

Who is Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali?

By: Achamyeleh Tamiru¹

Introduction

This article raises some serious questions on the integrity and honesty of the current Ethiopian Prime minister Abiy Ahmed Ali. As a Bible thumping leader, Abiy Ahmed needs to come clean about so many questions in his checkered biography. Whether we agree with him on his current actions (inactions) and policies and his flamboyant camera seeking styles, it is important we question the integrity of the man who is at the helm of a country we all love.

Source & Authenticity

The Wikipedia post of the biography PM Abiy Ahmed is written by the PM himself. This is a fact verified by a credible source close to the prime ministers office. On the other hand, if a person wishes to remove the post or to correct it he or she has the right. But if the stories entered were wrong, the PM or his office would have removed or corrected it.

Early life

Abiy Ahmed was born in the town of [Beshasha](#)^[9] in the historic [Kaffa Province](#) (in the present day [Jimma Zone](#), [Oromia Region](#)), Ethiopia on 15 August 1976.^{[10][11]} His father, Ahmed Ali, was a [MuslimOromo](#)^[12] (and had four wives^[13]), while his mother, Tezeta Wolde,^[14] was an [Orthodox](#)^[15] [Christian](#).^{[16][17]}

Abiy is the 13th child of his father and the sixth and youngest child of his mother.^{[9][16]} His childhood name was *Abiyot* (English: "Revolution"). The name was sometimes given to children in the aftermath of the [Derg revolution of 1974](#).^[9] The then Abiyot went to the local primary school

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and later continued his studies at secondary schools in Agaro town. Abiy, according to several personal reports, was always very interested in his own education and later in his life also encouraged others to learn and to improve.^[9]

Education

According to the PM's biography, while serving in the [Ethiopian National Defense Force](#), Abiy received his first degree, a [Bachelor's degree in computer engineering](#)^[18] from a private College called Microlink Information Technology College (Addis Ababa Branch) in 2001.

Abiy holds a [Master of Arts in Transformational Leadership](#)^[18] earned from the business school at [Greenwich University](#), London, in collaboration with the [International Leadership Institute](#), Addis Ababa in 2011. He also holds a [Master of Business Administration](#)^[18] from the Leadstar College of Management and Leadership in Addis Ababa in partnership with [Ashland University](#) in 2013.

Abiy, who had started his [Doctor of Philosophy](#) (Ph.D.) work several years ago as a regular student,^[19] completed his Ph.D. in 2017 at the [Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa University](#). He did his Ph.D. work on the [Agaro](#) constituency with the PhD thesis entitled "Social Capital and its Role in Traditional Conflict Resolution in Ethiopia: The Case of Inter-Religious Conflict In Jimma Zone State". As a follow-up to his Ph.D. thesis, he published a research article on [de-escalation](#) strategies in the Horn of Africa in a special journal issue dedicated to [countering violent extremism](#).^[20]

Personal life

He met and married his wife, Zinash Tayachew, an [Amhara](#) woman and the grand daughter of a famous Anti-Fascist patriot named Dejazmatch Birre Zegeye of Armachiho, [Gondar](#),^{[9][16]} while both were serving in the Ethiopian Defense Forces.^[21] They are the parents of three daughters and one recently adopted son.^[21]

Abiy is multilingual and speaks [Oromifaa](#), [Amharic](#), [Tigrinya](#), and English.^[22] He is a fitness aficionado and professes that physical health goes hand in hand with mental health and as such, he frequents physical and gym activities in Addis Ababa.^[21] Abiy is an [Evangelical Pentecostal Christian](#) of the [Full Gospel Believers Church](#).^[23]

Military career

As a teenager and in early 1991,^[24] He joined the armed struggle against the [Marxist–Leninist regime](#) of [Mengistu Haile Mariam](#) after the death of his oldest brother. He did so as a member of [ODP \(Oromo Democratic Party\)](#), which at that time was called Oromo People’s Democratic Organization (OPDO). ODP was a tiny organization of only around 200 fighters in the large coalition army of about 100,000 fighters that resulted in the regime's fall later that year.^{[22][9][21]} As there were only so few ODP fighters in an army with its core of about 90,000 [Tigrayans](#), Abiy had to quickly learn the [Tigrinya language](#). As a speaker of Tigrinya in a security apparatus dominated by Tigrayans, he could move forward with his military career.^[22]

After the fall of the Derg, he took formal military training from Assefa Brigade in [West Wollega](#) and was stationed there. His military post was in intelligence and communications. Later on he became a soldier in the now Ethiopian National Defense Force in 1993 and worked mostly in the intelligence and communications departments. In 1995, after the [Rwandan genocide](#), he was deployed as a member of the [United Nations Peace Keeping Force \(UNAMIR\)](#), Kigali, [Rwanda](#).^[25] In the [Ethio-Eritrea War](#) between 1998 and 2000, he led an intelligence team to discover positions of the [Eritrean Defense Forces](#).

