

The Slash and Burn affair of the Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum & Associates

The Forum doesn't appear to be for the diaspora, a business or investment Forum, what is it?

The organizers don't look oblivious, and participating businesses don't look legitimate what are they up to?

By Teshome Debalke

There is something very mystifying and at times hilarious about many things some Ethiopians do to fulfill their fantasies and petty interests. At the institutional level they have no qualm to conceal public information or fabricate it to their liking on important matters that makes-and-break the lives and liberties of millions of our own people.

Such slash-and-burn behavior and lack of transparency comes at an enormous cost to our people at home and in the Diaspora. Though I am not in liberty to say I know all the causes, absence of self-conscious and failure of societal and institutional penalty to restrain bad behavior comes on the top. Moreover, the inability to accept the bare truth and the harsh reality of life perverted the mind to create a bubbly world to live-in and sustain –creating perpetual conflicts at the expense of the vast majority of our people. In other word, choosing the rule of the jungle over the rule of law to sustain a bubbly world comes naturally and inevitable.

That said; individual behavior and accountability in public affairs matters regardless of the conventional wisdom may be. Institutional transparency and accountability in public affairs matters; regardless of what the conventional rule-of-the-jungle may be. Therefore, avoiding or postponing personal accountability and institutional transparency at the expenses of the public amounts endorsing crimes against humanity and treason with far more consequences.

To illustrate the point, the Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum with good slogan bad intention comes in handy. On the surface, Diaspora Business Forum is a noble idea every Ethiopian should appreciate and should involve. What could possibly be a better idea than mobilizing the Ethiopian Diaspora with vast resources and knowhow to engage in business and investment for the benefit of our people and us all, you would think...

But, from its origin, [Forum \(Roman\)](#) is 'the marketplace or public square of an ancient Roman city, the center of judicial and business affairs and a place of assembly for the people.

In modern times, [‘Forum \(legal\)’](#) is ‘a designated space for public expression’.

In practical context, a Forum where information asymmetry (an economic term that ‘deals with the study of decisions in transactions where one party has more or better [information](#) than the other causes [misinforming](#)’) is not a Forum but, sales pitch, lecture or propaganda; depending what is intended. There is nothing wrong with one-or- the other providing it is not referred as a Forum and disclosed up front to the public what to expect in the public invitation of a gathering.

Therefore, looking at the Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forums, it appears there is a conspiracy to conceal vital information from the public in the name of Diaspora Forum. The way the participating Media selected. Failure to disclose the identity, the backgrounds and the credentials of the participating businesses owners and officers. The lack of complete transparency by the organizers makes it anything but a Forum. Most notably, the organizers that are the ultimate responsible parties’ disregard not even to provide the very Ethiopian American Magazine that supposedly sponsored the ‘Forum’ that supposedly to inform the Diaspora is more reason to believe their intent to mislead. In fact, the organizers are so reckless in many areas – bordering criminality, it is safe to assume there is more to The Forum than inviting the Diaspora to help their country of birth and themselves.

Their simple disregard not to mention the fundamental investment policy problems-- a prerequisite in any business or investment Forum and concealing the credentials of the organizers, and speakers is sufficient to stay away from it.

That also bring us to ask, why the ‘Medias’ that supposedly covered or reported on the ‘Forum’ failed to scrutinize the organizers and the participating ‘businesses’ owners or officers appears a staged Forum for political or economic reasons with far more implication on the organizers and participants.

The lack of interest by independent Medias and civic organizations to investigate the organizers and participants of the Forum is not helping either.

The Organizer (Ethiopian American Magazine)

According to the official website of the Forum (<http://www.theethiopianamerican.com>), the annual Magazine (it used to be quarterly when it started) is ‘**a non-political business magazine that focuses on diaspora businesses and investment matters**’. But, only four issues of the Magazines are posted since its establishment in 2005 and only the last issue (2014) is accessible to the public with no relevant ‘businesses or investment information that **‘matters’** to the

Ethiopian Americans. There is also no explanation provided what exactly 'non-political' means in business and investment context of a regime where everything is political.

Observing the past Forums' that are peculiarly missing on the website (the 1st-8th) where Tadias Magazine reported the 3rd through 9th Forums. It appears 'nonpolitical' meant no criticism of the ruling regime's slash-and-burn investment policy decisions. See Tadias coverage of past Forums <http://www.tadias.com/index.php?s=the+Ethiopian+Diaspora+Business+Forum+>)

The rest of the content of the website only provides the latest –the 9th Forum's activities including the testimony of 'businessmen/investors' and government enterprises agents painting rosy picture of investment opportunities in the country.

Nor there are any relevant investment information for the Diaspora -- contacts, incentives, policy issues, political and market risks -high level corruption, the presence of the ruling party in the private sector operating businesses, lack of security – (financial, political and property, land policy, ...) that matters to the Diaspora investors.

Moreover, the Ethiopian Investment Agency (<http://www.eia.gov.et/english/>), the government agency responsible for all foreign investment matters in the nation led by the Third Director General, **Fitsum Arega** is nowhere found in all Forums, nor the Forum provides any information in regard to the responsible government Agency on the official website. **The fact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs created a separate Diaspora Affair office is another indication (www.ethdiaspora.org.et)**



Fitsume Arega

It is to be recalled in 2011 articles titled Investment in Ethiopia is a Child Play... that identified individuals that run the Nation's Investment Agency's official website from 1991-2010 under (www.ethiomarket.com) led by Manny Amare of New York that operate ModernEth and Altour . His outfit is the sponsor of several Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forums. See the article Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum: Public or insiders Forum?

