and Advertising and Distribution Division. The Press Agency, despite its semi-autonomous structure, is first and foremost subsidized by the government because revenue from advertisers doesn't generate sufficient amount. (Ibid: 244) Such financial intervention from government has crossed over to also become content regulation – although the Editorial Policy of the press agency which was published in 2002 gave the editors of the media house responsibility for editorial decisions such as the placement of news. There have been several incidents where editor's decisions were override by last minute calls from government officials. (Ibid, 2013: 309)

The public press is often criticized for being a mouth piece of the government to only spread propaganda. Kebede Anissa said, "These days the public media is mainly preoccupied with issues of the government. More focus is given to the propaganda and interests of the government. It lacks balance as the interests of many sections of the society are unheeded," (Interview on the Ethiopian Herald, Oct 26, 2014: 9). This is not a hidden secret, as recorded by

Skjerdal (2012: 2), an editor-in-chief at the Ethiopian News Agency (a state owned provider of news) openly says it.

Ethiopia's current media ownership falls majorly in the Public Interest group, where it is monopolized by the state. Findings show that the Pigovian ownership model is mostly at play in 'poorer' developing countries, which Ethiopia falls into. (Ethiopia ranks 174th out of 187 countries on the UNDP's human development index in 2015, and has an average per capita income less than half the current sub-Saharan average). Furthermore, studies have shown that increased interaction of Ethiopia with China (who ranks as one of the lowest countries on press freedom) further facilitates the Pigovian approach in the country. It has been found that china's no-strings-attached approach is in fact the opposite in expanding its ideology. One example to this is the tendency for the Chinese government to privilege/favor state media over private media – in terms of both finance and access to information. (I. Gagliardone, 2010, 2014)

Another reason for this is that the more the mass media criticize a country's government (which the private press often do), the more the government will try to control the media (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996: 269).

2.5.2 The Private Media in Ethiopia

The private press in Ethiopia emerged after the Press Freedom Bill was proclaimed by the Ethiopian Transitional Government (TGE) in October 1992. The document states in Paragraph 3 that, "1. Freedom of the press is recognized and respected in Ethiopia. 2. Censorship of the press and any restriction of a similar nature are hereby prohibited." Part Three further guarantees the right of access to information by saying that any press and its agents shall, without prejudice to rights conformed by other laws, has the right to seek, obtain and report news and information from any government source of news and information. (Lulie, 2008: 23)

Lulie went on to mention that although the existence of the young private, 'independent' media was supposed to aid the multipartyism and play major role in the new found democracy, it greatly lacked ethical and professional standards to do so:

“...but the independent press which was introduced in much of the African countries following the early 1990s global wave of democracy began its mission as a sworn enemy of the young ‘democrat’ governments in most of the Sub-Saharan African countries including Ethiopia. There was a huge lack of professionalism and ethical standards of journalism and abuse of freedom of press and expression by the press itself. In many instances it was difficult to call the press independent as it acted as a political opposition with a massive practice of advocacy journalism and sensationalism.” (2008: 37)

As quoted by Lulie, Francis Kasoma (1997) says that the ‘independent’ press will be as much to blame as the governments which are taking draconian measures to stop irresponsible journalism.

Some kind of understanding between the state and the independent media is necessary for the latter to uphold a legitimate role of acting as the ‘fourth estate’. But the rather, in Ethiopia, the private press is suspicious and one sided-treatment has in fact prevented it from seeing any good that has been achieved by the government (Ibid, 2008: 560).

The first independent media of Ethiopia was highly politicized and commercialized. After a personal interview Lulie conducted with Wondwosson Mekonnen (2007), he wrote, “The society itself forced you to lie and changed the industry to a commercial competition where the [better] news you have the better market you have. Some venders who adopted the routine joined the industry as owners, editors, journalists and gave the bad practice a momentum.” Lulie wrote:

“He says besides considering the government as the common enemy of the independent press there was an ongoing battle between the industry itself, one newspaper against the other to kill it and avoid the other from the market which end up with dangerous practices like defamation, inciting violence and going against the ABCs of journalism.” (2008: 55)

This dangerous, and careless, act of the media led to the tightening of laws and in return, a further polarization of the private media and state. Ethiopia now has the most journalists in exile of any country in the world other than Iran, according to Committee to Protect Journalists’ statistics and Human Rights Watch research (Human Rights Watch, 2015: 1).

2.6 Defining Framing

Communications is not a static, but rather a dynamic process that involves frame-building and frame setting (Vreese, 2005: 51).

Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, more evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the term described (Entman, 1993: 52). It means making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences.

Text cans make bits of information more salient by placement or repetition, or by associating them with culturally familiar symbols. (Ibid, 1993, 53)

Framing is a critical activity in the construction of social reality because it helps shape the perspectives through which people see the world; it involves the process of inclusion and exclusion as well as emphasis (Hallahan, 1999: 207).

As quoted by Scheufele (1999: 103), McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) suggested that not only are agenda setting and framing related, framing is, in fact, an extension of agenda setting. Agenda setting refers to the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis the mass media place on certain issues and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audiences.

Scheufele (1999: 106) also quoted Gitlin (1980), who defined frames as ‘largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports’. Sometimes it is unspoken and unacknowledged because this concept of media framing can be ‘unconscious ones’ (Gamson, 1989).

For the purpose of this study, we will use the definition of framing taken by Johnson-Cartee (2005: 24), “Framing is the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization (or a political leader, public relations officer, political advertising consultant, or news consumer), defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy” (T.E. Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997: 567). Media workers are keen in setting such frames. Public relations professionals are often called ‘spin doctors’ and ‘imagemakers’ because they are constantly defining what reality is for client organizations, as well as for the company itself (Hallahan,

1999:206). Client complaints about media bias or inaccuracies in coverage can often be explained in terms of framing that is inconsistent with a source's favored frame (Ibid, 1999: 228).

Two levels of such frames are mentioned by Scheufele (1999: 105); when presenting news and when news is being comprehended. Specifically, 'media frames and individual frames.' Media frames refers to the way news is framed by media workers when presented to the audience while the individual level refers to the way each audience member internally frames the news, influenced by past experiences, culture etc. In this paper's analysis, we'll be focusing on framing research by investigating media frames.

Hallahan (1999: 209) identifies seven models of framing. Namely, framing of situations, framing of attributes, framing of risky choices, framing of actions, framing of issues, framing of responsibility and framing of news.

2.6.1 Framing of News

Entman (1993: 55) wrote, "...framing in a news text is really the imprint of power – it registers the identity of actors or interests that competed to dominate the text." This is to mainly mean that the framing in the news plays a major role in the exertion of political power. It reflects the 'play of power and boundaries'. "Critical researchers consider media framing essentially a tool of power that can be used in the struggle to define whose view of the world will predominate" (Hallahan, 1999: 223). Framing is a tool used by media and politicians to make salient points that would direct their readers to a desired frame of mind (Cissel, 2012: 69). By making some issues more salient in people's mind (agenda setting), mass media can also shape the considerations that people take into account when making judgements about political candidates or issues (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007:11).

Johnson-Cartee wrote about how, as individuals, everyone is dependent on the news media to bring the political happenings of the day – and how this dependency not only affects how we view politics but also the way we go about our daily lives, our social perceptions and social judgments (2005: 41). As stated in Sheufele & Tewksbury (2007: 11), such studies of news

frames were ‘based on the idea that mass media had potentially strong attitudinal effects...’ (McQuail, 2005). Johnson-Cartee (2005: 26) also says,

“Particularly when news consumers hold no prior strong beliefs or attitudes toward and issue, news framing is likely to have more influence on individual decision making.”

Framing puts information into a context and establishes frame of reference so people can evaluate information, comprehend meanings, and take action, if appropriate (Hallahan, 1999: 224).

2.6.2 Influences on Framing of News

Walter Gieber said, “News is what newspapers make it,” (as quoted in Harcup, 2004). Journalism is not produced in a vacuum. Journalists work with a range of constraints and influences; structural factor that affect their output (McQuail 2000: 244). There are different kinds of influence on content has been a big area of interest and research in the past decades.

The first hypothesis suggested by Gans (1979) and Gitlin (1980), which states that ‘content reflects social reality (mass media as mirror of society), is generally rejected. Although fragmentary, several theories which have been formulated into media organizations, have been fairly consistent in supporting the view that content is systematically and distinctively influenced by organizational practices (and imperatives) (Mcquail, 1994: 187). This includes various influences, some of which are discussed below.

One of these influences are the gatekeepers. Shoemaker (1991:1) simply put gatekeeping as “the process by which the billions of messages that are available in the world get cut down and transformed into the hundreds of messages that reach a given person on a given day” (as quoted in Sokora, 2012: 515). Gatekeeping theory of communications began with Lewin’s (1951) work on community dynamics and a notion of gatekeeping that was laid out in terms of food consumption – the selection process by which certain foods reach the dinner table, or not (Ibid, 2012: 515).

Media workers, as gatekeepers, are among the main influences on the framing of news. As quoted by Yonas (2008, 10), Fourie (2004:54) defines gatekeeping as:

‘The process through which certain information passes a series of checkpoints (gates) before being finally accepted as news material. Gatekeepers are the people or groups that have an impact on this process. They are part of the news organization and their influence can also extend beyond the 11 daily tasks of news identification, newsgathering and publication.’

Editors and journalists are vested with the power of determining what the audience should think and hold as an important issue (Getachew, 2006: 26). Editors largely determine what goes on the media. As described by the gate keeping theory, in the news selection process, editors select news stories they believe that their audience wants. The gatekeeper decides which information to pass on to the audience, and which not to...often based on their personal attitude and perception (Ibid: 2006: 25).

According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996: 109) the influences from journalists and editors emanates from different angles such as the existence of deadlines, media routines, selection of sources, target audience and the pressure of delivering news that sells – since media houses also need to make money.

Public relations practitioners influence the framing of news by making sure that the news is ‘slanted or framed in a way that is consistent with the source’s preferred framing or how a client would like to have a story told’ (Hallahan, 1999: 228).

Advertisers are other external influences that shape content. As Altschull’s (1984) second law of journalism states, “the contents of the media always reflect the interests of those who finance them.” The entity who actually pays for the media product has the power of influencing the content. This means that advertisers also influence media content. The more advertisers support one kind of media content, the more that type of content the media will offer. In addition, some advertisers work directly to delete or shape the nature of media content by specifically

withdrawing advertising from objectionable content or by letting it be known that they do not want to support media that run certain types of articles (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996: 269).

2.6.3 Ownership as influencer of Framing of News

According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996: 169), ‘editors must control reporters, publishers must control editors, and the owner(s) must control publisher. McQuail (2003: 123) refers to media owners as the ‘ultimate controllers’. Because ultimately, media owners or their appointed top executives have the final say in what the organization does (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996: 163).

One of the most feasible ways the ownership shows power and exerts control over the news is through stated policies and guidelines. Most organizational policy is traditional and fixed, and journalists learn these often unwritten policies through experience and observing what kinds of stories the organization use (Ibid, 1996: 170).

Not only can owners hire and fire editors, columnists, and reporters according to their stated political beliefs, but they can also cause subtle “slants” in coverage as the employees try to anticipate what the owner wants (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996: 267). This ‘slant’ in news content creates distortion from an “objective” truth presented to audience, and the editorial stand of the newspaper finds its way into news.

2.7 Summing Up

Modern journalism in Ethiopia, which goes back to a bit over a century, has gone through several stages and events to get to where it is now. These different phases contributed in the formulation of current laws and the way media practices are carried out. Media has been a mouth piece of the government and a self-declared ‘sworn’ oppositions simply negating the works of the state. This hinders it from fulfilling their public service role as a fourth estate. In fact, Lulie (2008: 56) said that it could be boldly stated that ‘when the philosophy and practice of the independent media acting

as the fourth *estate* came, both the government miserably failed to understand the concept and the media did not know how to play their roles’.

Newspapers are periodically published documents that carry current information about the society with characteristics such as the predominance of news-oriented content, regular periodicity, low cost and textual medium (Muhammadali, 2011: 26). They have fallen victim to manipulation for propaganda, as well as to the effects of commercialization. What is needed to regulate this and restore the fourth estate to its main role, public service? What can be done to control the abuse of this powerful industry? McQuail (2003: 92) says that both external control and also self-control are incomplete without some form of accountability, although, control of media is not the same as media accountability.

Through this paper, the researcher aims to explore ways in which media’s accountability towards the public can grow and develop suggestions to make it happen.

3. Chapter Three

3.1 Methodology

This research, which looks into the influence of media ownership on the framing of news will do so by studying the news content of two newspapers that represent the polarized forms of ownership in the country. The Reporter, a privately owned English weekly (which also has a bi-weekly Amharic version), covers issues and news that are political, cultural and social. In the same manner, the Ethiopian Herald newspaper is one that is issued by the Ethiopian Press Agency, a publicly owned institution. It covers the same areas as The Reporter. The research conducted on the two newspapers studies whether or not media's ownership type affects the different ways of framing the same news – conducted primarily through content analysis.

3.2 Primary Method

3.2.1 Content Analysis

In this research paper, with the aim of realizing the correlation between and the influence of media ownership on the framing of news, the researcher utilized different methods and approaches. The primary method employed is the use of media content analysis.

Content analysis is described as the scientific study of content of communication (Prasad, 2008: 1). It is used to study a broad range of texts from transcripts of interviews and discussions in clinical and social research to the narrative and form of films, TV programs and the editorial and advertising content of newspapers and magazines. It was introduced as a systematic method to study mass media by Harold Lasswell (1927), initially to study propaganda (Macnamara, 2005: 2). The methodology later became officially recognized after Bernanrd Berelson published *Content Analysis in Communication Research* in 1952.

Several definitions are available for content analysis. It has been defined by Holisti (1969: 4), as any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.

From Lasswell's (1948) suggested frame work of communication process, 'Who, Says What, Through Which Channel, To Whom, With What Effect', much of media studies have focused on the final two elements, audience and effects.' (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996: 12) But content analysis focuses on the latter ones, with a specific focus on 'who, says what.' Content analysis studies media content, as it is the basis of media impact. (Ibid, 1996: 27)

The researcher chose to utilize content analysis, because among its other advantages, it is a technique suited to comparisons – for example, of trends over time or organizations (Sommer and Sommer (1991). As this paper aims to compare the framing of news in two distinct types of media ownership in newspapers in Ethiopia, this method was selected as the primary method. Yet, since the study of media content alone is not sufficient (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996: 28), the researcher has also employed the use of interviews with different stakeholders in the subject matter to get a fuller account on it.

3.2.2 Quantitative Approach in Content Analysis

This paper make use of quantitative content analysis. While some (Hsieh, Shannon, 2005) claim that content analysis is widely used in qualitative data gathering, others argue that it is in fact birthed as a quantitative method. Below are definitions Franzosi compiled in his work (2007), further consolidating the quantitative nature of the method:

“[the method of] *quantitative* content analysis ... consists of tabulating the occurrences of content units ...”