Later on, Abiy was posted back to his hometown of Beshasha, where he – as an officer of the Defense Forces – had to address a critical situation of inter-religious clashes between Muslims and Christians with a number of deaths.^{[22][26]} He allegedly brought calm and peace in a situation of communal tensions accompanying the clashes.^[22] This may have foreshadowed his role as an inter-religious mediator he became in later years.

In 2008, Abiy was one of the co-founders of the Ethiopian Information Network Security Agency (INSA), where he worked in different positions.^[9] For two years, he was acting director of INSA due to a [leave of absence](#) of the director assigned to the post.^[9] In this capacity, he was board member of several government agencies working on information and communications, like [Ethio Telecom](#) and [Ethiopian Television](#). In 2010, Abiy eventually decided to leave the military and his post as deputy director of INSA to become a politician. The highest rank he had achieved during his military career was that of a [Lieutenant Colonel](#).^{[20][22]}

Political Career

Member of Parliament

He started his political career as a member of the [ODP \(Oromo Democratic Party\)](#).^[27] The ODP is the ruling party in [Oromia Region](#) since 1991 and also one of four coalition parties of the ruling coalition in Ethiopia, the [EPRDF \(Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front\)](#). He became a member of the central committee of ODP and congress member of the Executive Committee of the EPRDF – in quick succession.^[22]

Religious Forum for Peace with Abiy Ahmed (2010)

In the 2010 national election, Abiy represented the woreda of [Agaro](#) and became an elected member of the [House of Peoples' Representatives](#), the lower chamber of the Ethiopian [Federal Parliamentary Assembly](#). Before and during his time of parliamentary service, there were several religious clashes among Muslims and Christians in [Jimma zone](#). Some of these confrontations turned violent and resulted in the loss of life and property. Abiy, as an elected member of parliament took a proactive role in working with several religious institutions and elders to bring about reconciliation in the zone. He was then setting up a forum entitled "Religious Forum for Peace", an outcome of the need to devise a sustainable resolution mechanism to restore peaceful Muslim-Christian community interaction in the region.^[20]

In 2014, during his time in parliament, Abiy became the Director General of a new and in 2011 founded Government Research Institute called [Science and Technology Information Center \(STIC\)](#).^{[9][28]} The year after, in 2015, Abiy became an executive member of ODP. The same year he was re-elected to the House of Peoples' Representatives for a second term, this time for his home [woreda](#) of Gomma.

FACT CHECK:

Now let us analyze Abiy Ahmed's qualification based on this official bio.

- 1 Abiy Ahmed was born in 1976.

His biography states that he:

“Went to the local primary school and later continued his studies at secondary schools in Agaro town”

And later it states:

“ As a teenager and in early 1991, he joined the armed struggle against the [Marxist–Leninist regime](#) of [Mengistu Haile Mariam](#)”

Question:

Abiy Ahmed was 15 years old in 1991 when he joined the armed struggle. At 15 a child can only reach 8-grade maximum. If he was in the armed struggle in 1991 how can he be in the armed secondary school at the same time?

Comments:

Abiy Ahmed was indeed in the OPDO at 15. *He did not finish his high school.*

- 2 His biography states that he joined the armed forces in 1993 when he was 17 years old.

Comments:

Another indication that he could not have been in Agaro for his secondary school while he was in OPDO and later in the Armed Forces.

3 His bio states that:

“In 1995 he was in Rwanda in the Ethiopian army contingency that was dispatched under the auspices of the AU and the UN.”

Comments:

When Abiy Ahmed was in Rwanda he was 19 years. Abiy Ahmed at 19 and with only two years service could only have been a private soldier. The records and the story that was told by his own friends show that he had no other rank until he suddenly became a captain. If he was only 19 and private soldier when he was in Rwanda he could not have played any role in peacemaking and reconciliation as told by his colleagues and his supporters. He probably did not even speak English properly coming straight from either 8th or seventh grade in remote corner of Kaffa region in Beshahsha. As we know it the contingency's job was to manage roadblocks and escort convoys and similar missions.