<http://ecadforum.com/articles/ethiopian-diaspora-business-forum-public-or-insiders-forum/>

The question is who are the people behind the Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum and participants? What is their relationship with the ruling party? And why are the Diaspora Medias and institutions failed to investigate them to protect the Diaspora and the people of Ethiopia?

The only two
the official
**Yohannes
Ahmed** both do
Beleco Business



Yohannes Assefa

Omer Redi Ahmed

officers of the Ethiopian American Magazine reviled on
website are the Founder and the Managing Director
Assefa, and the Public Relation person **Omer Redi**
not provide their background and credential.

PLC is also listed as 'our partner/representative in

Ethiopia' on the 9th Forum's website. But, the same company is also referred as 'The Ethiopian
American's sister company that handle all trade show related matters in Ethiopia' on the [5th
Forum](#).

Omer Redi Ahmed is identified as Media and Communications Consultant in Addis Ababa,
according to the website and no additional information is provided or public information was
found.

But, the main person of the Forum, the Founder and executive Director Yohannes Assefas'
LinkedIn profile reveals he is an Attorney in New York State and Washington DC. He is also the
Director of Stalwart Management Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
and the Managing Director of Pioneer International Legal Consulting in Addis Ababa. He is also
identified as 'chief of the WTO Accession Plus Project with the Ministry of Trade, according to
Addis Fortune 'Talking Accession' **Feb 13 2011** issue
http://addisfortune.com/Vol_10_No_563_Archive/news_radar.htm

Why all these important information, particularly working for the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade
that would give the true picture the Founder's background and the nonpolitical Forum he leads
are missing on the official Website of the Fourm is obvious.

That is not all; according to [All Africa News](#) reported, Stalwarts Management Consultancy
Services was 'founded by former employees of the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) where
Yohannes was the part'. But, record shows (<http://stalwartfinacongroup.com/>- the website
down as of 8-30-14) is an Indian based company led by [Dr. Bharat Kulkarni](#) that has operation in
'Business planning and designing Agro Industry Park in Ethiopia 'for a Client: PTE International;
a Pennsylvania, US based company operated by **Sisay Shimelis**. **PTE** specializing in international
business development and global human resources (PTE have no website).

It is not clear whether Stalwart Management in Dubai led by Yohanns is the same company the India led by [Dr. Bharat Kulkarni](#) that claim to be Director of **Stalwart Management Consultancy Services Pvt Ltd** and Chief Economist and HEAD, Trading Operations at Ethiopia Commodity Exchange operation in Addis with operation in Ethiopia. See also Zoom Profile (<http://www.zoominfo.com/s/#!search/profile/person?personId=1618913234&targetid=profile>)

PTE is a company specializing in international business development and global human



FSisay Shimelis

resources that 'orchestrated and managed the atomization of the Ethiopian Immigration System, as a result of which, the Ethiopian government is now issuing new passports with superior quality and security features according his (www.zoominfo.com/p/Sisay-Shimelis/1286213277) that identify **Sisay Shimelis** as a principle. He is also involved in, injera project.runing a baking factory in Addis Ababa with the help of The National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance (<http://nciia.org/designrev2012-grantees#>) and

NutrAfrica to globalize the Ethiopian coffee industry'.

The Forum's sponsors

The Forum sponsors are mixed bags from, 'Title sponsors' that include the government operated public enterprise Ethiopian Airline and the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and the George Washington University Business School where all the Forums were held Led by [Liesl Riddle](#), Associate Professor of International Business and International Affairs; and GW School of Business; Co-Director, GW Diaspora Program. It is not clear if GW sponsored the Forum or provided a venue as part of the USAID funded Diaspora Program.

The rest of half-a-dozen sponsoring businesses appear to be 'Diaspora owned businesses' operating in North America and Ethiopia with not much track records. The Forum doesn't revile their websites' links and the officers of the sponsors on its official website -- defying the whole purpose of sponsorship. All but one of the sponsors did revile the owners/officers of the business.

[Fairfax Africa fund \(www.fairfaxafrica.com\)](http://www.fairfaxafrica.com) is a Virginia US based company that claims ‘to



Yared Berhane

invest in selected high performing sub-Saharan African countries with high growth potential’ according to the website but, doesn’t reveal the identity or the owners and the officers of the Firm.

But, according to Ezega.com, a Silicon Valley, California based online portal, Fairfax Africa Fund current investment portfolio including a regional IT firm, an export focused agro-industrial Company and a pan-African mobile banking enterprise, and identify Yared Berhane as a senior official at Fairfax. He is also listed as partner and Principal of Ernst & Young – Ethiopia, according his Zoom Info Profile (<http://www.zoominfo.com/p/Yared-Berhane/1601093683>)

The same individual[s] runs another company by the name of Fairfax Technology with same addresses in US (www.fairfaxtechnologies.com). Fairfax Technology was one of the sponsors of the 7th Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum, according to the Forum’s website.

But, 2 Merkato, that claim to be a business portal that provide ‘an integrated information on



Yared Demisse

Ethiopian business’ located in Mega Building in Addis Ababa identify **Yared Demisse**, ‘a repatriate entrepreneur with extensive IT background from the US and Canada’ as the principle of Fairfax Technology

(www.2merkato.com/directory/14882-fairfax-technologies-llc) . Both 2 Merkato and Fairfax Technology are located on the 1st and 10th floor of Mega Building in Addis Ababa, according to their respective websites. Mega Building is known to be owned by the ruling party TPLF.