“Content analysis ... attempts to characterize the meanings in a given body of discourse in a *systematic* and *quantitative* fashion.

Content analysis is the *statistical* semantics of political discourse. ...

Content analysis aims at *statistical* formulations, directed toward empirical problems ... its statistical character [is] one of its most distinctive attributes.”

“A distinguishing characteristic of content analysis ... is its *quantitative* aspect.”

“There is clearly no reason for content analysis unless the question one wants answered is *quantitative*.”

(Leites and de Sola Pool (1942: 1), Mintz (1949[1943]: 127),
Lasswell (1942: 16), Janis (1943: 429)

Quantitative content analysis collects data about media content such as topics or issues, volume of mentions, ‘messages’ determined by key words in context (KWIC), circulation of the media (audience reach) and frequency (Macnamara J, 2005: 4). Neuendorf (2002) also reaffirms the vitality of the quantitative nature of content analysis calling it a ‘numerical process’ that ‘summarizes rather than reports all details concerning a message set’ (p. 14, 15).

To carry out this numerical process, it is important to define the unit of analysis (coding unit); the basic unit of text to be classified during content analysis (Zhang and Wildmuth, 2014). Coding is the process by which categories are established. It involves assigning labels to segments or chunks of text (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Coding involves working through the material with the help of the category system in order to record the occurrence of categories (Marying, 2014: 25).

3.2.3 Coding Technique

The following codes/categories will be used to analyze the news contents that are selected. All of the codes can be generally categorized into those measuring the importance of the news, and the descriptive message of the news.

1. Importance given to the news
 - Front page or not
 - Sub-headlines or not
2. Type of stories reported vs left out
3. Word usage throughout the story
 - Less subjective (words that do not imply anything upfront)

- Subjective (words that pass judgment as to what something is or not)
4. Sides taken/blamed parties vs less reporting
 5. Predominant voice throughout
 - Government voice being heard
 - Individuals/private entities heard
 - Other Voices

3.3 Secondary Method

3.3.1 Interview Questions

To aid data gathered by supplemental information, interviews with media owners, editors and individuals at managerial positions in media houses will be held. Through this, the researcher aims to build a fuller account regarding the organizational and ownership influence on the framing of news.

The interview questions were designed in two ways. The first one is to further consolidate the research finding and get personal opinions on the influence of media ownership on the framing of news. Secondly, a set of questions were drawn out to build up recommendations for the way forward. Depending of the interviewee, different questions were selected for each.

Questions to further consolidate the discussion on the influence of ownership on the framing of news include:

1. How far does the editorial policy go in dictating the framing and angling of news?
2. Where do the different framing in news reporting emanate from? Mere personal subjectivity, or purposeful agenda?
3. Do you believe that having an agenda that determines how news is angled turns the function of media away from public service?
4. What significance does editorial policy bring if the ultimate goal is to serve the public?
5. In your experience, have you noticed a slant in the way news is framed due to influence from ownership? How far do owners intervene?

These set of questions are designed to get answers that will help to build recommendations for the way forward:

1. How important is public opinion in keeping media accountable?
2. What preconditions are needed for the growth of strong opinion that is able to set the agenda?
3. Is there popular opinion in Ethiopia? If so, would you say it is organized?
4. In what ways can public opinion be identified, grown and utilized to keep the media accountable to the public?
5. Which ownership type do you believe can better serve public interest? Explain.
6. What do you think can/should be done to better the media scene in Ethiopia

*In addition to analyzing these news, the researcher will also look at how the same events were reported by foreign media. This is done so as to assess how well the two most circulated newspapers in the country have addressed the issue.

3.4 Sampling Method

For this study, the researcher will employ a purposive sampling method. A purposive sample refers to selection of units based on personal judgment rather than randomization (Elder, 2009: 4). Following this, the researcher has chosen three distinct major national news, reported both in The Reporter and Ethiopian Herald, to analyze through the codes listed above. The news chosen was based on the following criteria:

- The issue is a national one that both media houses ought to report on
- The issue has a political aspect that could be dividing among the private and public sectors
- The issue has a big impact

Based on these, the news that has been selected to be analyzed are the events that are associated with what are commonly referred to as the ‘Oromo Protests.’

4. Chapter Four

4.1 Presentation of Findings

The research was done on an extensive sample of two years, of how the events associated with the Oromo Protests were reported, and framed in two newspapers: the Ethiopian Herald (public owned) and The Reporter (private owned). The analysis is a comparison of how they framed the same news, and through interviews, links the framing with the respective ownership types.

4.2 Analysis on the ‘Oromo Protests’ news framing

The events that are now commonly referred to as the ‘Oromo Protests’ began after the release of the ‘Addis Ababa Master Plan’ in April, 2014. The protests were responses to the claim that the master plan of Addis Ababa was going to be implemented at the cost of the Oromo Special Zone’s residents.

4.2.1 Scale of the ‘Oromo Protests’

The ‘Oromo Protests’, demonstrations by the biggest regional state in the country, are one of the biggest cases in Ethiopia, which have drawn much local, as well as international attention. It has been widely covered by various international media giants such as the BBC, Aljazeera, CNN, Washington Post and The Guardian.

Social media was flooded by the growing use of the hashtag ‘#oromoprotests’ where individuals poured out their political frustrations. In less than three days, the hashtag was used in 500 posts, by 198 users and had reached 326,248 users and had 1,094,143 impressions made (Keyhole.co, Internet, accessed June 14, 4 AM).

It caught the global media’s eyes. The ‘Oromo Protests’, grew into becoming colossal events, which the general public of Ethiopia needed to hear about.

4.2.2 The Oromo Protests in The Reporter and The Ethiopian Herald

The issue first appeared on the Reporter on April 26, 2014, on the 'In-Depth' section, found on the 6th page of the newspaper. Addis Ababa's Masterplan was discussed at length, and in depth. Its headlines read, 'Digging up Old Wounds: New City Masterplan Ignites Old Controversy'. The headline expressed a hint of cynicism, implying that something (negative) was going to take place as a result of it. It had 3 sub-headlines. It was a detailed historical evolution and relationship between Addis Ababa as a 'federal city' and the 'special interest' that is mentioned in the constitution about the Oromo Special Zone. (See Annex 1)

On the Ethiopian Herald, the topic first appeared on May 3 on the editorial column of the newspaper. The editorial covered the issue even though there was no other news item or article in the paper that raised the same topic. Its headlines wrote, "Condemning the recent attempt of violence in the strongest term possible" and had a sub-head which read, "Violence serves no purpose than destruction". With the first sentence stating the 'breathtaking' growth rate of the country, the editorial piece blamed some 'few individuals with ill-fated ambitions' and 'terrorist groups' for the 'destruction and violence' that had taken place. (See Annex 13)

On the same day, May 03, 2014, the Reporter came out with front page news with a headline, "11 Killed, 70 Injured in Deadly Clashes". In the news, it referred to the event by using the terms 'mass demonstrations' 'incident' 'demonstrations' and 'protests'. It also quoted statements it received from officials. (See Annex 2)

The following day, on May 04, 2014, the Ethiopian Herald wrote about the Oromo Protests in the opinion pages, under the column 'view points'. With a headline that read, "Violence causes damage in Oromia state", it published the statement communicated by the Government Communications Affairs Office to the Ethiopian News Agency. Again, there were no other related articles or stories in the newspaper as the topic. The key words that they used to describe the events were "unrest" "unhuman act" "immoral deadly act" "instrument of destruction" "destruction as witnessed" "immoral individuals" "myopic attitudes" "violence" "barricade on fast economic growth" "anti-peace elements". (See Annex 14)

A month later, on June 5, 2014, the Ethiopian Herald came out with front page news that reported the speech delivered by the Surrounding Oromia Integrated Development Project Office

General Manager Mathewos Asfaw. The news' headlines, which didn't have any sub-headlines, read, "Office says Integrated Master Plan ensures fair urban dev't". The article fully reports the statements of the officer in ensuring that the Master Plan is in fact a 'common urban development.' The news was basically a re-publication of the speech. It referred to the 'Oromo protests' as 'violence'. (See Annex 15)

After two days on June 07, 2014, The Reporter came out with an article on page 6, in the 'In-Depth' section of the newspaper with the headline, "Addis Dreaming Big". The story was also done based on the statements given by the Surrounding Oromia Integrated Development Project Office General Manager Mathewos Asfaw. It had two sub headlines and referred to the 'Oromo protests' as 'turmoil' and an 'upheaval' twice. (See Annex 3)

On June 12, 2014, on the editorial page of the Ethiopian Herald, the newspaper came out with an article with a headline, 'What Addis and Oromia Special Zone deserve in common?' It was under the 'Viewpoints' column. It restated the news that was published as front page news in June 05, 2014 in the same newspaper. (See Annex 16)

A year and a half later, on December 19, 2015, The Reporter picked up the Oromo Protests on the third page under the headline, "Protests in Oromia town continue for third week." It had two sub headlines and referred to the events as 'protests', 'violent protests' and 'deadliest protests'. (See Annex 4)

On December 26, 2015, The Reporter came out with front page news, "Gov't reluctant to reveal causalities in Oromia, Amhara." The news reflected the public's voice and referred to the Oromo Protests at the 'deadliest protests'. On the same front page, it featured another news related with the Oromo Protests, under the headline "Opposition figure Bekele Gera, OFC leaders arrested. The news didn't have sub headlines but it mainly reflected the voice of opposition leaders and referred to the events as 'Oromo Protests'. (See Annex 5)

On January 22, 2016, The Ethiopian Herald brought up the issue in the editorial column, 'Viewpoints'. It had a headline that said, "The Masterplan is fully terminated heeding public's demand: OPDO Central Office Head." The piece was an interview with the OPDO Central Office Head, Daba Debele. It referred to the issue as 'protests'. (See Annex 17)

The following day, The Reporter came out with front page news with a headline “EU strongly criticizes Ethiopian gov’t over Oromo Protests”. The news had no sub heads, or a predominant voice. (See Annex 6)

On Feb 20, 2016, The Reporter reported the issue on front page “7 police officers, unknown number of armed protesters killed in Oromia”. The news had a neutral reporting and referred to the Oromo Protests as ‘protests’ ‘clash’ and ‘violent clashes’. (See Annex 7)

On Feb 26, 2016, the Ethiopian Herald came out with front page news with a headline, “Gov’t says legitimate, peaceful protests hijacked by political elements.” Although the news didn’t take sides when describing the event, it mainly quoted the statements given by a government official who said that ‘legitimate and acceptable’ protests had turned into ‘despicable violence.’ The news stated that although the issue was that of good governance, something that the government is ‘taking proper measures’ on and ‘engaging in continuous dialogue and discussion with the public, it had been hijacked by opportunist political parties and the Eritrean government. (See Annex 18)

The following day, Feb 27, 2016, it featured in the ‘Viewpoints’ column on the editorial page, the press conference that was given by the Government Communications Affairs Office Minister Getachew Reda. The headline read, “Political elements here and abroad hijack the process of the peaceful and acceptable protest: Minister”. The article had a neutral approach using the word ‘protest’ to describe the events. (See Annex 19)

On the same day, Feb 27, 2016, The Reporter featured the news “Parties call for swift dialogue with gov’t” on page 4. The news was dominated by the voices of opposition parties and referred to the events using words such as ‘unrest’, ‘problem’ and ‘peaceful demonstrators’. In the same issue, on page 10, it also entertained news under headline: “Inter-Religious Council calls for peace.” It referred to the Oromo Protests as ‘clashes’, ‘turmoil’ and ‘unlawful and violent moves’. (See Annex 8(1) & (2))

On March 5, 2016, The Reporter covered news in relations with the Oromo Protests on the front page with a headline that read “Top OPDO officials relieved of duty”. It had a neutral reporting with no predominant voice in the news, and used the words ‘protests’ and ‘mass anti-government demonstrations.’ (See Annex 9)

On March 11, 2016, Ethiopian Herald came out with front page news with headline “Externalizing public discontent no solution: premier”. The news featured the prime minister’s speech to parliament on the issue of the Oromo Protests. In the editorial page, the issue featured under ‘Viewpoints’ column a piece with a headline, “Sinister agenda of the destructive forces.” The piece referred to the Oromo Protests as ‘violence’ ‘attempts of destructive forces’ ‘instigating violence and chaos’. Views of the state were transmitted through. (See Annex 20)

The following day, on March 12, 2016, The Reporter did front page news on the same speech presented by the prime minister to parliament with a headline, “Gov’t pleads guilty”. The news had four sub headlines, and had a neutral approach. It referred to the Oromo protests as ‘public unrest’ and ‘violence’. On page 3 of the same issue, it reported on a related issue under the headline “Investors claim compensation for property damage amid Oromia riots.” It referred to the Oromo Protests as ‘public riot’. (See Annex 10 (1) & (2))

A week later, The Reporter featured on page 4, news under the headline ‘Gov’t used excessive force in Oromia: Human Rights Council’. It reflected the voice of the public and referred to the events as ‘unrest’ and ‘demonstrations’. (See Annex 11)

On March 22, 2016, front page news was published on The Ethiopian Herald that said, “Gov’t to compensate Oromia protest innocent victims”. It had a neutral coverage but gave the government the predominant voice. (See Annex 21)

On April 2, 2016, on page 3, The Reporter covered a story under the headline “Medrek criticizes PM’ recent sentiment.” Though the reporting was neutral, it featured the voices of opposition parties dominantly. It referred to the Oromo Protests as ‘unrest’. (See Annex 12)

4.3 Analysis

4.3.1 Importance/Placement

On the importance scale, table (1) shows that the privately owned newspaper, The Reporter has given the issue more importance as news than the publicly owned Ethiopian Herald. From April, 2014 to April, 2016, The Reporter gave an account of the ‘Oromo Protests’ fourteen times – out of which 7 were front page news. On the other hand, in the same time frame, Ethiopian Herald

reported the issue 10 times, out of which only 3 were front page news, while the rest were treated in the ‘Editorial and Viewpoints’ columns on the opinion page.

The Reporter presented the events more in news-related pages than the Ethiopian Herald. The only times Ethiopian Herald put the issue on front page news was when it was reporting a speech delivered about it by a government official. In such cases, it directly quoted and wrote the address given.

The importance both of the newspapers showed to the matter showed their allegiance to their owners. While the private media was set on reporting the ‘national crisis’ as news, that could possibly incriminate the government, the state media rather shunned it, and only presented it as news when officials spoke about it.

4.3.2 Description of Content

On content level, the ‘Oromo Protests’ were depicted and approached differently in the two newspapers. As compared to the Ethiopian Herald, The Reporter had a less biased approach in the way it presented the news. As it could be seen from table (2), The Reporter’s 13, out of the 15 items had a more ‘neutral’ word usage, where the media houses didn’t pass its own judgments in the news items. On the other hand, in the Ethiopian Herald, 5 out of its 10 items were highly subjective pieces where it passed judgment on the nature of the issue.