4 His biography states:

“After the fall of the Derg, he took formal military training from Assefa Brigade in [West Wollega](#) and was stationed there. His military post was in intelligence and communications. Later on he became a soldier in the now Ethiopian National Defense Force in 1993 and worked mostly in the intelligence and communications departments.”

Comments:

In 1991 when he joined the OPDO armed struggle, after the Dergue had fallen, he says he took military training in West Wollega and was stationed there as intelligence and communication soldier and then in 1993 joined the armed forces.

Comments:

This boi of the Prime Minister is confusing that readers are expected to connect the dots.

5 His biography further states

“Later on, Abiy was posted back to his home town of Beshasha, where he – as an officer of the Defense Forces – had to address a critical situation of inter-religious clashes between Muslims and Christians with a number of deaths.^{[22][26]} He brought calm and peace in a situation of communal tensions accompanying the clashes.^[22] This foreshadowed his role as an inter-religious mediator he became in later years.”

Comments:

In 2000 he was only 24 with little or no experience. It is difficult that he can assume such a responsibility at this age and with no knowledge or training on the subject.

6 His biography states that he participated in the Badme War between 1998 to 2000.

Question:

If he was in the frontline during these years how could he get his bachelors degree in 2001 in computer engineering from Micro link information technology?

Comment:

One needs to be full time student for years to get a BA in anything. In addition, one has first to finish high school to be enrolled in College. Besides Micro link College’s first-degree program graduation was held in 2005. That means even though Abiy stated that he graduated from the College in 2001, there

was no any degree program the College was giving before those who graduated in 2005 graduates.

7 His biography states that

“He was one of the founders of INSA in 2008. It says he was one of the founders of INSA and director of INSA for two years at the same time he was board member of several government agencies (29 years old).”

Comments:

This was at the height of the EPRDF repression, which took many lives, and hundreds of thousands of people were imprisoned. Abiy admits in this biography that he found and led one of the major instruments of repression in Ethiopia.

8 His Biography states that:

He got his Masters degree in 2011 and MBA in 2013.

Comments:

In the real world you have finish high school and attend college full time for 2 years to get a graduate degree. Abiy got two maters degree between 2011 and 2013. He must have begun working for his MA four years earlier. But he was in the active service in the army and later in politics with many responsibilities and there is no record that he was on leave for 4 years for his BA and two years for his MA and more time for his MBA. It is simply impossible.

9 His biography states that he:

“He started his PHD when he was a regular student.”

Comments:

In the academic world you don't start a PHD program before you get the required undergraduate and graduate degrees. To say that

he started his PHD program when he was regular student does not make sense. To get a PHD there are required courses that candidate should take before even beginning to write dissertations. This of course can happen in Ethiopia where you can get your PHD without nay-formal education. Abiy never had any formal education.

10 **Military Training:**

His Highest rank reached was Lt. Colonel. In the normal military process it takes a commissioned officer at least 15 years of service to reach the rank of Lt. Col. Abiy Ahmed was first a captain and then Lt Col without the required service and any formal officer training.

We have been told that he is a PHD holder. We know that to get a PHD after high school takes a minimum of 8 to 9 years of full time study. For most people it is interrupted for many reasons and takes much longer. Those who have genuine PhD understand what I mean. Abiy must have been in the 7th or 8th grade when he left his home and joined the militant movement. How Abiy was able to work full time as a soldier and then as a senior government official and be able to finish high school, get his under graduate, his graduate and finally a PHD is mind-boggling. Abiy may have attended distant education but still does not answer the miraculous ‘scholastic achievement’ without a formal education. It cannot be that easy. In Ethiopia, there are many fake PhD holders who have never been to formal schools. And don’t even speak English properly. He may be one of them.