Yared Demese is also identified as the Principal and Founder of Yared Consulting Inc. in Vancouver, British Columbia.

According to InfrasoftTech India Limited, a Mumbai Indian based company that claim to specialize with ‘Banking Product offerings are in the Retail & Private Banking verticals and include Core Banking, Microfinance, Lending Management, Anti Money Laundering and Financial Crime Surveillance Solutions” is a partner ‘Fairfax **Technology**. The company on the occasion of the completion of Addis International Bank ‘s project using Infrasoft tech’s Core Banking Solution reported seven other banks in Ethiopia are using InfrasoftTech’s OMNIEnterprise Core Banking. Among them is its first client **Wegagen Bank**, the ruling party Tigray People Liberation Front owned and operated Bank.

See the news

<http://www.infrasofttech.com/Portals/0/Skins/InfraSoftTech/UploadImage/201482115162515>

[3Addis International Bank S.%20C. Goes Live on OMNIEnterprise Core Banking Solution May 22 2014.pdf](#)

Addis International Bank (Addisbanksc.com) website is registered in 2012 and is administered by Techno Bros (www.technobros.net or www.ethiohosting.com) Melbourne, Australia based company operating in Addis Ababa, according to its website. Among its prized portfolio is the National Bank of Ethiopia (Central Bank of the nation) according to its website. How the Central Bank of the Nation's website is run by private company based in Australia is not known.



Akram Yahya

Public record shows Akram Yahya as the principle person of Techno Bros in Addis Ababa, according to his LinkedIn profile <http://www.linkedin.com/in/technobros>.

Techno Bros is also the owner of Habesha Net, 'virtual private servers in Addis Ababa Ethiopia since 2002'. (<http://www.habesha.net/index.php/about-us.html>), a server many government Agencies' websites are hosted on in Addis Ababa. It is to be recalled right after the abduction of Andargachew Tsigie, the top opposition leaders of Ginbot 7 Movement for justice, Freedom and Democracy (<http://ginbot7.com>) it was reported viruses were sent from a server identified as Habesha net from Addis Ababa.

Yemisraknesh Solomon of Infinite Dimensions Software Development PLC was the original registrar of Habesha.net. IDSD is also a privately held Information Technology and Services company located in Addis Abba, according to LinkedIn profile. The website <http://www.idplc.com> is no longer operational.

At the Meantime, Fairfax Africa Fund led by Yared Berhane that sponsored the Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum is investing on Boston Partner led by Tadiows G. Belete convenient meeting on the 7th Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum. (See Tadiows G. Belete on Award recipients below.

[Info Mind \(employ Ethiopia\)](#) claims to be 'a state of the art online career hub' based in Addis



Yosuf Reja



Dina Makonnen

Ababa and established 1998. No contact or identifiable person was found on its website. Public record found Yosuf Reja, Co-founded and CEO and Dina Makonnen, Director of Operations.

Reja is also Chief Executive Officer of Zebra Jobs; LLC, US based human resource consulting firm. He was the Former Executive Director-[Tigray Development Association](#).

All Africa report Zebra Jobs, (www.zebrajobs.net) based in Virginia US and InfoMind launched its Africa-wide job board in a joint venture with a US based company, Danya International Inc., in December 2007. (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200712240651.html>)

At the meantime Zebera Jobs claim a revenue of 140K with 3 employees, according D and B (<http://www.dandb.com/businessdirectory/zebrajobsgloballlc-fairfaxstation-va-31663415.html>)

[MODETH Outsource, PLC \(ModernETH\)](#) claims to be based in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, an offshore software development and outsourcing company that provides services to clients across the globe, according to its website. Established in 2008 in Addis Ababa the President is identified as Manny Amare and the Vice President as Eliab Tarkghen.



Manny Amare

Eliab Tarkghen

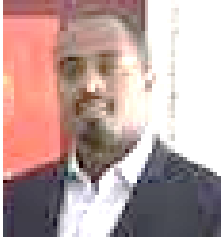
Both individuals are also run [ALTOUR Management Technology](#), a New York-based outsourcing company, founded in 1991, Altour that “provides companies with top-of-the line talent in the areas of data entry, software development and customer service, according to the website. Eliab is also Founder and Chief Executive Officer Eliab Consulting (<http://eliabconsulting.com>), Washington DC area IT company that focused on development of specialized software, including Ethio-Biometrics™, Ethiopic Editor, and Ethiopic Palm PDA address book, according to Zoom info profile In 2008, Eliab was a part of "Volunteer Experts," who traveled to Ethiopia to asses and develop a strategy for the deployment of ChambersNET project.

<http://www.zoominfo.com/s/#!search/profile/person?personId=671730832&targetid=profile> and listed as System Engineer for Police Foundation in the Washington DC area.

There is evidence the dual are the principles that administered the Nation’s Investment Agency’s website from 1991-2010 out of New York under (www.ethiomarket.com) from 1270 Avenue of the Americas, 15th Floor New York, NY 10020 address where ModernETH and ALTOUR operates now.