Ethiopian Herald had a more biased reporting, siding towards the state. It mainly described the ‘Oromo Protests’ as violence created due to a communication gap that was used by ‘anti-peace’ elements to hinder the nation’s fast economic growth. The fact that the Ethiopian Herald treated the news in the Editorial section, and not as news, left a big way for the opinionated state voice to be reflected to the audience. In the times it reported the related issue as front-page news; it reported addresses given on the topic by government officials. It represented the views that the state communicated. On the other hand, the privately owned The Reporter gave a less biased coverage and reflected diverse voices throughout.

4.4 Thoughts from Media Workers and Professionals

4.4.1 The Public Owned Ethiopian Herald

Media's ownership, directly or indirectly influences the content – even the objective news. Dejene Sojeto, the Editor-in-Chief of the Ethiopian Herald, also admitted, “This is the dynamics of media. Although it is fully independent in principle, it serves those who control it.” (Personal Interview, June 9, 2016)

He went on to say that at the Ethiopian Herald, their activities were free and independent; that they were only led by the Editorial Policy. The Editor-in-Chief who had the final say in the selection and framing of news decided on the editorial content, guided by the written editorial policy which was written in 1994 by the then Ministry of Information.

In response to the question posed by the researcher as to why the Oromo Protests weren't given due coverage as news, Dejene said,

“In accordance with the editorial policy, and our target audience – which are the diplomatic and international community – we do not focus on micro level local news. The core issue of the Oromo Protests was a communication gap and we are mainly working on filling that.”

Beyond the fact that he referred to the protests done by the largest ethnicity in the country as ‘micro level’, his claims go hand in hand with the statement of the agency's goals in the editorial policy, which include:

1. *Communicating the laws and policies declared by the government, and discussing its activities*
 2. *Strengthening the relationship between the public and government*
- (Ethiopian Press Agency, Editorial Policy)

In accordance with the above goals, the daily newspaper, Ethiopian Herald, dedicates its front page news to mainly government and state activities. More than 70% of the published newspapers of the Ethiopian Herald entertain governmental affairs and statements on their front pages.

Daniel Bekele, editor of Addis Zemen, said that in his view, the way the Oromo Protests were covered in Ethiopian Herald were not satisfactory (Personal Interview, June 13, 2016). He added, “Even though The Ethiopian Herald has a specific target audience and its aim is image building, shunning news is neither ethical, nor acceptable.”

In the introduction part of the Ethiopian Herald’s editorial policy, it states, “Ethiopian Press Agency...is a government print media institution.” Explicitly stated in the policy, the side that the newspaper takes towards the government comes as no surprise.

The publicly owned Ethiopian Herald, in order to be directly accountable towards the public is accountable to a media standing committee from the House of People’s Representatives. But seeing that one party won a landslide victory in the 2015 elections, the House represents only the state and not a diverse ideology. The predominant voice of the Government Communications Office throughout the newspaper, especially in the ‘Viewpoints’ column that covered the ‘Oromo Protests’ also supports this scenario since the Government Communication Office state minister, Frehiwot Ayalew, is the chairperson of the media standing committee. Directly and indirectly, the ownership of the Ethiopian Herald highly affected the coverage it had on the Oromo Protests.

Although the government cannot intervene in censoring the daily news that was published on the newspaper, Dejene said that it had ‘political appointees managing the agency’.

The newspaper follows the ideology of the state in line with the policy which was crafted by the government itself. Dejene has said that he decides based on the policy and that there have been no circumstances where his final decisions were override by ‘higher powers’. But Daniel begs to differ. He said that there have been instances where government officials have censored content before going out, and also questioned after one has been published – and that such occurrences weren’t too rare.

4.4.2 The Privately Owned Reporter

Bruh Yihunbelay, Managing Editor of The Reporter, said, “Ownership in no way intervenes in content – let alone in the news” (Personal Interview, June 13, 2016). He said that The Reporter

only represented the facts as they are and ‘didn’t frame them in any way’, while the selection process is based on the editorial policy they are governed by. As the fourth estate, Bruh says that their front page usually circles around a current national, policy and private-sector issues. The Reporter also has a special interest in the judicial process and justice system in the country and so mostly follows ‘big court cases’ on the front page.

Bruh said that the publisher doesn’t interfere in the content, not even in the editorial. He went on to say that the views reflected the stance of the newsroom, the editorial board and journalists, not the owner’s.

In response to whether he believed the Oromo Protests were covered well by the newspaper, Bruh says that they have in deed covered it sufficiently – ‘to the best of their abilities’. “We don’t want to put our reporters in harm’s way, since the situation is dangerous. But as far as our resources have allowed, we have covered on grassroots level in Arsi but weren’t able to give wide coverage on different areas in Oromia such as Wollega and Borena,” he added. Beyond the danger and lack of resources, The Reporter ‘didn’t want to over sensationalize’ the issue either. He said that the events as they unraveled guided the news – evolving from an ‘incident’ to ‘protests’ to high causality ‘turmoil’.

Hallelujah Lulie, researcher and former journalist, says otherwise. “It would be an understatement to say that media owners ‘intervene’ in the process of making news. They frame it,” he says (Personal Interview, June 9, 2016). He said that the private press is guided less by ‘editorial policy’ and more by the working conditions they are found under. Having previously worked at The Reporter, Hallelujah concludes,

“Even if there was an editorial policy, the journalists weren’t aware of it. They operate by knowing the general feel of the media house – the political inclination of the owner, business connections and political environment at the time.”

According to him, the ownership circumstances and environment dictates the self-censorship, framing and selection processes involved in the making of news.

4.5 Way Forward

“News framing has a lot to do with ownership. Owners have an agenda. Especially when you operate in countries such as Ethiopia where there is only fledging, if any, democracy, there is an additional risk in the industry. If not for an agenda, who would take this up just for the fun of it?” Behailu Shiferaw said (Personal interview, March 9, 2016).

According to Behailu, although public service could be the goal, the way to attain it can, and does, differ in the ownership types. He put it as, “Let’s say all have the best interest of the country at heart, and they are pro-democracy and pro-development. How do they want to push for that? By patting the government on the back for the good deed it’s done, or by calling it out where its efforts have failed?”

Differing of news framing doesn’t necessarily mean a diversion from public service. This is because ‘objectivity’ is impossible; media doesn’t mirror reality. According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996: 37), media content may be based on what happens in the physical world, but it singles out and highlights certain elements over others; and the media’s own structural logic is imposed on those elements. They say that ‘reality is necessarily manipulated when events and people are relocated into news or prime-time stories’.

So the question is not whether the news is objective or not. Rather, as Hallelujah put it, it remains on the question of the ‘degree of public service rendered’ or how well the public interest is kept. In this regards, he said that private media, with all its flaws, gave a ‘higher degree’ of public service and keeping the public interest because it allows and gives room for pluralism of ideas. But Andrey Valdov, Executive Editor for BBC Media Action – Ethiopia, says that, at least in theory, public ownership is the one that could serve the public interest better (Email interview, June 13, 2016). He adds, “But only when it is combined with a law that guarantees the media’s independence from outside interference, and that the rule of law is strictly applied.” This means that, when a well-functioning democracy that ensures the independence of media, then public owned media is believed to serve the public interest better. Daniel seconds this because even if the government interferes, it is alright since the ‘state’s interest is considered to be the public interest.’ In other words, fulfillment of media owner’s interest doesn’t necessarily mean that public interest is not kept...so long that the owner’s interest aligns with that of the public’s. This would be true in both ownership types.

So if the element of public service doesn't necessarily lie in the 'objective' framing of news, what does it rely on? It relies on how much the owner represents and understands the public's opinion – whether it is an individual or the government. Several factors contribute to the involvement of public in the media and policy agenda process.

According to Daniel, education is the foundation of it all. He said that in several ways, Ethiopia has skipped over a critical stage in education and is growing in various spheres. He says that this development is being carried by a society that 'has not yet developed through reading, knowledge and intellect'. "This will create so much mess," he added, stressing the need to work on building quality education starting from lower levels in order to realize a freely functioning media and democratic system.

"We are still at an infant level of democracy in Ethiopia. Civil societies and democratic institutions are yet to fully play their roles," Dejene said, speaking of what is needed to make sure that public interest is at the heart of media activities. He said that the cases reported in newspapers should be taken up by democratic institutions such as Anti-Corruption Office, Police force and Ombudsman. According to Dejene, these organizations must work in partnership with the media in following up with investigations. Dejene recalled times at which Addis Zemen (the Amharic daily published by the Ethiopian Press Agency) had exposed a very corrupt official in an investigative piece. But since the media is not an executive branch, no measures were taken, and the same corrupt official was in fact promoted to a higher position. This takes away the real power of media to effect any type of change in the nation. Bruh doesn't necessarily agree with this as he believes that media's power is indeed affecting change and that there have been several instances where the work they do at The Reporter have yielded much fruit in bringing change.

Hallelujah, mentioning that the media doesn't operate in a vacuum, holds the current political process and environment responsible for the inability of the media to serve the public to the best of its abilities. He notes that the 'creation of a critical mass' is necessary in having the public keep the media accountable. In order to do that, he also says that civil societies, strong independent journalists associations, press councils and education institutions will have to play their parts. He stressed, that above all, it is the 'political will' from the government that is needed in going forward.

He said:

“As the fourth estate, media independence is a reflection of the political system, and how broad or narrow the public sphere is.”

Hallelujah believes that there is strong public opinion in the country, and it is ‘organized’. But that just as the case of the Oromo Protests, the government is not allowing for it to fully form or spread. He believes that the government is mainly responsible for the poor culture of democracy in the country, and that “publicly owned media houses have lost their reputations because they are known to deliberately ignore public interest.”

Andrey added, “Public opinion is not enough to keep media accountable. Good regulation is what can ensure that newspapers, radio and TV stations as well as online media abide by a code of conduct that serves the public interest without censoring journalists.” He added that a working democracy and freedom of speech would foster independent voices to be heard, impact public debate and decisions that are taken by government institutions. Yet, regulation doesn’t always have to be done by the government, or by laws adopted by parliament. Media can also self-regulate themselves.

He also said that ‘what has worked’ for the BBC is the funding system where everyone who has a TV set in the house pays a certain amount every year. Since the public directly funds the BBC, it is accountable and answerable to the public.

Table 1 (Placement)

Date	Newspaper	Front Page	Other Pages	Non-news columns	Sub-headlines
April 26, 2014	The Reporter	-	Page 6, 'In-depth'	-	3
May 03, 2014	Ethiopian Herald	-	-	Editorial column	-
May 03, 2014	The Reporter	Front Page	-	-	-
May 04, 2014	Ethiopian Herald	-	-	'Viewpoints'	-
June 05, 2014	Ethiopian Herald	Front Page	-	-	-
June 07, 2014	The Reporter	-	Page 6, 'In-depth'	-	2
June 12, 2014	Ethiopian Herald	-	-	'Viewpoints'	-
Dec 19, 2015	The Reporter	-	Page 3	-	2
Dec 26, 2015	The Reporter	Front Page	-	-	-
“	The Reporter	Front Page	-	-	-
Jan 22, 2016	Ethiopian Herald	-	-	'Viewpoints'	-
Jan 23, 2016	The Reporter	Front Page	-	-	-
Feb 20, 2016	The Reporter	Front Page	-	-	-
Feb 26, 2016	Ethiopian Herald	Front Page	-	-	-
Feb 27, 2016	Ethiopian Herald	-	-	'Viewpoints'	-
“	The Reporter	-	Page 4	-	-
“	The Reporter	-	Page 10	-	-
March 5, 2016	The Reporter	Front Page	-	-	-
March 11, 2016	Ethiopian Herald	Front Page	-	-	-
“	“	-	-	'Viewpoints'	-
March 12, 2016	The Reporter	Front Page	-	-	4
“	“	-	Page 3	-	-
March 19, 2016	“	-	Page 4	-	-
March 22, 2016	Ethiopian Herald	Front Page	-	-	-
April 02, 2016	The Reporter	-	Page 3	-	-

Table 2 (Description/Content)

Date	Newspaper	Descriptive Words Used	Word Usage	Side Taken	Predominant Voice
April 26, 2014	The Reporter	-	Less Subjective	None	-
May 03, 2014	Ethiopian Herald	‘Terrorist groups’ ‘Violence and destruction’	Subjective	Blamed ‘few individuals with ill-fated ambitions’	Government
May 03, 2014	The Reporter	‘Demonstrations’ ‘Incidents’ ‘Protests’	Less Subjective	None	-
May 04, 2014	Ethiopian Herald	‘Unrest’ ‘Unhuman act’ ‘Immoral deadly act’ ‘Destruction’ ‘violence’ ‘Barricade on fast economic growth’	Subjective	Blamed ‘immoral individuals’ with ‘myopic attitudes’ who are ‘anti-peace elements’	Government
June 05, 2014	Ethiopian Herald	‘Violence’	Less Subjective	None	Government
June 07, 2014	The Reporter	‘Turmoil’ ‘Upheaval’	Subjective	None	Government
June 12, 2014	Ethiopian Herald	‘Violence’	Subjective	Blamed ‘anti-peace elements’	Government
Dec 19, 2015	The Reporter	‘protests’ ‘violent protests’ ‘deadliest protests’	Less subjective	None	Public
Dec 26, 2015	The Reporter	‘deadliest	Less	None	Public

		protests’	Subjective		
“	The Reporter	‘Oromo protests’	Less subjective	None	-
Jan 22, 2016	Ethiopian Herald	‘protests’ ‘problems’	Less subjective	None	Government
Jan 23, 2016	The Reporter	‘unrest’ ‘Oromo Protests’	Less subjective	None	EU
Feb 20, 2016	The Reporter	‘Protests’ ‘Clash’ ‘violent clashes	Less subjective	None	-
Feb 26, 2016	Ethiopian Herald	-	Less subjective	Blamed ‘opportunistic political parties’ and the Eritrean Government	Government
Feb 27, 2016	Ethiopian Herald	‘Protests’	Less subjective	-	Government
“	The Reporter	‘Protests’ ‘clash’ ‘violent clashes’	Less subjective	None	Opposition parties
“	The Reporter	‘Clashes’ ‘turmoil’ ‘unlawful and violent moves’	Less subjective	None	-
March 5, 2016	The Reporter	‘protests’ ‘mass anti-government demonstrations’	Less subjective	None	-
March 11, 2016	Ethiopian Herald	‘protests’ public demands’	Subjective	blamed ‘External and Internal destructive forces’ and lack of good governance	-

“	“	‘violence’ ‘attempts of destructive forces’ ‘instigating violence and chaos’	Subjective	‘destructive force’ ‘enemy quarters’	Government
March 12, 2016	The Reporter	‘political unrest’ ‘violence’	Less subjective	-	-
“	“	‘public riot’	Less subjective	-	-
March 19, 2016	“	‘unrest’ ‘demonstrators’	Less subjective	-	Public
March 22, 2016	Ethiopian Herald	‘protest’	Less subjective	-	Government
April 02, 2016	The Reporter	‘unrest’	Less subjective	-	Opposition Party

Chapter 5

5.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.2 Conclusions

The two newspapers, which have the biggest circulations in the nation, The Reporter and The Ethiopian Herald, gave a differing way of presenting the Oromo Protests. Their framing, as well as the emphasis they gave the issue varied in several ways.