11. **Plagiarism and Staged Interviews**

Abiy has worked his way to this level by giving false impressions of himself as a learnt person. He wants to present himself as a remarkable person in many ways. He wants to be considered as charming and exceptionally eloquent. People who have worked with him tell a story of a man obsessed with power and ego. He also tried hard to present himself as a person who has a capacity to memorize a whole

conversation and excerpts from books and present it as his own. In November 2016, he produced a fake interview supposedly by the 'Atlantic Magazine' on local and global affairs and posted it on You Tube. The interview never took place. It was made to look like he was responding to questions from an Ethiopian journalist falsely representing the Atlantic Magazine. His answers excerpts from the book Soft Power by Joseph NYE word by word and the interviews of Henry Kissinger, and an article by Russell Brand. The fact that he was able to memorize these and face the camera and present the speeches and writings of other people as his own, makes him a bold and desperate person who wants to prove himself in whatever way possible. In doing so he underestimated the capacity of people to find out that these were clear plagiarism. But plagiarism is also a crime. Anyway, here is the link to the You Tube video that shows Abiy's plagiarism:

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnUoPlbnqeo>)

N.B. Plagiarism is defined as: "The act of appropriating the literary composition of another author, or excerpts, ide as, or passages therefrom, and passing the material off as one's own creation. Plagiarism is theft of another person's writings or ideas.

12. Contradictory speeches to different audiences

His speech at his ascension to power was one that galvanized almost the entire population. But in later months, it became clear that he was adapting different speeches to different audiences. In his first interview, as PM, on the Ethiopia State TV from the National Palace, he glorified Ethiopian Kings such as Menelik and Haile Selassie I and repeated it at a few other occasions when addressing the general public through Amharic, the official language. But when he addressed his Oromo constituency in Oromiffa, he depicted these same leaders as enemies of the Oromo people who reduced the Oromos as slaves and worked all along to oppress the Oromos because of who they are. One sample is this speech he gave at Oromo's Democratic Party Conference in Jimma.

During this digital age and in a country where many speak both Afan Oromo and Amharic it is difficult to be two personalities. People

patiently waited until he learns and his better part emerges. People were aware of these discrepancies but still hoped that he will eventually unify the country. The PM continues to say one thing on one occasion and contradicts himself in another. He treats the Ethiopian people as children.

For example on March 28 he gave a press conference. When asked about the status of Addis he said Addis belongs to every body and not one ethnic group. But his own party's (ODP) statement made through Lemma Megersa in early March, made its position clear to the Ethiopian people that Addis Abeba belongs to the Oromo people and that they are intent in changing the demography of the city, hence the decision to move 500,000 Oromos from the South West to Addis and surrounding areas.

Abiy is a Narcissist

Abiy is becoming an ethno centric demagogue who will never be able to establish democracy in Ethiopia as long as he has a narrow ethnic agenda and self-destructive ego.

PM Abiy is focused on an image of himself as an all-knowing leader who can lecture on practically every issue. Many people believe now that PM Abiy has a narcissistic personality disorder.

“Narcissistic personality involves a distorted self-image. Emotions can be unstable and intense, and there is excessive concern with vanity, prestige, power, and personal adequacy. There also tends to be a lack of empathy and an exaggerated sense of superiority. Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is closely associated with egocentrism, a personality characteristic in which people see themselves and their interests and opinions as the only ones that really matter.”

People around him are careful not to touch his ego. He never consults before he makes crucial decisions. He always wants to be the center of attention. When he looks humble it is all by design. Abiy's ego is on the verge of submerging Ethiopia into an endless civil war. He loves the aura of an emperor. He wishes to be revered and respected like an emperor.

He could have still been a ruler without dragging Ethiopia to this path. Ethiopia is a victim of Abiy's ego.

Ably The Seventh Emperor

Abiy publicly stated in the EPRDF parliament that selected him to be the PM, that his mother had always told him that he will be 'the seventh king of Ethiopia' and that he had taken this very seriously. Because of this , Abiy is extraordinarily focused on himself and his image and has a 'vaulting' ambition, to use a Shakespearian language in Shakespeare's Macbeth. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhDoLdIYfyg>).

Conclusion

The throne that Abiy wished to sit is thorny and he is feeling it. After hearing about the prophecy of his rise to the throne, Macbeth develops a 'vaulting' ambition. Macbeth's ambition led him down to a path of self-destruction very early in his reign. The prophecy of the witches for Macbeth and the path he followed to make the prophecy real is a useful historical analogy. The novelist Italo Calino writing about the tribulation of those who have risen to power:

“The throne, once you have been crowned is where you had best remain seated. Without knowing day and night. All your precious life has been only a waiting to become king; now you are a king; you have only to reign. And what is reigning if not this long wait? Waiting for the moment when you will be deposed, when you will have to take leave of the throne, the scepter, the crown and your head”

Let the world know that Ably is a dangerous demagogue who, through his personality disorder unwise and narrow agenda would lead the nation and indeed the entire region and beyond into a turmoil.

Note: *The footnotes of this article are directly imported from the Wiki bio of PM Abiy.*