The little know individuals single handedly were empowered by the Agency’s previous Directors to control foreign investment inquiry to Ethiopia through ethiomarket portal and believed to do the same since they changed the portal registrar address to Addis Ababa and unidentified person by the name Zaid Mosheky; see article Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum: Public or insiders Forum? (<http://ecadforum.com/articles/ethiopian-diaspora-business-forum-public-or-insiders-forum>)

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Service (EBS)



Amman Fissehazion

One of the 'Silver' sponsors of the Forum is the **Ethiopian Broadcasting Service (EBS)**. It claims to be 'a privately held media company established in 2008 in Silver Spring, Maryland with advertising office in Addis Ababa represented by Incom Trading, Bole Sub City Kebele 11 Bawa Centre, according to its website (<http://ebstv.tv>). The identity of officers' and

background are not revealed on the website. But it claims it is "the first nonpolitical Diaspora-based satellite TV, EBS has led the way in introducing innovative programming in Amharic and English to over 20 million viewers in Ethiopia and in the Diaspora". Though there is no way to verify neither its claim nor the need to entertain Ethiopians across the world from US, once again it is not clear what 'nonpolitical' means as it is the case with the Diaspora Business Forum.

Public record shows the Co-Founder and CEO' is Amman Fissehazion that registered Noah TA Broadcasting Inc. in 2008 at Federal Communication Commission [FCC](#). No additional information whether Noah TA is a separate entity or the parent company of EBS.

Though it is not clear whether EBS have any relationship with the Ethiopian government run Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC), on September 22, 2012 [Dire Tube quoting EBS's Press Release](#) reported, 'ARABSAT took EBS (ETHIOPIAN BROADCASTING SERVICE) off the air without any warning or notice due to alleged deliberate jamming of satellite signals from Eritrea". It was not clear why Arabsat accuse a privately owned TV station based in US jamming satellite signals across the world as it accused and sued the Ethiopian government.

It appears the 'privately' held EBS isn't what it claims to be and requires further investigation by the Media and concerned institutions to figure out who is behind it EBS.

[Precise Consult International PLC \(PCI\)](#), a **consultancy** firm based in Addis Ababa claims to be specializing in finance, investment, business intelligence and private sector development advisory services, according to its website.



Henok Assefa

Henok Assefa believes to be the brother of Yohannes Assefa moved from New York to Ethiopia. He is also on the Board of the little known American Chamber of Commerce in Ethiopia established January 12, 2009, according to Ethiopian Investor, portal he runs. (<http://www.ethiopiainvestor.com/index.php>).

His firm (PCI) is the sponsor of all the Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forums and the principle that organized the first annual Forum in Addis Ababa in 2007.

PCI was also a partner with Access Capital Services and investment firm established 'by member of the 'New York Wall Street Diaspora and led by Ermias Amelga, CEO of Access Capital, according to Tadias Magazine.

(<http://www.tadias.com/index.php?s=Henok+Assefa+#sthash.arE3JtZm.dpuf>).

Ermias Amelga fled the country accused by the government for allegedly defrauding investors. It is not clear whether once a celebrated businessman's wows are politically motivated as it is not public secret where TPLF operatives purge prominent businessmen with fraudulent charges for political or business reasons.

What is particularly perplex about Henock Assefa in Addis Ababa and Yohannes Assefa in New York appeared a coordinated effort to convince the international community there is a dialog going between the private sector in Addis Ababa and Ethiopian Diaspora investors with the government.

Medias' coverage of the Forums

It appears the Forum organizers didn't invite independent Medias in Diaspora for reason but handpicked EBS as the sole Media to be present at the Forum to cover and sponsor most of the events-- violating the law of public Forum. It isn't clear what motivated them to allow one Media to cover a public Form.

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Service (EBS) is the only Media physically present [to cover the 9th Forum](#) as well as sponsor several event including the 9th Forums.



Assfaw Meshesha

The reporter representing EBS is Assfaw Meshesha with unverifiable public profile and background for a Media personality. Also, all the people

interviewed appear coached what to say as the report's frequent slip of the mouth reviled he talked to them earlier before the interview set up (see the [video](#)).

Tadias Magazine is another Media that constantly reported on the [previous](#) and the [9th Forum](#)



Liben Eabisa

Tseday Alehegn

. The New York based online Magazine was established in 2003 with an aim for 'journalistic excellence tailored towards the Ethiopian-American community'; according to the website The Founders of the Magazine are Liben Eabisa – Founder & Publisher and Tseday Alehegn Founder & Editor.

EBS violated two journalism rule; conflict of interest and failing to do background check on the Forum organizers and participants. While Tadia Magazine for many years took the words of the organizers to print anything it is told to failed to investigate and follow up on the background of the organizers and the participants to inform the discrepancies of the misinformation to protect readers..

Looking at the Forum's history an average person let alone a Media would question the integrity of the Forum and the lack of transparency of the organizers and participants. What went wrong with the two Medias is something they must be accountable in the future.

The Award Recipients: Pioneer Business Person of the year and Champion

According to the organizers, the Award is 'bestowed on Diaspora entrepreneurs who have introduced innovation(s) in business that have significantly and positively affected business practices with long-term results in Ethiopia or in the Diaspora'. But, the award selection criteria, the process or the identity and the independence of selecting committee members weren't reviled on all four awards on the website. Such elementary inquiry was not performed by the two Medias that covered the Award and many Medias that cut-and-paste news. Such unprofessional conduct would have major consequences in the real world, but no one seems to care enough to investigate.

Who were the Award Recipients in the four successive Forums?

