

Silent Cry

Exposing the hidden genocide in the horn of Africa

By YPFDJ-UK Media

Building a Strong, Conscious and Patriotic Eritrean Youth

Published: August 2009



A little girl aged about 10 years old walks with her infant brother on her back. She is responsible for her two little brothers as their parents are victims of the sickening barbarism by the Ethiopian soldiers. This little girl and her two younger brothers crossed to Garissa, northern Kenya with other Somali-Ogadeni refugees. Tens of thousands of men, women and children crossed to the neighbouring country Kenya escaping from Ethiopian soldiers who are indiscriminately burning, massacring, raping and torturing the people of Ogaden.



Ethiopia claimed the Ogaden region in the late 19th century through a series of agreements with Italy and the U.K., which colonized Somalia. Ethnic Somalis from the Ogaden region are opposing the Ethiopian rule and the minority Junta lead by Melez Zenawi has banned journalists from travelling independently in the region and rejected a United Nations call for an independent assessment of human rights atrocities. For this reason, the genocide in the region has been completely hidden from the rest of the world.

A group of young British students travelled to east Africa where they discovered the 'Silent Cry'. A documentary film based on the lives of families and their struggles in the Ogaden regions of Ethiopia. The story begun after the students met a Taxi driver in Nairobi, Kenya. He shared with them his personal tragedy about the displacement of his family. The Students then made a trip to northern Kenya where a refugee camp for the Ogadeni survivors is located. Nothing had prepared the team for the circumstances they were to come across. Poverty and extreme human suffering was visible.



On June 20th, 2009, Eritreans in UK were commemorating their martyrs in Hyde Park, London. Amongst many thousands Eritreans, there were also friends of Eritrea from different countries including some Ogadeni-Somalis. On that day, the students contacted YPFDJ representatives and explained their trip in East Africa and the documentary film titled 'Silent Cry'. The horn of Africa has become one of the most turbulent areas in the world and this is because most countries in the area have been marginalised and as a result have become easy

target of exploitation to those who have geopolitical agenda. Atrocities and crimes by minority juntas are being ignored and turned the region to a war zone. If there is going to be a positive change, the youth in the region has to get united and actively work to promote peace and stability. Many if not all positive changes in the world came by active roles of the youth.

As Eritreans, YPFDJ and also members of the 'Horn of Africa Youth for peace and Stability initiative', cooperating with the youth from our region is what we do and there was no doubt in our mind that, the documentary film would be informative. Empowering the people from the horn of Africa region is the only key to the solution. Creating awareness and educating our people can bring about everlasting peace and stability.



The Documentary was first shown in the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) on Saturday 25th July and then followed London on the 2nd of August. The event was organised very well and there were more than two hundred Somali, Ogadeni, English, Eritreans, Bangladeshi, Ethiopians, Pakistani etc. The event started with a brief introductory speech by the students who filmed and edited the documentary. During their speech they showed pictures of children arriving to the camp alone. Little Ahmed is one of them. His parents are missing after they were taken by the Ethiopian soldiers and disappeared. He spends nights and days without his parents. And they showed children's body burned, the silent victims of rape and torture. A mother who gave birth to twins on her way to Kenya after escaping from the Ethiopian soldiers. The most sickening of all was the ordeal of Fatima who was raped by 9 soldiers. 7 out of 10 people they met were tortured, 80 percent of the refugees suffered imprisonment, UN staff said, the main difference between Somali and Somali-Ogadenis was



the signs of torture on their body. 85 percent of women aged between 16 to 30 years were raped in prison. 90 percent of women they met had their husbands missing. 45 percent of children were without parents. 95 percent of men escaped from prison. Many were tortured, burned, raped, buried alive, and hanged. Parents were forced to watch their sons being murdered after the oil field attack by ONLF on the Chinese engineers and many were accused of supporting the ONLF rebels.

Working through days and nights for 58 days the students produced a documentary that will change many people. They say, they are speaking for the voiceless, they stand for a change and they consider themselves to be humanitarians who are committed in helping the oppressed people. They want torture of infants to stop, they want to end the rape of women and young girls and they want to end the hangings/slaughter of innocent people. They want to end Genocide in Ogaden and they have asked the entire peace loving world to join them. Muslims, Christians, Jewish, Protestants etc, to be part of this sacred movement.

The subject of this documentary, the atrocities on the civilian population of Ogaden was a reminder of what Eritrean people went through many years before independence. It's very sad that, this is happening today and is being perpetuated by a government that came to power as a result of the sacrifices of a people who suffered similar atrocities. These actions



are of course symptoms of a junta that is intellectually bankrupt, lacks legitimacy and has a single reason for existing. It is simply prolonging its existence and grasping at straws, treading the well beaten path to the dustbin of history. A path characterized by the persecution, arrest, rape and murder of the defenseless and the most vulnerable, those not able to respond. The minority tribal clique in Ethiopia is engaged in human rights abuses within the Ogaden region, which borders Somalia. Though Meles Zenawi and his minority junta is denying and covering these despicable crimes, human rights organizations have documented the atrocities committed.

These students have provided some direction. The thing that they pressed on is publicity of the Somali-Ogadeni plight. YPFDJ will use its own reach to publicize the plight of Somali-Ogadeni people and our people to the world. YPFDJ chapters in the whole world will work closely with the Somali-Ogadeni youth in our respective countries towards this end.

Visit: www.silentcry.co.uk