In comparison with one another, The Reporter's coverage gave the issue more recognition as news, and presented it in a less subjective manner. Throughout the two years, it was able to reflect pluralism of ideas, as well as projected varying voices – mainly that of the opposition's.

The Ethiopian Herald rather handled it in a poorer way, where the events associated with the Oromo Protests barely made it into the news. If a government official wasn't addressing the issue, or a statement wasn't being made, it was treated in the editorial section where predominant voice was given to the government. It was highly biased and only reflected the opinions of the state.

In comparison with the international media, both have failed in fully delivering primary information from victims and residents in the area. The managing editor of The Reporter has admitted that they weren't able to give it the wide coverage it deserved due to lack of resources, and also the fact that the issue was of a dangerous nature for reporters to be in the middle of. On the other hand, the public owned government media Ethiopian Herald has failed to even acknowledge the colossal nature of the Oromo Protests, and its relevance to their readers.

In conclusion, the type of ownership does very well affect the framing of news. It manifests through the working environment, managers or editorial policy. This is because, as long as there is media, and its owner, there is an agenda. This agenda is reflected through the framing of news.

Although this is true, it doesn't necessarily mean that because news is framed in a certain way, it doesn't serve the public. Yet, from the findings, the researcher sees that there is much room to improve, on both ownership types. The degree of public service rendered could be higher, and this is done mainly through the cooperation of the public and other civil and democratic organizations.

5.3 Recommendations

In order to ensure that the media is serving the public interest to the best of its abilities, as opposed to only the owner's, various things can/must be done. This ranges from responsibilities of government offices and legislature, to civil societies, associations and the public itself – to grow public opinion able to set and shape the agenda.

Firstly, media laws must enforce that media managers have the necessary experience in the media industry, or be certified professionals. If not, political appointees or mere business people can divert the function of media and allow the manipulation of content for political or financial gains.

Editorial policy shouldn't redefine news. No matter the type of owner, regardless the target audience, international standards of news must apply. Unless this is implemented, each and every media house will have its own definition of news, report it in any way they would like and over time, a universally acknowledged definition of news will fade away. News becomes just another column where opinions are reflected in a subtler way. Truth must not be altered depending on who hears it.

Both ownership types must strive towards independence. This is reflected in the ideology they forward. Private media, just because it is privately owned, must not become the 'sworn enemy' of the state and entertain only an opposing ideology, neither should government media only forward the government's. Pluralism of ideologies found in media measures its independence, as well as helps it grow its contribution to the enrichment of the public sphere.

Legislature must also hold media owners responsible for the integrity of their content. As long as they open newspapers, they are signing up to present a publication with news as the primary content. Making sure this is held up in uprightness is mainly an internal responsibility that lies on every worker in the house, starting from the owner to making sure his/her personal opinions stay out of the news, the editors in making sure the output is as objective, fair and balanced as possible and the individual reporters to refrain from self-censorship and aiming to report events as they happen. Yet this moral obligation of each media worker must also be backed by an accountability system.

5.3.1 Public Opinion and Media

So if the fact that owner's interest doesn't mean that public service isn't delivered, the question remains on what must be done to make the 'state's interest, the public's interest' or to align the owner's interest, with that of the public's. This lies mainly on the existence of strong public opinion. Strong public opinion comes about when the already existing fragmented opinions come together in an organized manner. Civil societies, associations and press councils must play their roles actively to lead the way in making this happen. By engaging with the public at grassroots level, they can identify and grow public opinion and stir public debate. It is through this that the public can fulfill its obligation to participate in the democratization process as well.

At the same time, a working democracy is necessary to allow these opinions to flourish. Samora Machel, a well-known African leader said (1980), "The state must be the first to be organized and totally committed to serving the interests of the people." It is when the different opinions, voices, views and ideologies are given room by the state that 'rule of the people' becomes possible.

Strong public opinion is a prerequisite for democracy, but so is democracy a prerequisite for the flourishing of public opinion. Neither can come first. They need to grow hand in hand. The public's active voice will cultivate democratization, while the insurance of the basic democratic principles such as the freedom of expression will cultivate a dynamic and strong public opinion that is able to shape its social, economic and political spheres.

Yet, ensuring that there is a freely-operating media will not guarantee public service. It can be rather unleashing another uncontrollable giant. Hence, media's accountability is vital in ensuring its dedication to public interest.

Media needs to be accountable directly to the public. Media's main function is to be the watchdog. If so, it shouldn't be directly regulated and administered by the same entity it is supposed to speculate. It will not be able to do its job. Rather it should be independently administered, by an institution that is a direct representation of the public. A press council that is recognized by the government as an authority, and that constitutes all various depictions of the public life is a necessity. There should be a media fund administered by press council as well.

The researcher commends the efforts that are underway in setting up Ethiopia's first press council, and recommends that all media houses including the government media to be members.

If media is the fourth estate that keeps the other three accountable, the public is the other entity responsible to keep the media accountable.

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List of Interviewees

Behailu Shiferaw: former journalist, current communications consultant, Water Aid (Personal interview, March 9, 2016)

Hallelujah Lulie: former journalist, researcher (Personal Interview, June 9, 2016)

Bruh Yihunbelay: Managing Editor, The Reporter (Personal Interview, June 13, 2016)

Dejene Sojeto: Editor-in-Chief, Ethiopian Herald, (Personal Interview, June 9, 2016)

Daniel Bekele: Editor, Addis Zemen (Personal Interview, June 13, 2016)

Andrey Vladov: Executive Editor for BBC Media Action – Ethiopia, worked as reporter, presenter, producer and correspondent for BBC World Service Radio (since 1992), Deputy Head of BBC World Service’s Bulgarian Section. (Email interview, June 13, 2016)

Annex 1

in-depth

Digging up old wounds: new city master-plan ignites old controversy



Aerial view of Addis Ababa

By Solomon Gebre and Asef Seyoum

Elevated at 2600 meters above sea level overlooking most of the country, Addis Ababa remains at center of Ethiopia's political and economic life for the past 26 years. Historically, handicapped strategic defense advantages, Addis's prominent position, mainly for its strategic defense advantages, Addis's prominence grew, even in the continent, over time. With this comes constant change and development which seems to have made the city of international city index like the A.T. Kearney's Global Cities Index (GCI) 2011. The Emerging City Outlook Report published early last year placed Addis Ababa in third place next to Jakarta and Manila in prospect to become the next big international city. The index measured the progress made by cities between 2008 and 2013 to indicate their prospect of catching up with the major cities in the world within the next decade or so.

As important as the prospect it is showing, Addis is also a city of stark contrast when one digs deeper. Until very recently it was a city where modern vehicles and transportation mechanisms working side by side with pack animals. It was a city where coordination among major infrastructure facilities and utilities was very hard to come by where installation of one usually disrupted another well-functioning utility. It was also a city where the standards of services and level of urbanization greatly varies as one move to the peripheries and the outskirts of the city. Yet, it is also a city where the presence of international organizations and

continental structures is highly visible. Nonetheless, the level of service-delivery and growth of infrastructure is still nowhere near what is required of a city with Addis's stature. As a reflection of this urbanization pressure, the city suffered from high turn over of mayors and high ranking officials over the years. For instance, since its inception as the political epicenter of the nation, tenure of mayors in Addis was just more than eight years while the average years of service for a mayor was just two years. But development has always been at the center of the city administration over the years, and working on its fourth city master-plan, which is expected to serve for the next 25 years, it has been one area of focus since the past two years. Unlike the cities which came before it, the new city master-plan have taken solid two years to prepare before the administration decided to take it for a run, inviting stakeholders and experts to deliberate on the plan and some of the new ideas it took on board. Currently, seat of both the city and regional government of the Oromia Regional State, Addis Ababa's executive board which over saw the master-plan revision work over the course of the past two years was a joint panel of both governments.

Just when stakeholders' consultation on the master-plan began, however, things started to take another dimension, perhaps far more unanticipated one, while making this master-plan public, triggered an on-going controversy surrounding the special relationship

between the city and its enclosing Oromia Regional State (ORS). Blast from the past To grasp the controversy one has to understand the unique connection that exists between Addis Ababa and the ORS. Geographically, the capital city is located fully within the territorial boundary of the ORS which is one of the nine parties to the Ethiopian federation. Addis Ababa although not a fully autonomous federal entity, it is given constitutional guarantee to self-administer having its own city charter in 1991 and revised in 2005, and a city council elected by the residents of the city. But, it is not recognized as one of the federal entities since it is a territorial division. Ethiopia's live together.

As a political and business capital of the country, this semi-autonomous, self-administering unit is a federal city which is directly accountable to the federal government. All this was enshrined in the 1994 Ethiopian constitution, where the ORS was also given a 'special interest' status on Addis Ababa on some scholars, its unique historical ties point by itself is far more controversial. While a considerable number of scholars actually championed a view that says Addis Ababa (Finfinne) in Oromia, who are displaced to make way for the new settlement Getachew Berhail, a researcher, in his article entitled "Nation without a city: Blind men without a cane" advocates this same argument at time going as far as accusing successive governments that cause other kinds of or obstrucating evicting of Oromos from their original homeland of stretch ORS's special interest to the others who support this narrative. It is that they argue that the ORS is given a 'special interest' guaranteed by the constitution what is in fact being is the other way around. Citizens' costly externalities on the surrounding towns of the ORS, regarding land disposal and territorial expansion of the city, they argue that it is the special zone which is taking advantage based on the ORS. Assistant professor of Addis Ababa University School of Law, Abra Debea, assistant professor of Addis Ababa University School of Law, on his part says that notion of special interest is far more than providing a seat for the regional government. In addition to being an official seat of the Oromia Regional Government, having special interest entails an environment in which Oromo culture, language and identity can be nurtured.

According to the vast body of literature on the subject, the full ramifications and meaning of the provision 'special interest' on the Ethiopian constitution is not yet implemented or even well studied, two decades later. But over the course of the twenty years, a lot has been said and much has been written about the subject matter, with a special focus on the challenges if when it enters into force. As one can imagine, the basic question here is nothing but the mounting

It is not necessarily the case that Addis Ababa should be a reflection of the ORS, it should indeed be a reflection of Oromia, Addis Ababa and the whole country all together since it is federal city of Ethiopia.

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of the 'special interest' itself means and what the framers of the Ethiopian constitution had in mind when writing this unique article of the constitution is far more controversial. Surprisingly, even members of the constitutional commission had to debate fiercely over the subject matter before it was ratified by the constituent assembly article itself. In particular, Transcript of the minutes of the debate of the constituent assembly passed just how debatable the matter was even some twenty years back.

Long over due But the constitutional provision, the technical difficulty in understanding what 'special interest' actually entail on the ground is another matter which led many people not to see each other eye to eye. Obviously, what framers of the constitution has in mind is quite important to know what it actually means when applied on the ground. Here only few scholars dare to give interpretations of the notion of 'special interest'. The majority prefer elaborating laws to make it more clear; Abera is not one them. He in fact elucidates what 'special interest' can mean in practical terms, "whenever the city plan to do something significant, it should first consult and if possible gain the consent of the Oromia Regional State in order to say the constitutional article only is fully exercised." According to his view, the city should view the ORS as a partner who necessarily have to be consulted on issues pertinent to the city and one whose consent really matters for the city.

In a much different tune, Asefa Fessaha, prominent scholar on Ethiopian federalism, says that it is quite wrong to stretch ORS's special interest to mean exclusive right over Addis Ababa. It is not necessarily the case that Addis Ababa should be a reflection of the ORS, it should indeed be a reflection of Oromia, Addis Ababa and the whole country all together since it is federal city of Ethiopia he argues. "Rather, as far as the status of a federal city is concerned, Addis Ababa is expected to abide by the principle of neutrality," Asefa asserts.

The constitution had something say about 'special interest' though. It states that 'respecting special interest' of the ORS could mean regarding resource issue, service delivery administrative matters and other issues. Nevertheless, the catalog of possible areas of respect of special interest is not exhaustive, not by a long shot if the majority of the legal and constitutional scholars are to be believed. They say that the promised,

follow up proclamation to elucidate article 40 is not forthcoming twenty years after the promise is made. Albeit the direction given by the constitution, there explaining more explanatory proclamation has been suggested according to the same scholars, and act, "no wonder the confusion and controversy is revisited back after two decades". Wondwossen Walata, from Gender University School of Law, on his part does not accept the notion that his part does not accept the notion that source of the controversy is the absence of constitutionally guaranteed laws which of non-existence at the moment. He says, one could not argue that such laws are totally non-existent. He argues, since both Addis Ababa city charter and the regulation issued by ORS to administer the special zones make mention of the issue of 'special interest'.

The deal With the controversy still raging, if one considers the bulk of recommendations by the same scholars, it all boils down to one and only one issue. The issue of cooperation, coordination and joint efforts. Joint action among the ORS, Addis Ababa Administration and federal government. According to Asefa joint commission between the three entities is one solution that should strongly be considered. It is a widely exercised system among other federal government, he explains, and is the best way out. He believes that all technical problems arising from such intergovernmental relationship will be solved.

Interesting enough is the immediate factor which triggered some of the oldest controversies in the Ethiopian federal system. It is the launching of the new joint master-plan between Addis Ababa and the ORS. According to reports, the master-plan faced some resistance from stakeholders and officials in the past few weeks. Although just at discussion stages, what it entails for the Oromia special zone administrative units, namely Sebata, Sevelata, Sulata, Buryaya, Gelan, Menagesha Legedadi, Legedadi, Habata, Dukem and so on is what was a bone of contention. They fear that the joint master-plan would have the potential to harm towns in the special zone by way of unchecked territorial expansion and eviction of the local farmers. Although the preamble to the master plan asserts that the whole intent is correct the wrong that has happened in past, which is the city posing on negative externalities but giving nothing in return, is an issue these groups do not accept. They, in fact, argue that it is a pretext to insure unchecked supply of agricultural land for investment. Mathews Asefaw, head of the integrated master-plan project office, do not accept

Annex 2

11 killed, 70 injured in deadly clashes

By a Staff Reporter

Eleven people were killed and 70 injured this week, a result of violent clashes in Ambo, Haromaya and Medda Welabu Universities, the Government Communications Affairs Office (GCAO) announced in a statement late Thursday. The government blamed "anti-peace" forces for the incident.

According to a statement sent to *The Reporter*, mass demonstrations caused "loss of lives and property" in the Ambo and Tokekutay towns in the Oromia Regional State.

The government said that students were deliberately misled by rumors, which was the catalyst for the mayhem. The demonstrations erupted last week against plans by the Ethiopian government to develop a common masterplan for Addis Ababa and neighboring towns of the Oromia Regional State. However, the plan was perceived by students to mean that the towns would be incorporated into Addis Ababa, the statement read.