The 2014th recipients was Munir Duri, the founder and CEO of Kifiya Financial Technology PLC a digital financial and payment services provider based in Addis Ababa and Daniel Gizaw of dVentus Technology PLC, Ann Arbor, Michigan based engineering and manufacturing of electronics and electro-mechanical components and systems for smart grid application with operation in Addis Ababa, according to their respective website.

Munir Duri, was portrayed as the Founder and CEO of Kifiya Financial Technology



Munir Duri

(<http://kifiya.com>) established in February 2010. Though the company was presented as innovative Ethiopian Diaspora Business, the record show the main IT work is outsourced to India, according to [Suhans Nandan, Senior Business Analyst at Kifiya Financial Technology PL](#). It is not clear what the innovation may be implementing software developed in India that is deserving of an award.

To make matter worst, Munir is also associated with [Global Computing Solutions Plc](#) owned by Alula Araya, (Munir's initial partner in Coca-Cola Company (East Africa Bottling) purchase in 1995 for 10 Million US Dollars). GCS was also established in 1995 by acquiring the then Ethiopian Branch Office of National Cash Register (NCR), and telecommunication company AT&T Head Quartered in Dayton, Ohio, according to Addis Fortune for undisclosed amount. (<http://addisfortune.net/articles/three-in-one/>)

According to the article, Kifiya is actually a subsidiary of Global Computing Solutions Plc. led by Alula Araya, TPLF operative not Founded by Muri as reported on the Forum to earn him an award. Accordingly Kifiya won the Unified Billing System (UBS) contract with the help of Debretsion Gebremikael, Minister of Communications and Information Technology.

Munir isn't an ordinary Diaspora Ethiopian investor as portrayed on the Forum with supposedly his new 'company' either. He is the son of Dr. Duri Mohammed, representing Harari/Adare ethnic group in the Federal arrangement of Ethnic Federalism. Dr. Duri, a close associate of TPLF and the Former President of Addis Ababa University that was accused of purging three dozen Professors in the early 90s when the ruling regime led by TPLF took power.

Munir in his own right returned from United Kingdom and worked closely with the ruling regime clicks and in 1995 purchased East Africa Bottling Share Company (Coca Cola) with his partners from then Privatization Agency. The original shareholders of the Company were Negussie Hailu, Munir Duri, Bereket Haregot, Kassim Hussien' and unnamed fifth shareholder that sold all or part of their shares to South African Beverage Company (SABCO) for undisclosed amount. 'Today, 73pc of the company is owned SABCO, while Negussie Hailu, Munir Duri, Dereje Yesuwork and Abinet G. Meskel, own the remaining 37pc", according to Addis Fortune.

The unnamed fifth shareholder was Alula Araya, a TPLF operative that returned from US 1992.

Muri was also was a co defender with the Former Prime Minster Tamerat Layne-- charged for corruption along his partners Nigussie Hailu. On 15 March 2000 [All Africa Reported](#),

"The Federal Supreme Court yesterday announced its sentence on Tamirat Layne and his co-defendants.

Accordingly, Tamirat was sentenced to 18 years, Shadia Nadim to 15 years and a half, Hussein Abdalla who was tried in absentia to 16 years, Nigussie Hailu to 14 years and Munir Duri to 3 years rigorous imprisonment. The periods of imprisonment are to be calculated as of the date of their arrest"

[World News Network](#) also reported the same but it was not clear how much time Munir served of his three years sentence.

No one knows what happen to Munir is blackmailed and used as a front by TPLF operatives led by Alula to get lucrative contract from government and various government agencies, international organization and private companies. (See if you can track his whereabouts since his arrest)

[Danil Gizaw](#) 'is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of dVentus Technologies in Addis Ababa,



Danil Gezaw

Ethiopia Established in late 2010 dVentus, according the forum's website. But, according to dVentus' official website, it is US based company with engineering and manufacturing in Ethiopia and sales, customer support and sourcing divisions in Asia, Europe and emerging markets in Africa and the Middle East".

The company doesn't revile its officers and managers and the work it did in other countries as the news section of the official websites reviles it only projects are in Ethiopia. It is not clear why the officers and managers of the company and its actual work not reviled on the website since its establishment in 2005 in Michigan US.

Addis Alemayehou, is Founder and Managing Partner of 251 Communications Established in



Addisu Alemavehu

2011, it is a marketing and advertising company. He is also associated with Paconet Media PLC, a privately held Media firm and the principle partner in the first privately held English FM Radio station (105.3 AFRO FM) as well as other interests in Ethiopia, according to the Forum website.

The 2014, Diaspora Business Champion Award recipient known for many activities including serving on the Ethiopian Board of Connect Ethiopia, ‘an Irish business charity changing the way poverty is tackled, on the Board of SGI Ethiopia’, SGI, as the first international private equity group, as a consultant and as an agent for various Telecom companies within the East Africa region, according [Aitcc Africa](#).

His LinkedIn profile also reviles many more activities, including Board Member of the Ethiopian American Business Forum in Addis Ababa since 2012, Advisory Board Member African Leadership Network, South Africa since 2010 Board Member of Information and Communications Technology Association =Ethiopia ([ICT-ET.org](#)), an NGO in Addis Ababa since 2011

Addisu who received the Diaspora Business Champion Award admitting he is the Principle partner in the first privately held English FM Radio station (105.3 AFRO FM) in Ethiopia 22 years later since the regime came to power doesn’t sound a business champion. Unintentionally he incriminates himself by reviling he is the ruling party insider to own the only privately English Radio in a country of 90 Million. Never mind Hundreds of applicants for broadcasting licenses were rejected by the regime while the award winning champion of business Addisu self-promote as being the first English Radio operator.

