



Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed arrives in Khartoum on June 7, 2019

ABIY'S NOBLE PRIZE: ROUGH RISE TO FAME

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Abiy's award has the potential of shaping the culture of leadership across Africa. His dedication in enhancing Africa's economic integration is the best example of how one-man can change the direction of an entire country. However, implemented too fast without sufficient consensus, Abiy's massive liberal reforms have come against the fierce gusts of ethnic nationalism, within the context of Ethiopia's complex patchwork of competing ethnic groups in nine autonomous regions and a long history of militarism.

The Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dr Abiy Ahmed Ali, is the latest high-profile individual to win the prestigious Nobel peace prize. Fondly known for his charisma, Abiy joins the list of laureates

recognized by the Norwegian peace committee, for their outstanding contribution in strengthening international peace,

As a son of a Muslim Oromo father and an Amhara Orthodox Christian mother, married to an Amhara wife, Abiy is the closest you come to Africa's Barack Obama.

The election of Abiy as Prime Minister on April 2, 2018 set off a reformist dynamic and geared a bold move to opening up Ethiopia to democratic reforms, Economic vitality, regional integration and openness to the world.

Surprisingly, Abiy led the wonder peace and cooperation deal with Eritrea on July 7, 2018, ending nearly three decades of stalemate and helped break the political deadlock between Sudan's Military Junta, leaders of the protest movement and the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) on August 19 2019.

All this unfolded, against the backdrop of the ongoing diplomatic row between Kenya and Somalia over their disputed maritime border in the Indian Ocean.

At home, Abiy embarked on fostering the democratization process and redeemed from the past backward political culture; fulfilling the constitutional promise of building a democratic and pluralistic political order. Currently, Ethiopia has released all political prisons within the last twelve months and is on the processes of repelling restrictive laws imposed on the media, and is revising its civil society law.

A new-fangled Ethiopia is emerging from uneasiness attributed with remarkable economic reforms and transformation. According to the latest International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast, Ethiopia was fastest-growing economy in sub-Saharan Africa in 2018 registering a 9 % GDP growth from \$43.31 billion in 2012 to \$80.5 billion in 2017.

Strategically, Abiy has managed to leverage the collative power of the people especially women and the youth, building a vibrant private sector to

enhance incursive and a sustainable growth, and has made the economic environment easier for Small and Medium Scale Enterprises to grow and flourish.

Moreover, the political environment and stability has helped Ethiopia to attract foreign direct investment. In October 2018, The World Bank approved \$1.2 billion (\$600 million grant and \$600 million credit) from the International Development Association (IDA) in support Ethiopia's policies designed to accelerate economic growth and achieve its vision of becoming a lower-middle-income country.

Abiy's dedication in enhancing the Africa's economic integration is the best example of how one-man can change the direction of an entire country.

However, implemented too fast without sufficient consensus, Abiy's massive liberal reforms have come against the fierce gusts of ethnic nationalism, within the context of Ethiopia's complex patchwork of competing ethnic groups in nine autonomous regions and a long history of militarism.

These changes have fueled uncertainty, insecurity and ethnic-based violence.

In June 23 2018, Abiy survived a bomb attack while addressing a rally in Addis Ababa. In October 2018, the Prime Minister managed to contain a horde of soldiers streaming out demanding pay hikes.

In a similar fashion, the assassinations of Ambachew Mekonnen President of Amhara, General Se'are Mekonnen, the Chief of the General Staff of the Ethiopian National Defence Force, together with his aide, Major General Gizae Aberra region, on June 22, 2019 unfolded as an abortive coup in the Amhara backyard and signaled the end of Abiy's vacation siting fragility of the Ethiopian state and society.

Sadly, Abiy's political and economic reforms have been received with a lot of discontents between the Ethiopian Federalists and the Tigrayans who now feel that Abiy's re-organization of the Ethiopian state is radical and selectively targeting the Tigrayans.

Far from transforming Ethiopia from a cruel regime run by a small elite to a true liberal democracy sweeping across the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia's uncertain revolution risks delivering anarchy within its borders and across the region.

Regionally, Ethiopia's ethno-nationalism is rippling through the Horn of Africa seemingly enhancing its soft power as the lone regional peacemaker, eclipsing the strategic partnership of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and others.

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