According to the statement, an attempt to loot the Ambo branch of the Construction and Business Bank resulted in the death of seven residents

of the Ambo and Tokekutay towns.

Apart from the two towns, three students were killed at Medda Welabu University and a hand grenade killed one student and injured 70 in Haromaya University, 19 km north of Harrar town. The incident happened while students were watching a football match on television.

Independent observers and those who claim to be eyewitnesses say that the death toll and injuries might be higher than what has been officially admitted.

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"The forces behind the chaos...had a violent history in the past," the government statement read, claiming the protests had been encouraged by "outside forces who control media inside and outside the country" for "their evil purpose," without giving further details.

Pictures released on social media including Facebook and Twitter, reveal that there were protests and high security presence in Dire Dawa University. Similarly, students of Addis Ababa University also protested on Thursday. That same day *The Reporter* observed that a considerable amount of Federal Police officers and members of the Addis Ababa Police Force were seen at the gates of the university.

ADDIS DREAMING BIG

By Asrat Seyoum

As the political and business capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa has been the undisputed focal point for the last 127 years. Unusually its popularity has never been so high as it has been for the past couple of months. It is for the most unlikely reason too. Apparently, it is about a proposed urban masterplan for the capital and the surrounding Oromia Special Zone incorporating five townships found encircling Addis Ababa: Subulala, Burayu-Menagesha, Sebeta, Gelan-Dukem, Legotafu/Legedadi. The turmoil, which was not that alarming at the beginning, did not take long to take a turn for the worst. According to official figures, 11 individuals lost their lives in an upheaval that erupted after the announcement of an integrated masterplan for Addis Ababa and the surrounding Oromia towns. At the core of this upheaval is a claim that the proposed joint masterplan embodies the desire by the capital city to expand horizontally threatening the territorial integrity of the surrounding towns of the Oromia Special Zone. Well it is just a claim since the administration of both the city and the neighboring Oromia towns has other ideas as to what the masterplan seeks to do and what the intention and rationale for preparing the plan are. And it has nothing to with the horizontal expansion.



at this time was never the intentions of both the administration, according to Mathewos Aslaw, General Manager of Addis Ababa and surrounding Oromia Special Zone Integrated Development Plan Project Office. This week Mathewos was out meeting people from the media; the project office is also as old, and the controversy which is being propagated

all about setting the record straight. In a discussion that took half-a-day Mathewos and his team dwell on the master plan - what it is, how it was conceived and how it will be implemented. Righting the wrongs The whole idea for an integrated planning come from a study that was

Arrel view of Addis Ababa and the surrounding area commissioned by the Addis Ababa City Administration to assess the soon to be defunct Addis Ababa City Masterplan. The assessment, which involved Grand Lyon-Lyon Town Planning Agency and the Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and

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City Development, revealed a serious disconnection between the city and its neighboring towns. "At times, what the city does and what the surrounding towns are up to were found completely contradictory to one another," according to Mathewos. For instance, land allocated for industrial development, residence or farming purposes by the two independent administrations could come in to a direct conflict, he explains. "An industrial zone located on the side of Addis Ababa could seriously affect a residential area or farming land on the side of one of the towns of the special zone. This was a serious wrong that has to be corrected," Mathewos elaborated further. Apart from that, the compatibility issue between the infrastructures of the city and the near urban sprawl defined the urbanization situation in the capital, according to the urban planners. What appeared to be more alarming was a trend of unchecked horizontal expansion. And this called for the masterplan to be rethought in a way that it becomes more sustainable and forward looking, Mathewos told journalists.

All in all, the assessment indicated some worrying trends in the way urbanization was progressing in Addis Ababa. Unregulated and unmanaged urban sprawl defined the urbanization situation in the capital, according to the urban planners. What appeared to be more alarming was a trend of unchecked horizontal expansion. And this called for the masterplan to be rethought in a way that it becomes more sustainable and forward looking, Mathewos told journalists.

Nevertheless, what the planners never ceased to underscore is the fact that integrating the plan of two independent entities does not in anyway imply a merger, annexation or territorial expansion by one of the entities. Still both Addis Ababa and the surrounding towns own and implement their own independent masterplans. The only change was now both parties plan together to avoid contradicting one another's effort. Both the project office and the supervisory board comprise professionals and political leaders from both the Addis Ababa City Administration and the Government of the Oromia Regional State. According to Mathewos, they jointly share responsibilities and is an assurance for all parties involved. This means that it will be a win-win situation, he says.

Ambition More than anything else, what the explanation offered by the urban planners showed was a deep ambition and aspiration the city has. According to Mathewos, the major rationale for revisiting and rethinking the masterplan

was nothing but the aspirations the city has, not only to be the urban center in Ethiopia but also in the continent. By the year 2040, half of the Ethiopian population, 47 million, will be living in towns and cities rising from 18 percent (15 million) at current times. Mathewos details and in this dynamics the capital is expected to lead the whole urbanization. For that, he says, the city revolution. The can't ignore its surroundings. "The whole area, the city and surrounding towns are what we expect to be part of the mega city system in the future," he told journalists.

Across the country too there is supposed to be some nine urban systems and integrated urban regions in which Addis Ababa is expected to play a leading role. Of course, the Central urban system will center around Addis Ababa and its surrounding towns, while the Northern center is to be around Mekele, capital of the Tigray Regional State, the Southern will be Hawassa, the Eastern Dire Dawa, a federal city in its own right and the Western around Nekemte. Furthermore, the North-Eastern, North-Western, South-Eastern and South-Western will also have their own urban systems that will be built around towns like Bahir Dar, capital of the Amhara Regional State and Woldia/Kombolcha, Gode and Jimma respectively. In fact, the aspiration of the city planners seems to go far more than that. By 2025, Addis Ababa is preparing to be one of the top ten tourist destinations in the African continent with plans to be in the top five by 2040. For this, Mathewos explains, the city should have world class conference halls, hotels, universities, residences and things like shopping malls. For this to be realized, however, integration with the surrounding towns is inevitable, he added. In the same time frame, Addis is also preparing to host some of the big international events like the world cup and the Olympics; by 2025 Africa Nation's Cup and All Africa Games and by 2040 the city is eyeing the World Cup and the Olympic Games.

Yet again, with an estimated population of close to three million, Addis Ababa is the only closest thing to being an urban center in Ethiopia. According to various data, the next best thing to an urban center in Ethiopia, for instance, has a population not exceeding 300,000. And the masterplan which is still in its drafting stages seems to be the only document that is looking to change this reality. Nevertheless, the politics around it, whether it is well founded or not, does not appear to be helping to say the least.

Protests in Oromia towns continue for third week

By Dawit Toleza and Neamin Ashenafi

Protests in several towns of Oromia Regional State that were sparked by the Addis Ababa and Oromia Special Zone Integrated Masterplan have continued for a third successive week with the death toll and damage to property mounting. On Tuesday residents in the town of Dodola in western Arsi remained gripped in a state of fear. Violent protest from the previous week have still left its scar on infrastructures of the town and the livelihood of the residents. Large stones which were used to block the main entry point to the town are seen on road sides, glass windows of several banks are shattered and regional administration offices including office of the ruling

OPDO (Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization) ransacked. The protest rocked the town on December 10. It was a Thursday, one of the two weekly market day for residents, which meant large crowds head to the open market at the center of the town which also shares the same asphalt road with Dodola Secondary School. Protests began from the secondary school and later spread to the entire town. Residents say four people died and many injured as a result of a crackdown by government security forces. But local authorities deny the death of people. "There is no losses of lives but those injured have been receiving medical attention," Ally Gugeto, a local official, told The Reporter. He blamed "anti-

peace" forces exploiting the student protest to escalate the situation. Ever since the protest the town has been gripped with fear as small businesses close their doors early. "I am now unable to go to the market and do my business as I used to," a trader who buys wheat from farmers in the locality and supplies to major cities told The Reporter opting to remain anonymous. The town administration has ordered the closure of schools after reports that protesters are planning to come back on Monday, a market day which draws the biggest number of residents. Later the week, the situation became more stable with the public holding discussions with senior government officials. But protests were ongoing in neighboring towns like Asassa with students taking

the lead. Beyond the integrated urban development plan, protesters cite grievances with the local administration with regards to "good governance problems" including poor public service and discontent in delivery of justice. **Death toll** Towns in western Wollega, western and southwestern Shewa including Wolliso, Talle, Ameyya, Chelila, Ginde, Beret, Chitu, Gulisso, Inango and Gedo witnessed the deadliest protests. Opposition parties put the number of people killed in these clashes to more than 30 with the government refusing to be drawn into the number of human

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casualties due to crackdown on protests. At a press conference on Wednesday Getachew Reda, head of the Government Communications Affairs Office, said the protests have resulted in "a high number" of human casualties and property damage. But maintained that the government would not engage in "back and forth regarding the number of victims". "That would be insensitive. Because [the protests] were led by people who calculate their gains [from the unrest], it has resulted in an unnecessary loss of life and property," he told local media. However, the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Front (Medrek) on Tuesday said that more than 30 people

have lost their lives in various towns and cities of the Oromia region. Beyene Petros (Prof.), president of the party, Merera Gudina, deputy president and head of external affairs and Tilahun Endeshaw, head of public relations brandished a list which they said contained the names of 30 people killed by government forces. "The excessive force used by the government against peaceful protesters is horrendous," Tilahun said. The government maintains that the protests, which according to the government, were initially "largely peaceful" have taken a different "character". Getachew branded some of the protesters as "armed gangs who

want to bring about lawlessness in the country". "Uncontrolled armed gangs are now openly talking about bringing about regime change," Getachew said adding that the government will put a stop to it. The communications head accused Ginbot 7 and Oromo Liberation Front, groups designated as terrorists by the government, and legally registered political organizations in the country - Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) of "exploiting the situation". Apart from damages to government property, there were also reports of attacks on private property including those owned by foreign investors such as Dangote Cement and Sol Agro PLC,

Opposition figure Bekele Gerba, OFC leaders arrested

Two Blue Party members also arrested

By Tamiru Tsige

Just four months after his release serving a four-year jail term, Deputy Chairman of Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), Bekele Gerba, was arrested again on Thursday following a two-day sweep by authorities. The arrest also included six other

members of the party including Dejene Taffa, the party's deputy secretary general as well as the party's youth league leaders including the deputy chairman Gurmessa Ayana, head of the public relations, Adissu Gala, head of party affairs, Dereje Merga, the auditor, Alemu Abdissa and a member identified as Tariku.

According to party officials, Desta Dinka, chairman of the youth leagues of OFC and Forum for Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia, an umbrella of four parties including OFC, was also arrested and they all remain at Federal Police Central Crime Investigation Sector (Maekelawi).

"They were all arrested without any

fault but for opposing the ruling party and the killing of Oromos," Bekele Nega, secretary general of OFC, told The Reporter.

The arrests come after weeks of protests in several towns in Oromia Regional State that resulted in the death of 86

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people, according to the opposition. The government has, so far, refrained from disclosing the number of people who were killed as a result of the unrest that were sparked by the Addis Ababa and Oromia Special Zones Integrated Masterplan.

"The government cannot solve a problem by killing or arresting people but through dialogue," Bekele said adding that the government has rejected their call for dialogue. The deputy secretary has alleged that some 500 members of the party have been arrested following the protests from various parts of Oromia region.

The government has remained tight-lipped with regards to the latest arrest of opposition leaders. But officials have accused legally registered opposition

parties of "stirring" the Oromo protests. At a press conference held last week, Getachew Reda, head of Government Communications Affairs Office, named OFC of collaborating with groups designated as terrorists by parliament.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn also vowed in parliament on Friday that his government will take measures against opposition parties who "are operating under the guise of peaceful opposition but advancing the agenda of terrorist groups and the destabilizing regime of Eritrea".

Bekele Gerba, a former lecturer at the Addis Abeba University (AAU), was arrested on terrorism charges in August 2011 and subsequently sentenced to eight years in prison. He was accused of being a member of the outlawed

Oromo Liberation Front and inciting a secessionist rebellion. He was released from jail after finishing his parole.

In a related development, Semayawi (Blue) Party also disclosed that two of its members and Getachew Shiferaw, editor-in-chief of Negere Ethiopia, the party's mouthpiece, have been arrested.

The two arrested members include Tewodros Asfaw and Daniel Tesfaye, who served a two and three month jail term, respectively following a clash with police during a protest in April called to denounce the beheading of Ethiopian migrants in Libya by the so called ISIL.

Yilekal Getinet, president of Blue Party, told The Reporter that the trio was arrested on Friday and maintained their innocence of any wrongdoing.

Gov't reluctant to reveal casualties in Oromia, Amhara

By Yonas Abiye

The government has once again refused to disclose the numbers of people killed, injured and arrested in connection with the recent protests in different parts of the Oromia Regional State as well as in North Gondar of the Amhara Regional State.

Protests in several towns of Oromia Regional State that were sparked by the Addis Ababa and Oromia Special Zone Integrated Masterplan have reportedly led to the killings of dozens of unarmed protesters. However, Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, who appeared before the House of Peoples Representatives, opted to skip the question that was raised by MPs regarding the number of human casualties and arrests made over the past three weeks.

The PM rather rushed to explain

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the causes of the protest and blamed "terrorist elements abroad and anti-peace elements backed by the Eritrean government".

He, however, said that his government believes in dialogue and in giving priority to the will of public - a will undertaking any development project.

"We believe the masterplan will improve the living conditions of farmers. However, if the people are not convinced, we will never displace our people and enforce any project forcefully. We rather prefer to extend the project until the people come to the understand it fully," Hailemariam told MPs.

Media outlets have reported that towns in western Wollega, western and southwestern Shewa. These include Wolliso, Tolle, Ameya, Chelia, Ginde Beret, Chitu, Gulisso, Inango and Gedo. These had witnessed the deadliest protests with opposition groups accusing the government of killing as many as 80 unarmed protesters.

On Friday, the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) told The Reporter that the number of protester killed are as

high as 86.

Similarly, the PM also declined to give details with regard to the human casualties in North Gondar Zone of the Amhara Regional State. He instead went on explaining that the question of self-determination, which was raised by the people of Kimant is legitimate.

A week ago, the head of the Government Communications Affairs Office with a ministerial portfolio, Getachew Reda, responded in a similar manner declining to give details on the number of casualties in both Oromia and Amhara.

However, reports are emerging that there has been mass arrests in relation to the latest protests.

In a related development, the PM told the House that individuals who are allegedly responsible for the bombing of the Grand Anwar Mosque have been arrested. However, he did not give any detail on the identities of the suspects and their motives. He also indicated that he could not give any detail as the investigation is under way and is yet to be completed.

EU strongly criticizes Ethiopian gov't over Oromo protests

By Neamin Ashenafi

The European Union (EU) Parliament, in its recent motion, condemned the loss of lives and destruction of property following recent unrests in the Oromia Regional State and called for dialogue to solve the issue.

The motion, apart from condemning the loss of lives and destruction of property, also includes concerns with regard to the issue of drought in Ethiopia and the incarceration of Andargachew Tsige.