Before he becomes a Diaspora Businessman, Addisu’s colorful background as a promoter of the trade and private sector tells the story. AGOA zero tariff preference Addis was Chief of Party for The VEGA Ethiopia AGOA+ Program, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It is the only stand-alone trade promotion program in Africa working to increase exports to the U.S

His speech on the Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum in 2008

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BeQb4ZKvER4> then working for VEGA Ethiopia AGOA+ Program and businessman now - knowing the problem on the ground speaks volume to his double talk.

The Nov. 25 2009 Bloomberg report 'the [U.S. Agency for International Development](#)- funded AGOA Plus said it brokered a contract worth as much as \$30 million annually between Jackson, Mississippi-based [Atlas Manufacturing Group](#) and Alameda Textile. Alameda is part of a group of companies that was founded and is controlled by members of Ethiopia's ruling party"

The report quoting Addis Alemayehu, the director of the AGOA Plus project, said 'his organization had been working on the deal for 18 months and said its intent was to create jobs'.

"For me, you go to the factory and you look at the 2,000 to 3,000 Ethiopians working, that's all I care about," he said in a phone interview on Nov. 23 in Addis Ababa. "There's always going to be a negative side when it comes to deals like this."

Addisu was also quoted "We see great potential for Ethiopia to increase exports to US under AGOA in general and in the textile and garments sector in particular,"

According to Addis the revenues that the nation obtains only from the textile sector has increased from about two million USD to 19 million USD in 2001/2 and 2008 because of AGOA. The country has also set to supply textile products worth of 25 million USD to the American Market in 2011, he added. <http://www.iesc.org/ethiopia-agoa-program-staff-featured-for-support-to-manufacturing-industry.aspx>

Alameda Textile alone exported 90% of the textile in US under Addisu's watch as he admitted -- making him technically working for the ruling party business interest than the people of America then or Ethiopia now unlike he make people believe. Is he breaking the law?

How about the Forum organizers and participants? It appears there is an elaborate conspiracy by individuals to mislead and misinform the public on behalf of the ruling regime. It requires high level investigations to find out the depth transgression.

Past Award Recipients of the Forum

In the previous Forums the recipients of the Pioneer Ethiopian Diaspora Business Person Award of the 8th Forum in 2013 are Amman Fissehazion, Co-Founder and CEO of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Service (EBS). In 7th Forum of 2012, Zemedeneh Nigatu, MD of Ernest & Young Ethiopia and Tadiows G. Belete, CEO of Boston Partners. And, the 6th Forum of 2011 was Ermias Amelga, CEO of Access Capital.

All the recipients have physical business presence in Ethiopia except Amman Fissehazion that operates his 'privately' owned TV station out of Washington DC area.

Amman Fissehazion is an elusive man with no much public information found for a Media operator. The 'privately' held Satellite TV EBS he established based in US claim it is 'nonpolitical' entertainment Media. But, it appears it is the ruling



Amman Fissehazion

Party owned enterprise to divert the Diaspora from the political reality at home (See sponsors above for detail)

It is hard to believe an investment in private entertainment satellite TV for the Diaspora with no meaning advertisers ignoring every crisis in the country but entertainment would convince anyone.

Tadiows G. Belete, is the CEO of Boston Partners is said to be 'a returnee who is among the earliest Ethiopian Diasporas to start business in his home country and celebrated for successes from running hair salon, working nights as a parking lot attendant in the Boston area worked his way up to invest on Sloan-spa, office building and resorts in Ethiopia'. But, at the 2012 annual Ethiopian Diaspora Forum Organized by The



Tadiows G. Belete

Ethiopian American in Washington DC, Yared Berhane, a senior official at Fairfax, and Tadiwos, CEO of Boston Partners announced that they have signed the multi-million dollar deal to export the Ethiopian brand to the rest of Africa, according to Ezega that claim to be the 'premier Ethiopian portal based in Silicon Valley, California that serve the Ethiopian community' with an office in Addis Abab, according to its website
(<http://www.ezega.com/news/NewsDetails.aspx?Page=news&NewsID=3349>)

What is troubling is not necessarily Tadiwos of Boston Group but the little known Fairfax African Fund that is involved in many things but not transparent in what it does (see Sponsor Fairfax Technology?)

Zemedeneh Nigatu is the Managing Director of Ernest & Young-Ethiopia (www.ey.com/ET/en)



Zemedeneh Nigatu

is the most visible and celebrated investment promoter in Ethiopia/Africa and the only person in the Forum that represent a prestigious American Accounting-Consulting firm based in New York. He vocally and publicly advocates the opportunities in Ethiopia, particularly to the Middle East and Indian investors in what appears to be is where most of his clients come from.

He advocate for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa in several Forums, including the World Economic Forum and Corporate Council on Africa is understandable given most of his clients/income come from multinational corporations. We should also accept his silence on the political and investment policy reality since the government of Ethiopia and possibly the ruling regime's businesses are major client to speak ill of the 'hand that feed him'.

What isn't clear is his misleading statements to Ethiopians in general and the Diaspora in particular-- beyond and above what is expected from the person that represents a prestigious American Firm where credibility is the only assets.

