

"Deru Kugi Utareru"



DAWIT FANTA

"Deru kugi utareru" is a Japanese proverb which translates as "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down".

As in a plain definition, democracy is "A government of the people, for the people and by the people". So to ensure democracy, adherence to the rule of law is a key feature. And its essence is to sustain the legitimate exercise of governmental authority according to the constitution and its enforcement through established due process. The basic principle of rule of law is to protect the people from arbitrary power, unchecked governance and mob rule which are the traits of dictatorship.

According to the World Justice Project (WJP) the rule of law comprises mainly of the following four principles:

1. A system of self-government in which all persons, including the government, are accountable under the law. It means equality before the law.
2. A system based on fair, publicized, and broadly understood and stable laws.
3. A fair, robust, and accessible legal process in which rights and responsibilities based in law are evenly enforced.
4. Diverse, competent and independent lawyers and judges.

The failure of one of these features certainly impedes the prevalence of the rule of law.

When we come to the Ethiopia context, it is crystal clear that to notice the Judicial Independence falls into question. Judges are under strict political influence and the whole judicial body could be said as a definite siblings to the TPLF led ruling party as Minister Bereket Simon described on his book "The Tales of the Two Elections" , the Defence (the Army) is the identical twin siblings to the ruling party.

Beside the politically sided judges, the prosecutors are also either politically biased or blackmailed by the Zenawi's henchmen. Foreexample, Prosecutor Shimelis Kemal, a one time good Samaritan in the past who stood as lawyer for free press journalists at his cost, has been blackmailed and now he is a lap-dog who wagged his tail and appeals to court for death sentence on political prisoners.

On the other hand, when the ruling party does something against the constitution, these institutions that are supposed to bring it to account doesn't accomplish their responsibility; rather they are fully dedicated to justify its wrong doings. So these pseudo-institutions and their servile puppets are playing a significant role in clogging the path for democracy and wrecking the ground for the prevalence of the rule of law.

The Rule of Law or The Law of Jante?

We have seen that the common features of the rule of law in Ethiopia are dysfunctional. So, if not the rule of law, what underpinned the Ethiopian political realm? I think it should be the Jante's law.

The Jante's law is an idea which first created by the Danish-Norwegian novelist Aksel Sandemose in his novel "A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks," where Jante is a fictitious town of Denmark. The society in Jante had Ten Commandments of social conformity to keep everyone in line; in Jante differences weren't celebrated, rather every possible measures had been taken to keep in conformity those who stuck out.

The following are Jante's law:

1. Don't think that you are special.
2. Don't think that you are of the same standing as us.
3. Don't think that you are smarter than us.
4. Don't think that you are better than us.
5. Don't think that you are wiser than us.
6. Don't think that you are more important than us.
7. Don't think that you are good at anything.
8. Don't laugh at us.
9. Don't think that anyone of us cares about you.
10. Don't think that you can teach us anything.

In the 20th century, the society in the imaginary town of Jante adopted their own law just for social conformity; but sadly, in this globalization era the same asinine law of Jante has been imposed on the shoulder of the Ethiopian people by TPLF megalomaniacs to ensure ideological conformity and political mediocrity which is literally anti-democracy.

On the face value it seems that we have the constitution, institutions.....etc. consequently we are in pursuit of happiness and the fruits of democracy; but all these are a smoke screen that deceptively arranged to heighten the political stature of TPLF

led ruling party in the international arena and to gain external legitimacy. What is going beneath the surface is the enactment of the replica and same version of Jante's law to straitjacket the whole people into one and similar Zenawi's Revolutionary Democracy ideological chamber.

Anyone who has a different ideology will be hammered particularly if they assumed that it would overshadow theirs. That is why every now and then we hear the arrest of opposition political leaders and activists. They have been arrested, falsely charged, extorted, humiliated, and convicted.

Currently the people of Ethiopia are in an incomparable frustration. Citizens are forced to be "League" and/or "Forum" member; they are compelled to contribute to EPRDF subtly or overtly. If anyone diverts out of the preset ideological track, he is a certain tall poppy who will be cut down at all cost.

Quarantine

As its dictionary definition, quarantine means an isolation of a person or animal that has a disease from other people or animals to prevent the spread of the disease.

Whereas in TPLF/EPRDF context, it is a process of isolation of a person who has a different political ideology from the society to prevent the awakening of the people by means of incarceration under a fabricated charge.

Right this moment there are thousands of political prisoners owing to the ill-conceived TPLF's quarantine tenet. But the point is, it might be possible to maroon a physical person for long time in isolated place, but it is implausibly difficult to pluck out their political belief; if quarantine was an exclusive solution, Robben Island would be a burial ground of Anti-Apartheid movement as Mandela was locked up there for close to three decades.

Tall Poppy Syndrome

Tall Poppy Syndrome /TPS/ is a situation that happens when a person /Politician in this case/ develops a superiority complex and that the view and contributions of others can be scorned and consequently cut down /eliminate/ others.

Particularly as this ruler's TPS reaches its climax, people will be held under the iron grip of dictatorship then they would prefer political mediocrity; and the country will suffer from ideological myopia. As a result the despots like Zenawi will count the state as their private property, the institutions as a collection of gadgetry which serve their corrupted will than the rule of law and they develop a disorder which demands the society to genuflect to them. That is why it becomes trendy in Ethiopian judiciary system that the politically "convicted" prisoners chivvied and extorted by the motley of TPLF's functional junkies to ask pardon and to genuflect to Zenawi to get free from their concentration camp.

What We Need

We need and we struggle for:

- (a) The Rule of the Law, NOT the Jante's Law.**
- (b) Constitutionalism, NOT Unchecked governance.**
- (c) Institutionalism, NOT Arbitrary power.**
- (d) Term limits, Power alteration and Honourable Departure, NOT Life time leadership.**
- (e) Celebrating ideological differences, NOT Incarcerating people because of their political belief.**
- (f) Freedom and All fruits of Democracy, Not Relics of Communism.**

WE WERE BORN FREE AND WE HAVE AN INALIENABLE RIGHT TO LIVE FREE!!!

BY: DAWIT FANTIA