The motion describes the recent Oromo protests as "the biggest crisis to hit Ethiopia since the 2005 election violence" adding that "security forces used excessive lethal force and killed at least 140 protesters and injured many more."

It also accuses authorities in Ethiopia of arbitrarily arresting "a number of peaceful protesters, journalists and opposition party leaders in the context of a brutal crackdown on the protests in the Oromia Region."

The motion also called for a credible, transparent and independent investigation into the killings of protesters and into other alleged human rights violations in connection with the protest and called

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on the government to fairly prosecute those responsible before competent jurisdictions.

It can be recalled that the relations between the EU and Ethiopia deteriorated after the unrest in Ethiopia that followed the May 2005 elections where the leader of the European Union Election Observation Mission, Ana Gomes, cited election related irregularities.

In addition to listing the problems, the motion also calls upon the EU – Ethiopia's single largest donor – to monitor programs and policies effectively to ensure that EU development assistance is not contributing to human rights violations in Ethiopia.

The EU also called upon the continental union to "effectively monitor programs and policies to ensure that EU development assistance is not contributing to human rights violations in Ethiopia, particularly programs linked to displacement of farmers and pastoralists, and develop strategies to minimize any negative impact of displacement within EU funded development projects".

Recently, minister of Foreign Affairs, Tedros Adhano (PhD), traveled to Brussels the seat of the Union and discussed a range of issues with senior officials of the Union including vice president and high representative, Federica Mogherini.

Concerning the recent motion, spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tewlede Mulugeta told The Reporter that what defines the relationship between the two parties is working and focusing in the areas of peace and development and enhancing the enduring relationship of the two, which has lasted for 40 years.

7 police officers, unknown number of armed protesters killed in Oromia

By Zekarias Sintayehu

Seven law enforcements officers and an unknown

number of armed protesters were killed in the series of clashes that happened on Monday in West Arsi zone of

the Oromia Regional State. The recent clashes were widely observed in Shalla, Siraro and Shashemene

woredas in West Arsi zone causing destruction of various properties. The Government Communications Affairs Office

(GCAO) minister, Getachew Reda told The Reporter that the

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armed protesters burned farms, forests and other government institutions as well as churches and mosques during the clash. He added that the causes of the clash is under investigation.

According to the locals, the cause of the clashes an alleged ban of an Oromifa song that has a political content. They told The Reporter that the clashes started after police officers questioned why the banned song was played at a wedding ceremony.

The violent clashes claimed the lives of seven police offices as well as an unknown number of protesters and caused the destruction of properties in the region. Getachew noted that 12 were arrested in relation with the recent violent clashes in West Arsi zone.

Although the government is still in the process of investigating the causes and damages of the

clashes, Getachew claimed that the clashes were not a continued part of the protest that shook Oromia Regional State a couple of months ago. "This is because the nature of the protest seems to have changed as the armed protesters burnt religious institutions like churches and mosques," he said.

Getachew added that the clashes are under control and the elders are calming down the public. But sources told The Reporter that there are protests are in some areas of the region. Sources said that there are roadblocks in different parts of Oromia.

According to US-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) and opposition parties, during the protest against the Addis Ababa and Oromia Special Zone Integrated Masterplan at least 140 people were killed. In addition, more that three thousands

people were jailed for taking part in mass anti-government demonstrations since November, according to opposition parties.

Apart from damages to government property, there were also reports of attacks on private property including those owned by foreign investors such as Dangote Cement. The government have not yet given an officially statement regarding the damages incurred because of the protest.

It is to be recalled that the protests against the integrated masterplan first began in April 2014 which left more than a dozen killed in Ambo town, 125km west of Addis Ababa. Protesters fear the plan would enable the capital city to expand into the surrounding Oromia regions at the expense of Oromo farmers, language and culture.

Annex 8 (1)

Parties call for swift dialogue with gov't

By Neamin Ashenafi

Two opposition political parties, which took part in last year's elections, requested the government to handle the recent unrest in different parts of the Oromia Regional State and other parts of the country through proper dialogue and employ all the necessary peaceful mechanisms. The parties also condemned the way the government handled the problem.

The two parties, Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) and Ye Ethiopia Ra'ey Party, (Ethiopian Visionary Party) a.k.a. EraPa, in their recent press statements asked the government to

handle the problem peacefully adding that it should avoid the use of excessive force on peaceful demonstrators.

EDP said that the party had issued two press statements regarding the unrest in Oromia and Amhara regional states, however, the situation has not pacified and the problem is intensifying by spreading to other peaceful areas.

"The measures that are taken by the government are mainly focused on sorting it out by using excessive force. That shows that the government is not following proper mechanisms to control the problem peacefully," a statement EDP sent to The Reporter read.

The party also added that the mechanisms that are followed by the government prove that the government wants to solve the problem by using force, rather than engaging in peaceful dialogue.

"Handling such problems forcefully is not the best way to solve the problem and the government should follow the proper way in handling the unrest, which is discussions with all stakeholders," the statement read.

By the same token, ERApa also called for a swift discussion between all the parties engaged in the recent unrest and denounced the way the government is handling the problem.

"Discussion is a source of trust, transparency and good faith and entertaining alternative ideas will lead to solving any problem; however, the measures taken by the government are way beyond such approaches and the approach by the government will lead the country to other unrests and destruction so the government should discuss with all stakeholders to prevent the death of citizens," ERApa said.

Apart from that, ERApa also asked for the cancellation of the Anti Terrorism proclamation and called on the government to discuss with all political groups, including those that are labeled as terrorist organizations by the House of Peoples' Representative.

Inter-Religious Council calls for peace



Religious leaders said that the recent unrests in Oromia, Amhara and Gambella regional states unveil the need to have dialogue.

By Henok Reta

Following the recent clashes between protesters and government forces in West Arsi, Oromia Regional State and other parts of Ethiopia, the Inter-

Religious Council called upon both sides to end hostilities and strive for peace.

Briefing journalists on Wednesday February 24, members of the Council denounced the current turmoil and the unlawful and violent moves taken

by protesters in Oromia, Amhara and Gambella regional states. They also called on the government to stop its forceful crackdown.

"As religious fathers we never want to hear about a single death and any form

of damage to infrastructure," Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abune Mathias, said.

Similarly, Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel of the Ethiopian Catholic Church stated that Ethiopia's long-

standing value in arbitrating disputes is fading away and many believe that a series of crises are the manifestations of this.

Sheik Mohamed Umar Amin, head of the Islamic Affairs Supreme Council of Ethiopia on his part said that violence should not be attached with religion adding that protesters must stop this pretext to advance their hidden agenda. "Citizens and the government must engage in peaceful dialogue to address their problems," he said.

The religious leaders called upon the public to fast and pray to curb any potential disaster coming to derail the country.

In another development, Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn – in a televised conference with state-owned media outlets – vowed that he would never tolerate any further crises. Nevertheless, several international organizations including the Human Rights Watch expressed their concern that the problem in Oromia should be solved in a direct engagement with the people rather than using force.

The Ethiopian Inter-Religious Council was established in 2010 with seven major religious institutes: the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, the Ethiopian Catholic Church, the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus and the Ethiopian Kalehiwot Church.

Top ODPO...

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customs authority, on Monday paid a visit to his new office located off Ras Mekonnen Street inside the recently inaugurated Oromo Cultural Center. The next day, Beker was busy presenting ERCA's six-month performance report to the Authority's employees.

Beker entered public service in 1991, as a wereda administrator in his home town, Dodola, West Arsi. For the next six years, Beker worked in various posts in Arsi and Bale. He then moved to the regional level, serving as a police commissioner from 2008 to 2009. After that, his rise to high-level positions began by becoming deputy head for Government Communications Affairs Office under the then head Bereket Simon. Later he was named Mayor of Adama.

Beker has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Management and a Master's degree in Leadership.

After assuming his new post, Beker is expected to face a formidable task in resolving the standoff in the region.

Bezu – the other new appointee – is also expected to have a tough responsibility. Prior to being assigned

to the Office of the Prime Minister in 2015, he served as head of OPDO's urban politics and organization division.

Meanwhile, members of the Central Committee of OPDO are currently meeting in Adama. In the closed session, which started on Wednesday, members are expected to confer on the reshuffling of party officials and the recent protests that rocked Oromia.

According to US-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) and opposition parties, the protests that erupted in November against the Addis Ababa and Oromia Special Zone Integrated Masterplan claimed the lives of at least 140 people. In addition, more than three thousands people were jailed for taking part in mass anti-government demonstrations, according to opposition parties.

It is to be recalled that the protests against the integrated masterplan first began in April 2014 which left more than a dozen killed in Ambo town, 125km west of Addis Ababa. Protesters fear the plan would enable the capital city to expand into the surrounding Oromia regions at the expense of Oromo farmers, language and culture.

Annex 9

Top ODPO officials relieved of duty

By Wudineh Zenebe

The Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) Central Committee last week has relieved two of its higher officials of their duties in connection with the ongoing large-scale protests that have

swept throughout different parts of the Oromia Regional State since November. They are Office head of OPDO, Daba Debele, and head of the region's administration and security bureau, Solomon Kuchu.

According to sources, after

evaluating the current state of affairs in the Oromia Regional State and the intensifying security situation, the Central Committee of the OPDO criticized both Daba and Solomon for not doing enough to tackle the existing political crisis and the violent turn it

had taken.

Eventually, the OPDO named Beker Shale, director general of the Ethiopian Revenues and Customs Authority (ERCA), as the replacement of Daba and Bezu Wakbeka, Public Mobilization advisor to

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, as the region's administration and security bureau head.

Beker, who had to leave the top job at the revenues and

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Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn addressing MPs on Thursday

By Yonas Abiye

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn told parliamentarians on Thursday that the recent political unrest and the associated violence that have erupted across parts of the Oromia Regional State and the Kimant Community of the North Gondar Zone, Amhara Regional State occurred due to the lack of rapid response from the government for the question raised by the people.

Hailemariam reiterated what he told the house in the same session a few months ago. But this time, the PM has made

swift changes as to who is responsible for the conflict. Hailemariam advised his party-mates not to look further than the party itself to understand the underlying cause of the conflict. He also argued that in spite of progress that that country has made under the ruling party in past 25 years, it is no falling out favor due to severe maladministration and lack of good governance running rampant on the ground.

Responding to questions from parliamentarians on Thursday on issues of good governance and rent-seeking, the PM said: "In our belief, good

governance is not just a mere propaganda or a lip service to the benefit of the people; it is rather a matter of survival. We run the risk of feeling the wrath of the people unless we bring changes to such grave concerns."

Nevertheless, the PM also defended claims that the measures taken are barely scratching the surface of the problem saying that the aim was to bring about a comprehensive change to the situation and that measures would go deeper and wider than ever before.

For this, the PM cited

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the recent measure that the Addis Ababa City Administration has taken where some 600 city officials were either fired, suspended or charged with corruption. Hailemariam went further and indicated that the federal government would also take its own measures and is conducting its own investigations to completely stump out maladministration.

"During the past 25 years and particularly in the past 12 years, our people both at the rural and urban areas have been on-board with the promising trend the country has been on. No one could dispute that. However, because of the problem that grew within us and because of our failure to address the growing public concerns from time to time, we have managed to be sources of public grievance," he told to parliamentarians.

"The people are raising questions of good governance and jobs, which are expected questions as far as a demanding society is emerging." Hailemariam continued to argue adding that the role of the anti-peace elements in the violence is still not something that one can discount. "These forces would always try and divert real questions and try to use it to their own political advantage," the PM told the MPs while appreciating what he said was the role of the peace-loving community in downplaying the agenda of these groups.

He added that lack of options for the employment for the youth and women in the region also has played its own role to the problem and the government shall work to address this issue with greater emphasis.

"The government along with the people has now controlled the situation in Oromia. But the absence of instability in other areas does not mean that there is no problem in those areas as well; the only difference is that in other parts people has not decided to express their grievance via violence but maladministration and lack of good governance is widespread in the nation. Hence we have to work to attain good governance at all levels in the government ladder," he remarked.

The Prime Minister said addressing woes of the public is a key issue to strengthen peace in the country and sustain the development. In that, he expressed regret over the loss of lives and property during the violence in some parts of Oromia.

In addition to the political instability, the performance of his government over the past six months was another focus for the PM on Thursday.

According to Hailemariam, construction, service and manufacturing sectors have witnessed growth during the past six months. Investment increased by three fold compared to the same period last fiscal year, he said. He also admitted the severe impact of the drought on the country's agricultural sector performance in the period covered by the report. The government has so far spent eight billion birr to mitigate the impact of the drought in various parts of the nation. The response from the international community is also reported to be very slow.

Eritrea

Another matter that the PM dwelt on is the condition of "no war and no peace" between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Responding a question raised by an MP "if there is any new policy direction regarding Eritrea," the Premier said that the country has no new policy towards its arch-foe and neighbor Eritrea. "Ethiopia won't cease working to restore the people-to-people relations between the two countries, Hailemariam said.

"However, the prevailing problem is that the

Eritrean government has never refrained from instigating instability in Ethiopia and across the region," he said.

The PM further stated that Ethiopia will respond to any attack from the Eritrean regime in accordance with international laws. Without giving further details, he indicated that Eritrea has released the Ethiopian nationals it had kidnapped recently as it clearly understood the consequence it would be forced to receive from the Ethiopian government.

Foreign trade

Some USD 1.3 billion has been generated from export trade in the first half of the fiscal year, the PM told parliamentarians. The performance was lower than the USD 1.4 billion that was secured same period last year. Hailemariam was also candid about the gloomy picture hanging over the Ethiopian export sector commenting: "The half year performance is so low that it is indicative of how difficult it will be to meet the targets set for whole year". The global market trends especially the declining price for Ethiopia's major export commodities is the primary reason for low performance of the export sector, according to Hailemariam. Apart from that, the PM also indicated the impact of low contribution of the manufacturing sector to cumulative disappointing result.

In contrast, the country's imports have increased by 11 percent compared to last year's reaching USD 8.3 billion in the six months under consideration, Hailemariam's report indicated. This obviously results in widening the trade gap, he said. Hence, in order to ease the forex shortage, the government has utilized the foreign currency secured from money transfers, foreign direct investment (FDI), national reserve and other sources, he said.

The government collected 65 billion birr from taxes in the period in question, showing a 10.7 percent increase compared to the same period the previous year, the PM stated. In general, the country's economy has continued its healthy growth trend, according to his assessment. But, he indicated that there is a lot to be achieved in terms of exploiting the potential for taxation.

The ailing agriculture

The PM, who underscored the need to modernize the agriculture sector, also admitted that the current El Niño phenomenon is likely to affect the overall agricultural productivity of the country.

However, the country is working to minimize its impact and compensate for the decline in crop production through expanding the existing farmlands, distributing select seeds and fertilizers as well as by undertaking watershed management, Hailemariam said.

Industry

The efforts being made to expand small and medium industries in urban areas will be strengthened to address unemployment and generate more income from the sector, according to the PM.