In an interview on Tadias Magazine Published: Monday, December 30th, 2013 asked by the reporter

"As to those who want to follow in his footsteps to Ethiopia, especially the Diaspora in the U.S., Zem recommends optimism and perseverance as the secret to success. "I say come with the glass half full mentality than the glass half empty attitude and you will enhance your chances of success," he emphasized. "I put my money where my mouth is and continue to personally invest in Ethiopia because there are still vast untapped opportunities compared to many other emerging economies."

– (See more at:

<http://www.tadias.com/index.php?s=Ethiopian+Diaspora+Business+Forum#sthash.u4AUAYEQ.dpuf>)

Though he came short of telling what area he invested on, his close association with the ruling party as policy adviser and as consultant for his ‘favorite’ public enterprise like Ethiopian Airline appears to be talking contrary to the reality of his own Firm’s attractiveness surveys on Africa Survey

The 2013 Ernst & Young’s attractiveness surveys on Africa Getting down to business

<http://www.zuidafrika.nl/viewer/file.aspx?fileinfolD=359> says;

“At a macro level, the perceived barriers to investment in Africa were similar to those mentioned in our previous two surveys: primarily political risk factors, with an unstable political

environment, corruption and a weak security environment consistently being at the top of the list”. Page 56

The 2012 Survey also repeat essentially the same thing http://regenesys.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Derek-Engelbrecht-Ernst-Young-Attractiveness_2012_africa_v17.pdf

The 2013 survey identified **Key principles and their implication to get it right (page 63) and concluded**

“African governments should engage in more collaborative and productive partnerships with these companies already doing business across the continent. There also needs to be greater focus on creating an enabling environment for doing business by more actively addressing the priorities we have highlighted in this report: implementing anti-bribery and corruption initiatives, accelerating the execution of critical infrastructure projects, addressing customs and border management inefficiencies, and driving the regional trade and integration agenda.”

The self-serving survey also reduced the main component of political risk (lack of representation in defragmented population with minority rule like Ethiopia) to ‘African elections calendar’ and down played the political risk as well as market risk of authoritarian regimes. In fact, governance beyond facilitating Foreign Direct Investment (FDR) is the least interest to his Firm as reflected on the surveys.

Indecently, EY survey doesn’t recognize Ethiopia in any of the top category of attractiveness and put the ‘Projected GDP growth rate (% change year to year – 2012–17) 6.3% and ‘Africa’s

rise to middle income' for Ethiopia shows 'Unlikely middle income by 2025'.contrary what we were told by Zemedeneg in many occasions-- repeating the regime's double digit figure.

Why would a successful Ethiopian who should know better would put his life and career online for a tyranny in his birth place is hard to contemplate.

Ermias Amelga He was the Founder and CEO of Apex Bottling company in1999, followed by Access Capital Plc., a private equity management firm that invests in real-estate in 2008, and Zemen Bank.



Ermias Amelga

By all account he has been a true Diaspora investor unlike any that deserve recognition surviving as long as he did in a web of corruptions infested environment he operated. According to Addis Fortune, "The Company was enjoying great success when the Ethiopian Revenues & Customs Authority (ERCA) knocked on its door, claiming that Apex and many other bottling

companies owed it excise tax in arrears"

His fallout, (some believe is orchestrated by TPLF operatives common with many independent businesses) began in 'September 2009, after it was asked to pay 50 million Br in excise tax arrears, including penalties and interest', According to the same report, Ermyas sold a majority of the shares at Apex Bottling to Michael Brehane and Yidnekachew Brehane, retaining only 45pc. (http://addisfortune.com/Vol_12_No_615_Archive/Highland%20Bottler,%20Apex,%20Faces%20Mounting%20Legal%20Troubles.ht)

With 50million birr back tax on his shoulder, Access Capital problem followed as it appeared to be planned by the regime. All of a sudden it was reported he was arrested on February 14, 2013, not for other things but 'issuing a bad check to a house buyer who claimed a refund for his investment but failed to cash it' according to Fortune report.

Such farfetched excuse to arrest on a claim of an individual is an elaborate scam to find a reason to arrest, demonize, bankrupt and confiscate asset as it is the hallmark of the regime and its operatives to eliminate business and political competitors' as it happened over-and-over again.

Some more interesting Diaspora Investors/characters

All of the businesses that are privileged to operate lucrative businesses are the ruling regime's political supporter's privilege.

Mulugeta Tesfakiros



Muligeta Tesfakiros

He is referred as 'a resident of Boston in the United States (US) for 12 years before he returned to Ethiopia in 1997, Mulugeta entered into the Ethiopian private sector with involvement in logistics. After mining salt in Afar Regional State, he finally formed AKAKAS, a logistics company, with Akalu Gelleta and Kassahun Abery (PhD), according to Addis Fortune.

With no public information on his background in Boston USA the man returned home and became rags to riches story involved in salt mining, real-estate and winery and now entering hotel business by purchasing Bekel Mola Langanu Hotel from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. .

