

Ethiopia Invokes the Right to Self Defense

The joint forces of Ethiopia and the Transitional Federal Government of Ethiopia have triumphantly entered the capital, Mogadishu, completely dismantling the short-lived authority of the UIC. The rhetoric of international terrorists and jihadists has turned out to be empty words. Somalia has been liberated from six months of siege. From Dinsoor to Burhakaba to Mogadishu the joint Somalia-Ethiopian defense force marched from town to town and was received with warm welcome.

Cinema halls that were closed even to watch the world cup have begun to open. Public execution and flogging ceased, women who are the bread winners of the Somali society now trade in an open market. On the contrary, the fundamentalist, after they were dealt with a crushing blow in their last ditch effort in Kismayu are now running in disarray.

The terrorist elements and their Eritrean agents are fleeing under the hot pursuit of the TFG and Ethiopian defense forces.

Ethiopia was forced to fight an imposed war by the international terrorists. No stone was unturned to avoid a full-fledged conflict with fundamentalists of the Union of Islamic Courts. The extremist leadership at the helm of power in the Union of Islamic Courts took the patience of Ethiopia for feebleness. Especially the misinformation of the Eritrean government, painting Ethiopia as fragile and as a state found on the brink of civil war, have made the jihadists arrogant.

The leadership of the jihadists besides declaring war on Ethiopia, went as far as challenging the latter by claiming its territory. It also trained, armed and infiltrated outlawed groups. Even in the face of these provocative acts of the Islamists, Ethiopia preferred restraint.

News Feature

While dialogue for peace was going on with the leadership in various capitals, UIC gave an ultimatum and got engaged in reinforcing frontline to capture Baidoa, seat of the legitimate and internationally recognized government of Somalia, and pushing a massive infiltrating dissident forces.

What options would Ethiopia have under this situation? What would any country do if it were in the shoes of Ethiopia? Ethiopia could no more wait with folded hands and was obliged to invoke its inherent right to self defense.

There were ample evidences depicting the threat the extremist UIC leadership posed. Since 1995 Al Itthad was engaged in terrorist acts in various parts of Ethiopia including Addis Ababa. In 1995 the group carried out an assassination attempt on the Minister of Transport, the late Abdulmegid Hussen. And there were a number of terrorist acts on civilians since then. Therefore, in no perspective can one say that Ethiopia is to be blamed. Ethiopia is fighting international mujahideens. The Ethiopian defense force with forces of the Transitional Federal Government are paying the ultimate price. Observers say if the international community were proactive in dealing with the extreme leadership of the UIC, the current Somali crisis could have been averted.

Despite the worst case scenarios painted by the self acclaimed analysts, there are no signs for a regional war looming in the Horn of Africa. There are, indeed, signs that peace is in sight at last. Somalis can decide their fate.

The fundamentalists are defeated. Ethiopia's proportionate counter attack was justifiable and Talibanization proved to be not in the interest of Somalis.

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Ethiopia believes it is not the army but the determination of the Somali people that can pacify Somalia. Ethiopian defense force, therefore, upon completion of its mission, will definitely pull out.

The international community should say enough is enough to the tragedy in Somalia by giving concrete support to the TFG, presently preoccupied in restoring peace and stability.

Ethiopia did what could be a pride to Africa and nations fighting international terrorism. Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin in his introductory remarks on the situation in Somalia said: "Let me assure you that whatever we do in Somalia is what will make Africa proud."

In a nutshell, for the Somali Federal Government to stand on its feet after 16 years of anarchy in Somalia, the African Union, the United Nations and the international community should provide the Horn of Africa nation, political, economic, diplomatic and humanitarian support.

The International community should start as soon as possible to help TFG to make lawlessness in Somalia a history.