When Enigmatic Hypocrisy Overtakes

It is less than often that employees of the numerous UN institutions bravely resign on account of ethical principles and to uphold ethical standards as stipulated in the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service of the United Nations which the organisation uses as a behaviour and ethical guide in the management of its personel. But that is exactly what the brave Swedish national Mr. Anders Kompass did. Having served for over 20 years, he resigned his post **citing the impunity** **and lack of accountability** of the UN he witnessed. As a man of conscience and high integrity Mr. Kompass could not live with the corruption and malpractices in the UN. He had the courage and selflessness to blow the whistle and live with the consequences. He lost his good paying job but left dignified and walking tall. How many can do that!

Of course for any person who follows world events on cyber space, reports on the terrible failings and corrupt practices of the UN peace missions are as common as tragic current event news. Corruption, sexual abuse and cover up and broken accountability system are manifestly ever headlines. But what is so fundamental about Mr. Kompass’s story is that it brings out the very current inner nature of the UN. It exposes the incongruous nature of its practice and its mission. The UN is supposed to be a democratic institution bestowed to ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms. Yet the serious concerns and fiascos Mr. Kompass exposes, are the antithesis of its very mission. His report shows how autocratic the UN is in its governance and the extent to which this has been internalised. Needless to say abuse of any sort that befalls on an individual or group is an abuse of human right and so is sexual abuse of children by UN serving personnel. Astoundingly what we can discern from this story is, cover up rather than official, transparent and truthful disclosure of events is the modus operandi. Yet the UN is in the seventh heaven even when falsified, manipulated human rights abuse cases are brought to her. Not only that, its competence on human rights concern and protection seems to be invariably selective vis-à-vis countries and deliberately streamlined vis-à-vis the universal declaration human rights. All this is done to suit the case at hand. Who would say this is not stomach-turning hypocrisy.

Mr.Kompass clearly points out that the pursuit of personal interest overrides everything else thus forcing employees to look the other way. Add to such malpractices, the manipulation and exertion of undue pressures and hegemonic control by the powerful member states, then you have a recipe for dysfunctionality, corruption and ineptitude. As we can recognise the UN as institution is self-legitimising accountable to no one. But the problem here is what to do when the UN abuses? I am not talking only about events which Mr. Kompass has told have transpired. I am talking about equally or even harmful decisions that the UN makes. A case in point here is for instance, the illegal falsified sanction and disproportionately biased and politically motivated human rights accusation levelled against Eritrea. There is no other legal mechanism outside the UN institutions where the accused can get a fair and legitimate hearing. This is the in-built problem of the UN. By all accounts, the UN as an institution is without conscientiousness and therefore a negation of itself – literally in conflict with itself. Curiously enough, the UN is right even when at fault and ceases to exist during occasions when it does not serve the interest of the powerful members. Reform is long overdue.

And a final note on Mr.Kompass’s brave act. His resignation is indeed a noble contribution to the effort of those who call for the reform and rejuvenation of the UN as the world’s collective instrument of peace security and prosperity. But even more crucially the reform called should bring about a mechanism of some sort of accountability and probity. Equality, and respect for the interests of all nations regardless of size and power, truthfulness, justice, transparency and impartiality should be the lubricants of workings of the UN. It is for such purpose that this conscientious man has given his privileged status. I say thank you Mr. Kompass – you really are a true compass!

Haile H.Gaber Holland