The construction of various industrial parks is underway across the country, he said, citing the Bole Lemi phase one project, which has already gone operational, and the Hawassa Industrial Park, as a case in point. Preparations have also been completed to commence the construction of agro-processing industrial parks in four regional states, he said.

The Reporter, Saturday, March 12, 2016
Vol. XX No. 1018

Investors claim compensation for property damage amid Oromia riots

By Kaleyesu Bekete

Local and foreign investors asked the Ethiopian government to pay them compensation for lost properties amid the public riot in the Oromia Regional State.

Informed sources told The Reporter

that local and foreign investors whose properties were damaged during the public riots incited in the Oromia Regional State in connection with the planned Integrated Masterplan of Addis Ababa and the Surrounding Oromia Special Zone last November filed their compensation claims to the Office of the

Prime Minister. According to sources, the government has-in principle-agreed to compensate the companies who lost their properties in the violent public riots that have been going on since November 2015.

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H Sources said that after reviewing the compensation claims filed by the local and foreign companies the Office of the Prime Minister remanded the case to the Ethiopian Investment Commission. The PM's Office ordered the Ethiopian Investment Commission to evaluate the compensation claims by collaborating with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and the Development Bank of Ethiopia-the entity which provided loans to the investment projects.

"The government wants to make sure that the compensation claims are valid. Some of the claims could be exaggerated so they want to clear that," sources said.

An official at the Ethiopian Investment Commission has confirmed that the commission is working on the compensation claims. The official said that since the case is a national issue that needs maximum care it is being over seen by the board of directors of the Ethiopian investment Commission. According to the

official, some 14 companies have filed for compensation but the total amount of compensation payment they demanded is not yet known. "They are working on it. They are trying to verify the claims. The amount is not yet determined but the government is committed to pay compensations for the lost properties," he said.

The official said the Ethiopian Investment Commission is also working closely with the Ethiopian Insurance Corporation (EIC). "EIC was asked to estimate the property damages incurred and how much of the properties were covered by insurance policy and those that were not covered by insurance policy. Since Ethiopia is considered as a safe country the investors did not have insurance policy for property damage that might be caused by conflict or social unrest," the official said. He said that the government has a firm commitment to compensate the investors.

More than 140 people have lost their lives in the riots fomented in different towns of Oromia since

last November. Factories, flower farms, and trucks that belong to private companies have been burnt down. Residential houses, police stations and government administration offices have been ransacked.

Speaking to the Ethiopian parliament on Thursday, Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn said that the government needed to listen to the grievances of the people. Hailemariam blamed the deaths and destruction of property in the protests of unnamed "anti-peace forces," which he said had hijacked the protesters' legitimate concerns. The PM also claimed that the problems in Oromia were the "direct results of unresponsiveness and unemployment." The Prime Minister on behalf of his government apologized for the lost lives and property in the riots.

Though the Addis Ababa expansion plans were dropped the riots have continued to rock Oromia towns.

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The Reporter, Saturday, March 19, 2016
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Gov't used excessive force in Oromia: Human Rights Council

By Neamin Ashenafi

The Human Rights Council (HRCO), one of the few independent civic society organizations, in its latest report revealed that the government had used excessive force to control the recent unrest in the Oromia Regional State.

According to the report, the excessive measures taken by the government's security officers resulted in the death of 103 innocent civilians. In addition, 9 were injured, 22 were beaten and tortured, 226 were illegally detained, whereabouts of 12 individuals is not known, 600 people have been displaced from their homes and 882 homes were burnt down, the report stated.

The Council revealed its report earlier this week at its head office in the presence of local and international media outlets, members of the diplomatic corps and various civic organization organizations.



The report was released this week by the officials of HRCO

Though there are 18 administrative zones and 342 weredas in the region, the report only covered 33 weredas due to lack of resources.

"According to the information obtained from sources in the region, several peasant association offices, police sub-stations, farmers' training halls in

various parts of the region and over ten trucks belonging to Dangote Cement Factory and one public transport bus estimated at 1.7 million birr were burnt down," the report stated.

The report also revealed that there were incidents of rape by government security forces in areas such as Ambo Jeldu and Gindeberet. In some areas of the region, government security forces conducted door-to-door searches during the night and have allegedly insulted and humiliated residents, the report stated.

In addition to that, some demonstrators in Ameya wereda - on their way back after protesting - burnt down and destroyed the homes of Amhara residents who were living in the area for over 30 years and in retaliation to that the Amharas burnt down 96 homes of the Oromos, the report stated.

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According to the report, such conflicts occurred because of a very few selfish residents of the region who were supported by very few administrators of the area.

The government has repeatedly stated that the legitimate questions of the public were hijacked by some anti-peace elements and terrorists; however, the Council in its report revealed that it did not witness such elements.

The Council also warned that the unrest is not yet over and that the problem might escalate. In that regard, the Council called on the government to respond to the demands of the students and the people as soon as possible and bring to justice those who are responsible for the loss of lives, injuries and damage to property. The Council also called for the release of those detained illegally and compensate the families of the victims for the extrajudicial killings and for those who sustained injuries.

Medrek criticizes PM's recent sentiment

By Neamin Ashenafi

The Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (Medrek) criticized the recent "apology" of Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn concerning the unrest that spread across the Oromia Regional State claiming that it was less genuine since mass detention and torture is still continuing across the region; that is even after the apology.

The party expressed its grievance over the apology of the PM in a press conference held at the party's headquarters around Sidist Kilo off Weatherall Street on Friday afternoon.

The party claimed that "if the apology by the government is real and genuine, the perpetrators should have been brought before the court of justice and at the same time the mass detention and torture of both Medrek's members and civilians should have stopped immediately." However, the party statement noted that the problem still continues today and even after

the apology more than 2,627 citizens were detained in different areas of the Oromia Regional State.

The party also stated that the government did the apology not because it wanted real reconciliation with the people and wanting to offer a lasting solution to the unrest, rather it was to win the hearts of the international donors.

"The government is well aware that apologizing and asking for forgiveness is a widely accepted and diligent thing to do in the developed world. It is a sign of shouldering responsibility in the developed world therefore the government did this thing to attract the attention of the international community; the apology is more of a work of public relation," it claimed.

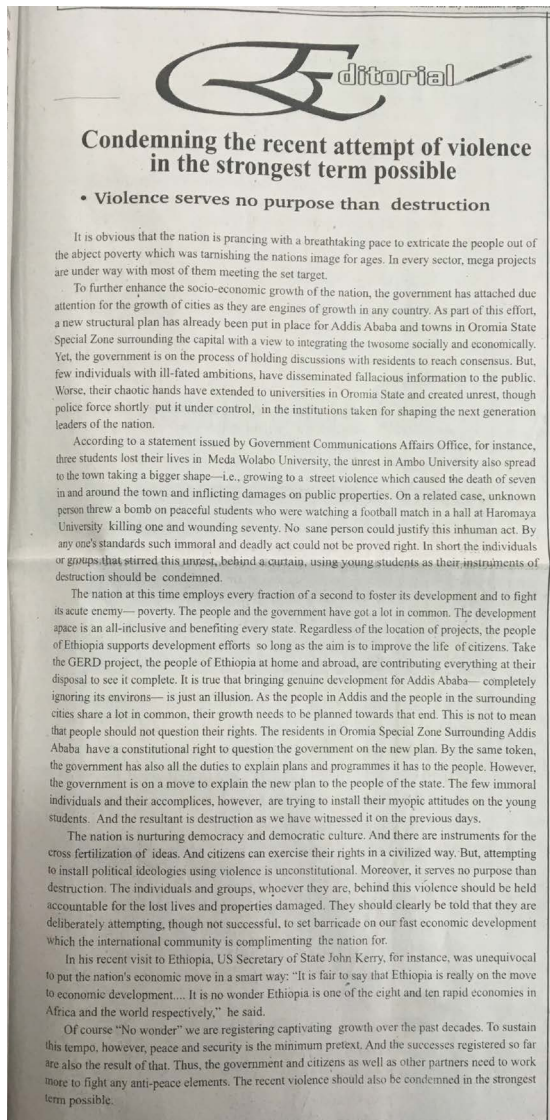
The statement of the party went on further to criticize the apology and stated that "the government is not willing to punish the officials who are responsible for the failure in the system;

it rather transfer them to another position or area compounding the problem further and telling as to how the apology is not genuine."

The party also stated that though the government pretends as if it has regretted the loss of life and destruction in the property related to the recent unrest in Oromia Region, the fact on the ground remains intact and even worsened in some parts of the region.

In this regard, the party warned that the unrest is not yet over and that the problem might escalate, therefore, the party called on to the government to respond to the demands of the people as soon as possible and bring to justice those who are responsible for the loss of lives, injuries and damage to property.

The party also called for the immediate release of its members and citizens who are detained illegally and asked government to compensate the families of the people who have lost their lives and those who have sustained injuries.



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Violence causes damage in Oromia State

Government Communications Affairs Office disclosed that loss of lives and property damage occurred in some universities in Oromia State.

According to a statement the Office sent to ENA Thursday, the situation in the universities has now stabilized. Following is the full text of the statement:

Communiqué issued by Government Communications Affairs Office in connection with the loss of lives and property damage following disturbances in Oromia State.

Baseless rumours which discredit the value and aim of the integrated development master plan designed to integrate Addis Ababa with the Oromia Special Zone surrounding the city through development have been widely spread by some quarters. The master plan that took many years to design is currently under public discussion.

Realizing the keen desire of many inhabitants of the state to get the accurate information, Addis Ababa City Administration and Oromia State have been organizing different forums to explain the benefits of the developmental gains of the plan.

The consultative forums where public discussions have been conducted to well known, embracing students in institutions of higher learning.

However, before the full-scale holding of the public discussions with stakeholders in all areas of the state, loss of lives and property damages have occurred in some universities where students confused by deliberately misleading rumours and gossips created havoc.

As a result of the disturbances that were accompanied by violence, the lives of three students of Meda Welabu University were lost. Since the violence which erupted in Ambo University in particular spread to the town, five persons have died; public and government properties damaged following the attempt to rob the Construction and Business Bank in Ambo town and other violent acts in the towns of Ambo and Tokeekutayu.

In a related development, about 70 students were wounded and one student killed by a hand grenade thrown by unidentified persons as students of Haromaya University were watching a football match on television.

The situation in the universities is now stabilized through the collaborative effort of federal and state security forces. Following the investigation thus far, it was possible to verify that few anti-peace were forces that have past violent history and which controlled through media inside and outside the country to manipulate the question of students for their evil purposes.

These forces would not hesitate from using peaceful citizens for their illegal activities. Proponents of violence who do not want to see the appropriate question of the students to be addressed properly are scurrying to gain political profit by making the masses victims sitting themselves safely at a corner. Our democratic system has been fully ensuring the constitutional rights of citizens individually and collectively, and handling every question/demand peacefully during the past twenty three years.

As this democratic tradition has become part of our daily life and is developing and our democratic system has created conducive situation for addressing any demand/question, the government urges the general student population to attend to their education shunning the few forces of evil that spread rumour and distorted campaign.

Seizing this opportunity, the government would like to express its condolences to grieved compatriots and their families and will further strengthen its efforts to bring to justice the main

Office says Integrated Master Plan ensures fair urban dev't

BY ABERA WENDOSON

ADDIS ABABA—Addis Ababa and the Surrounding Oromia Integrated Development Project Office General Manager Mathewos Asfaw said the integrated master plan ensures fair development among Addis Ababa and its surroundings while it also enable the city sustain to be a well-versed headquarters of Africa along with the development of town in its environs.

Briefing local journalists and foreign correspondents on the essence of the integrated master plan at Dessalegn Hotel yesterday, Mathewos said the goal to make Addis Ababa a world class and undisputed capital city of Africa by 2025, would not be ensured unless its surrounding towns develop in parallel.

The recent violence that erupted in various universities which some associated with the integrated master plan though the Office believes the Plan does not have any destructive content that pushes into violence except calling for common urban development.

Concerning this, Mathewos said that there should not be any misconception about 'integration' as incorporating the Oromia Special Zone into Addis Ababa or Federal Government administrations. However, the intent is to create strong social and economic ties for common development thereby ensuring the country's renaissance.

According to Mathewos, it was in 2002 E.C that the Addis Ababa City Administration assessed the implementation of the City's old master plan. The assessment found out that it was ineffective in terms of having green area and open space, housing, infrastructure and recreational centres.

"Besides, the old master plan only included the ten sub-cities of capital without considering the surrounding towns in Oromia. The master plan was contradicting with that of the special zones of Oromia which necessitated the new integrated master plan with the consent of the state.

"The special zone is administered by the state having its own master plan. Addis Ababa is the same," Mathewos said. "We believe linking the surrounding towns with the city is crucial for one cannot achieve the desired development without the other," he added.

"For instance, a master plan of Addis Ababa delineated certain part of City territory for industry, while that of the special zone put it a residential area exposed to pollution. This creates, a contradicting land use," Mathewos asserted.

Mathewos also said that the integrated master plan is drawn from the successful experiences of federal states such as Berlin, Toronto, Canada, France, Paris and China. "We didn't copy directly from them rather adopted taking into consideration our country's constitution, the federal system, the culture and the societal identity," he said.

Responding to questions raised by the journalists on the widespread accusations of Addis Ababa housing construction entering into the boundary of Oromia State, Addis Ababa City Administration Housing and Construction Bureau Deputy Head Yonas Ayalew said the construction has not entered Oromia boundary describing the accusation unfounded.

He also said the integrated master plan would be implemented jointly by the Addis Ababa City Administration, Oromia State and the Special Zone as well as the Federal Government.




See Office says Integrated... page 2

Map of Addis Ababa City and the surrounding Oromia towns

Office says Integrated...

They will also help to offer training for...



issues, he said.

As Oromia Urban Planning Institute Director General Tilahun Regassa said the population of Addis Ababa reached three million while that of cities taken as second most populous in the country is only 300,000. "The ratio is one to ten showing a great imbalance. It is put in our strategy that we can create cities like Addis Ababa if and only if we link Addis with its neighbouring towns for integrated development," Tilahun added.

Responding to the question that inadequate compensation to farmers in return of their land taken over for investment, Mathewos said: "Yes, it was true. They were given little compensation and it was the failure of the old master plan which the new integrated master plan is believed to address".

Mathewos finally said that the office will aggressively work to enable the public get a clear picture of the plan.

There are social services in the periphery of the capital benefiting residents of both the city and the Special Zone which inevitably require them to work together on various

What Addis and Oromia Special Zone deserve in common?



BY ABERA WENDOSON

Given the current huge traffic jamming in the city, the more relevant solution to connect the five surrounding towns with Addis Ababa is making use of modern mass transit transport in a bid to reduce unnecessary move to the city.

Owing to have modern infrastructures Addis Ababa has been crowded by skyscraper buildings of shopping malls and recorded sustainable investment booming since very recently. On the top of this, the number of international and regional organizations have been on rise. However, its ten years old master plan is said to have shortfalls as the 2002 survey that was conducted on the implementation and effectiveness of the master plan by Addis Ababa City Administration and Addis Ababa University implied.