Accordingly Addis Fortune Mulugeta is the Lone Bidder Offers 64m Br for the famous Langanu Bekele Molla offering 4 million more birr than the last bidding. He is also the owner of Muller Real Estate (<http://www.muller-realestate.com>), and Blue Nile Investment PLC' that bought Awash Winery from the Privatization Agency for 459.9 million Br in 2013 (<http://addisfortune.net/articles/awash-winery-going-private-at-last/>)

See Addis Fortune report on purchase of Langanu Bekele Molla

http://addisfortune.com/Vol_10_No_579_Archive/Lone%20Bidder%20Offers%2064m%20Br%20for%20Langanu%20Bekele%20Molla.htm

Mulugeta is among "Meles loyalists opposed to Ethiopian diaspora move" of campaign to block western aid from reaching Ethiopia as a punitive measure against the crimes being committed by Meles Zenaw regime on the 2005 election, according to EthioMedia (http://www.ethiomediamedia.com/fastpress/diaspora_move_opposed.html)

Mulugeta Tesfakiros on the same so called 'nonpolitical' EBS-TV interviewed recently (about his Real East venture painting rosy picture targeting the Diaspora in the campaign initiated by the regime's Foreign Minister Diaspora Affair.

(http://ebstv.tv/main/index.php?option=com_hwdvideoshare&task=viewvideo&Itemid=9&video_id=112)

Alula Araya



Alula Araya

Director of Global Computing Solutions (GCS) was established in 1995 and acquiring the then Ethiopian Branch Office of National Cash Register (NCR), Head Quartered in Dayton, Ohio. GCS a System Integrator, which implements Building Automation, Network and Enterprise Systems. It also provides Consulting and Management for IT Services, Network Operation Centers (NOCs) as well as Security and Data Center Operations

http://preciseethiopia.com/ceo_forum_member/alula-araya/

Alula returned from US in 1992 from the Seattle Washington Area and went on in buying binge public enterprises

Allula is also a unidentified 5th shareholder East Africa Bottling (Coca Cola) and ‘partner’ of Munir Duri in Global Computing Solutions (GCS) and Kifiya Financial Technology that won the Unified Billing System (UBS) contract with the help of Debretsion Gebremikael, Minister of Communications and Information Technology. (See Munir Duri for more on Alula Araya)

Alula, known as a clandestine TPLF operative by his associates is claimed to be the favorite of TPLF’s fat cats. Many believe he is simply doing TPLF bidding and doesn’t own anything in his name as most operatives. The complete absence of his activities in the cyber space for US educated engineer and operator of Technology Company reinforce his irrelevance without the TPLF fat cats.

Conclusion

The Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum is unquestionably is not kosher. The organizers, the sponsors and the participants clearly are an embarrassment to Ethiopians in general and the Diaspora in particular. The Forum’s clumsiness is also an insult to public’s intelligence and the very ideal of business or investment-- trampling on the rule of a Fourmand every ethics imaginable.

First, from the beginning all nine Forums recycle the same people, the same business, the same Medias and government agencies. **Yohannes Assefa**, one of the Founder and the Executives Director since the Forum’s foundation is a lawyer by profession isn’t an independent party to lead the Forum; owning and partnering with multiple businesses in US, Middle East Asia and Ethiopia directly benefiting from the Forum.

To make matter worst, he works for the government's Ministry of Trade while he managed what he claims nonpolitical Forum. There is no excuse for such clumsiness for a trained and practicing business lawyer in New York and Washington as he claimed. He should also understand the implication of misleading the investors as a neutral party when in actuality the Forum is a promotional pitch of his and associates' business interest or and the ruling party and or the government of Ethiopia. He is also aware of the legal consequence of colliding with foreign government misleading investors for financial gain.

At the meantime, in all the Forums; the speakers, the owners of the sponsoring businesses' and Medias concealing critical information regarding their business activities, government policy issues and the associated risks and reward involved investing in Ethiopia is misleading the public and illegal. The simple fact the participants are concealing the ruling party is the owner and operator of every business alone is sufficient reason to believe the Forum a ploy orchestrated to mislead the public and potential investors in the name of 'nonpolitical' Forum.

The activities of individual businesses present at the Forum and the networks of other business associates --stretching from North America to Middle East, Asia and all the way to Australia doing businesses in Ethiopia is hardly a secret for the Founder and organizer the Forum and the regime in Addis Ababa.

Regardless, the little window of opportunity the Forum provided to find out who-is-who in the Forum open a flood gate of 100s of networked businesses around the world that are directly and indirectly associated with Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) that can't be covered by one expose like this.

Whether the Forum organizers are innocent victims used and abused by the regime or part of the bigger scam of illegal enterprises of TPLF spreading across the world it is hard to say. It definitely requires an extensive worldwide investigation of businesses associated with TPLF and their networks in Ethiopia, North America, Europe, Middle East, Asia and elsewhere in Africa.

What can be said about the Forum is to clean up or shut down. The era of misrepresentation and corruptions is over.

Ethiopian Medias, legal institutions and civic society need to get involved in one and all public Forums to clean up misrepresentation and corruptions on behalf of the people. Others, including those who lost their investments misled by the Forum and its participants must call the responsible authorities to investigate them.

The American science fiction writer Frank Herbert best known for the novel Dune reversed the conventional wisdom by saying

"Power attracts the corruptible. Absolute power attracts the absolutely corruptible."

Likewise, Clive Staples Lewis, the Irish novelist, poet, academic... that lived in the mist of the two World Wars in tyranny infested region once said;

"Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies, The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience".

In that note, the struggle must face the absolutely corruptible amongst us as vigorously as it does the officials of tyranny to end the treacherous regime's rule. One more day is too a long time to wait especially for those that suffer the most in the dungeons of the corrupt regime.

Ethiopians must not take no for an answer from the brazen regime and its associates