According to the Integrated Addis Ababa and Surroundings Master Plan Project office General Manager Mathewos Bekkele, the survey found out that the master plan does not consider the need to have green area, an open space and recreational centers in the city while it also lacks means of linking the developmental activities of the city with the neighboring Oromia Special Zone.

Therefore, it does not take into account the development of other neighboring towns. Moreover, the Addis Ababa Master Plan used to have contradictions with the master plan of the Special Zone of Oromia as the office General Manager Mathewos said.

Due to such contradictions, Mathewos says, master plan of the city and that of the special zone had always had an impact on one another. For instance, Mathewos noted that when the master plan of Addis Ababa indicates a certain part of its territory as a place of industry, in the meantime, the master plan of the special zone may delineate the near by place as a residential area. Hence, this creates a situation by which one pollutes the other by smoke and wastage.

Besides, the existing urbanization trend is said to be unhealthy, unsustainable, haphazard (unregulated) urban sprawl (unplanned relocation of farmers with negative consequences, uncoordinated planning and investment, and moreover, causing reduction of the agricultural products as well as environmental pollution and degradation of the ecosystem).

As to Mathewos, disintegrated planning cannot ensure fair and balanced relations and living standards between urban and rural community. The integrated plan will enhance strong rural-rural, rural-urban and urban-urban relations and integration through expansion of infrastructure, social and municipal services based on fair and mutual benefit principle, he added.

Citing the advantages of the integrated master plan, Mathewos said that it enables horizontal urban expansion on the rural community, limits urban sprawl and promotes

a well managed vertical growth and expansion. It also creates a conducive environment for creation of resilient green economy by controlling the current environmental pollution, enhancing healthy livelihood for the rural community and protecting the rural resources, creating micro and small enterprises, big industries and harnessing their chain effect.

According to Mathewos, the whole aforementioned blessing implications have resulted in creating the integrated master plan of Addis and its surroundings. More inclusively a coordinated master plan enables to create urban and market centers integration hence achieve balanced and less costly development.

To create undisputed capital of Africa as a plan for 2025, let alone interlinking Addis with its neighboring towns which is naturally inevitable to happen through time, it even demands to link it with all East African towns with road and rail way infrastructures. So the integration seems inevitable.

There are also more aspirations to establish African cultural center, renewable energy sources, and laboratory institutes as well as renewable automotive energy sources in the country to make it a leading Africa Capital.

Given the current huge traffic jamming in the city, the more relevant solution to connect the five surrounding towns with Addis Ababa is making use of modern mass transit transport in a bid to reduce unnecessary move to the city.

Therefore, the integrated master plan of Addis Ababa and its surroundings is vital to understand the very significance of accelerating the development of the surrounding towns in such a way that it could never harm the humble any where between the two.

It is to be recalled that violence erupted a month ago in connection with the integrated master plan in some parts of the nation and various universities of the country, while the office of the master plan project says the integrated master plan is an advantageous for Addis Ababa and its surrounding towns since it promotes common development and lays a firm ground for Addis Ababa in its efforts to be one of the best African cities in the near future.

Speaking about the existing misconception regarding to the integrated master plan, Mathewos said that the integration is all about interlinking the Oromia Special Zone with the capital city of Addis Ababa for common development and for jointly realizing Ethiopia's Renaissance, rather than incorporating the Oromia special zones 'in to the federal

government administration.

"The special zones are administered by their own region and by their own master plan, the same is also true for Addis Ababa", Mathewos said. "What we are saying is, we should link the surrounding towns with the city for one cannot bring the desired development without the other", he added.

Mathewos also said that the integrated master plan is drawn from the experience of federal states in abroad such as Berlin, Toronto, Canada, France, Paris and China who became successful with this regard.

"We didn't directly copy the integrated master plan from them but we rather adopted it taking into consideration our country's constitution, the federal system, the culture and the societal identity", he said.

As he responded to reporters question on the widespread accusations of Addis Ababa Housing Construction passing in to the boundary of Oromia region, Deputy Head of Addis Ababa City Government Housing and Construction Bureau, Yonas Ayaley said, the construction has not passed into the boundary of Addis Ababa while he called the accusation was unfounded.

The integrated master plan is aimed to be implemented jointly by Addis Ababa City Administration, Oromia Region, Oromia special zones and the federal government, he adds.

The integrated master plan of Addis Ababa and its surrounding towns.

As Oromia Urban Planning Institute General Director Tilahun Regassa said, the population number of Addis Ababa is three million while the number of population in cities taken as second most populous in the country is only three hundred thousand.

"The ratio is one to ten showing a great imbalance. It is not in our strategy that we can create cities like Addis Ababa if and only if we link Addis with its neighboring towns for integrated development", Tilahun added.

According to Tilahun he mentioned the violence that erupted in the name of the master plan came from anti-peace elements.

Responding to the question of little compensation that used to be given to farmers after their land was taken over for investment, Mathewos said, "Yes it was true they were given little compensation and it was due to the failure of the old master plan which the integrated one could resolve it now".

Mathewos finally said that the office will exert efforts in creating awareness about the importance of the integrated master plan of Addis Ababa and its surrounding towns to the public.

The Master Plan is fully terminated: OPDO Central Office Head demand: OPDO Central Office Head

Human lives and property have been lost and damaged as a result of protest on the proposed joint master plan of Addis Ababa and its surrounding towns of the Oromia State. The Oromia State administration has also promised that the master plan will be implemented in a transparent manner after having asked in a transparent manner with the public. Particularly, the administration has assured that the question of the master plan is at the interest of the people. Accordingly, Cefe Oromia, OPDO Central Office Head, said in an interview with Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) Central Office Head Daba Debele regarding the rationale behind OPDO's central committee decision to terminate the master plan. The following piece is a translation from *Addis Zemen* by Abay Hailu. Except:



OPDO Central Office Head Daba Debele

What is the rationale behind OPDO's decision to fully terminate the joint integrated Urban and Development Plan of Addis Ababa and Oromia Special Zone Surrounding Fafan? The master plan was intended to bring about development to the people. As prior discussion was not held with the public and other concerned stakeholders, it created doubt among the public about the real intention of the master plan. Some efforts have been undertaken to clear off this doubt. However, the public still raised various concerns and questions regarding the master plan. Hence, the master plan has become the concern of the public.

The Plan has nothing to do with border issues. However, the society has raised various questions at various levels. The public, particularly farmers, expressed their various concerns regarding the master plan, particularly in the right manner, have demanded a solution for the good governance that prevails in the state.

In the past, a promise was made in a press conference that if only the public after having discussions with various government bodies at various level, accept the master plan that it is going to be implemented. Hence, farmers, the youth and various sections of the society have held discussions in various parts of the Oromia State. They reached a conclusion that they do not accept the Plan. Based on this, the Central Committee of OPDO has also held discussion on the issue and resolved that the Plan needs to be terminated fully. The decision is reached based on the discussions held with the public. Hence, the Plan has been fully terminated.

What are the major good governance problems identified in the state? And what are the measures taken to resolve these problems? The good governance problems identified include the master plan and other sectors that provide service to the public such as in the justice system, land provision, supply and payment, government purchases and services. In addition, there are

address the questions. The issue is the concern of the government. And the government is led by the party and the party has formulated directives. This is because, after being reviewed by the council (Chefe Oromia), a remedy to the questions would be formulated.

Mathewos mentioned that the special zone of Oromia State has been benefited by the Addis Ababa Administration as stated in the Constitution would be addressed in the near future. When we say in the Constitution of the implementation? What are the issues included?

There are some issues incorporated in the Constitution. And the public has also raised its questions. Directives will be formulated to harmonize the questions with what is stated in the Constitution. The issues under consideration have been reviewed in detail.

As there are government bodies that can receive and execute based on the proclamation, the government will implement. However, what is set as a principle is that it will be executed soon. The political stance is that the issues should not take a lot of time.

Some parties claim that "OPDO's decision to terminate the Plan is influenced by the recent protest. What is your comment on this?" The two issues need to be seen separately. The people's requests are the people's demands. OPDO always respects the people's demands. It gives ears to the questions of the public and give response.

There are some issues that we identified as to be resolved by the government and the party to resolve the concerns. But the public's demands have to be respected and receive answers. The government has the responsibility to answer. Because the government is elected by the public, it has to give ear to the public.

On the other hand, other parties and anti-peace elements have been trying to use the public's questions for their own hidden agenda. It is a mistake. These two need to be seen separately. The people's demand is the people's demand. It should be seen in separately from individual or farmers? How are the cities going to be institution interests. It is evident that some groups want to use the people's questions for their own political gains.

Externalizing public discontent no solution: Premier

BY DANIEL BEYENE

ADDIS ABABA — Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn said externalizing one's fault for not meeting the public legitimate demands won't be helpful in the effort to bring about lasting solution to the root cause of the recent protests in the country. The Premier was presenting government's six-month report to the House of People's Representatives yesterday.

According to the Premier, the ruling party, EPRDF, has clearly stated in its political policy that it needs general public that demand for dynamic economic and social progress in the country with a view to speeding up the nation's renaissance journey and exposing poor leadership.

"Hence, coupled with lack of good governance and the ever increasing political consciousness of the public at large had triggered the public protests," he reiterated. Hailemariam went on saying that it is usual for the incumbent won't waste its time blaming others for the crisis that occurred in Oromia and Amhara states. It has already begun taking corrective measures against various officials who have been giving deaf ears to the legitimate public demands, he added.

As to the unsuccessful plots of instigating chaos and violence through flogging the public demand by external and internal destructive forces, he said that the sinister agenda of the enemy quarters has foiled mainly due to the vigilant and powerful protesters.

The Premier told the MPs that the public demands and protests in Oromia and some parts of Amhara states are also not uncommon in other states in the country. Their demands would be met by ensuring good governance, he added.

In his report, Prime Minister Hailemariam noted that owing to El Nino's effects and low export revenues, the nation's economy is expected to grow below the projected 11 per cent this fiscal year.

In the report, the Premier also indicated that measures and steps have been taken and would be taken in curbing malpractices and improving the life quality of the general public, as well as the ongoing efforts to realize industry-led economy and create millions of jobs for youth and women.

"Owing to El Nino's effects and low export revenues, the nation's economy is expected to grow below the projected 11 per cent this fiscal year."

Sinister agenda of the destructive forces

BY DANIEL B.

In the recent violence one can vividly see the ill attempts of the destructive forces that are working day in and day out to incite religious and ethnic tensions in some Woredas of Arsi zone in Oromia State. Indeed, these futile attempts of destructive forces to overthrow the constitutional political system of country and to go back to the previous era of oppression have been foiled with the unreserved supports of the general public. Moreover, peace and order have been restored in those areas. However, these destructive forces are continually changing their tactics to incite violence in this country through wrongly interpreting and using the ideas of federalism. Hence, hereafter, it is a good idea to discuss the values of federalism in this article.

Ethiopia has a federal system that makes every fellow citizen to be active participants in every single national issues and agenda. This enables them to dictate their future. This irony is how on the earth such kind of federalism would be used as an excuse to instigate violence and vandalism. The destructive forces or the ring leaders of the protests must answer this question.

What the public at large and the government firmly believe that federalism is taking strong root in Ethiopia and Ethiopians have managed to build democratic nation that is striving to break the yoke of poverty once for all via durable peace and socio-economic development.

These days, the general public are largely participating in the political, economical and social affairs of this great nation. Ethiopia's federalism has made States to exercise self administration. It has also opened door for equal and fair wealth distributions in the country. Above all, regardless of the differences of religion, or ethnicity, Ethiopians have now enabled to form a united country more than ever. Ethiopia also becomes an excellent model of unity in diversity.

The Constitution has guaranteed peace and stability through forming a country based on the consents of nations, nationalities and people's of Ethiopia. The whole Ethiopians are in the favour of the federal system because it absolutely serves their interests.

Therefore, this Constitution has won the public heart and it is up to the government and general public to protect and uphold the values of the Constitution from anti-peace elements by any means necessary.

It is evident than before those who try to spark riots and unrest in some part of the country have a hidden agenda. They leave no stone unturned to destabilize this very nation called by many as an oasis of peace and stability in turbulent region.

Sadly, in the recent violence the enemy quarters have caused public property damages and casualties as well as burnt down religious institutions to ash. This by itself will prove the inhumanity and viciousness of these destructive forces than never before.

On several occasions, Ethiopians have explicitly condemned chauvinism and parochialism as both threaten the very existence of their beloved nation. They have also determined to build a prosperous nation based on their consents.

It is obvious that Ethiopia's federalism has brought an end to non-stop civil wars and the coverage of disgraceful news of drought in the mainstream media. Presently, Ethiopia is country where every nation, nationalities and people can learn to use their own language and exercise fully their self administration right as well as promote their respective cultures without any fear and so forth.

Of course, the destructive forces are instigating violence and chaos in the country saying federalism is not yet put in to practice in Ethiopia. They might fool some people using this argument but they are saying this to advance their narrow interest of disintegrating the nation.

Moreover, these destructive forces strongly believe that the general public will benefit more when they completely rely on the natural resources that are undergound of the earth than creating ever lasting economic and social integration among Ethiopians. Hence, the government and the public particularly the youth have a strong responsibility to expose the hidden agenda of the destructive forces and also make them accountable for the property and human damages.

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Gov't to compensate Oromia protest innocent victims

BY FANUEL LAKEW

ADDIS ABABA — Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn said that the government would compensate innocent victims of the protest in Oromia State during talks with Abba Gadas, traditional Oromo leaders, at his office here yesterday.

Special Aide to the Prime Minister Ewetu Bilata, who attended the talks, told journalists that the Premier has agreed to the Abba Gadas demand for the compensation of innocent lives lost and property destruction in the State in accordance with the government stance and study conducted recently.

The Special Aide also said that Prime Minister Hailemariam held discussion with the traditional Oromo leaders on ways of maintaining and ensuring peace in the State. They as well discussed how to differentiate the role of government and that of the leaders in resolving peace hindrances such as the recent protests in the state.

Hailemariam on his part noted that the government has not utilized the role of the Abba Gadas in restoring peace in the country.

"Thus, the government would sustain relations and utilize such democratic values with the leaders to ensure peace in the country. The government would also work hard to handle public complaints in the State and the country as well," Ewetu quoted Hailemariam as telling the Abba Gadas.

The government would work to familiarize the youth with the unsung democratic values of the Gada system inculcating in them as it has a great role in ensuring harmony among the people.

Talana Abba Gada, who is also Abba Gades Council Chairperson, Beyene Senbetso said that

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they discussed with the Premier current security issues in Oromia State and the country as a whole as peace is decisive for a country's development journey. He also affirmed that the government's compensation pledge through the Gada compensation system called *Guma* and *Begna*.

Moreover, the government as well pledged to release innocent students to ensure peace working with the Abba Gada leaders. The Chairperson noted that they would meet with students to discuss need for going back to school in collaboration with the public and government.