



The Monthly Publication from the Ethiopian Embassy in London

Ethiopian News

August - September 2012 Issue



H.E. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi

1955 – 2012

May He Rest in Eternal Peace

Ethiopians all over the world bid farewell to PM Meles Zenawi

After weeks of national mourning for the untimely death of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, a state funeral - Ethiopia's first in more than 80 years - was held on 2nd September in Meskal Square, where tens of thousands of Ethiopians, dozens of foreign leaders and dignitaries, including at least 20 African presidents, gathered to pay their last respects.

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi who led Ethiopia for the last 21 years with great wisdom and far sightedness passed away on 20th August, aged 57, at the hospital where he was under medical treatment.

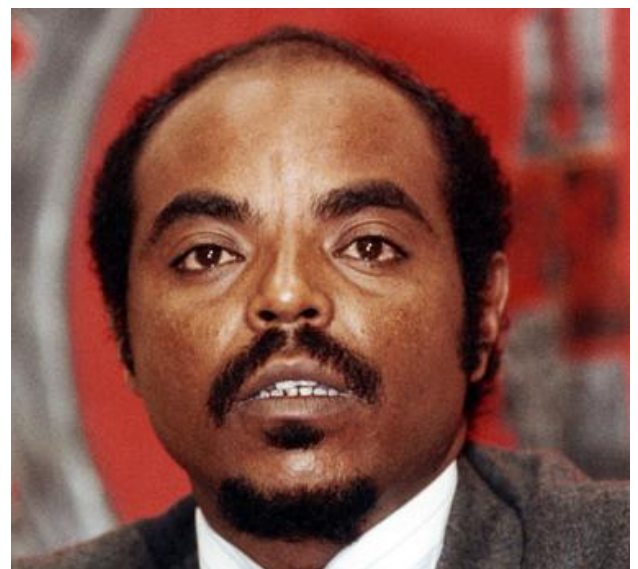
Prime Minister Meles was mourned by innumerable Ethiopians, many of whom travelled hundreds of kilometres to pay their last respects on foot, on horseback and on public transport, when the late Prime Minister's coffin lay in state at the Grand Palace. After the first day, the palace gates were closed but the sheer volume of people meant that the gates were opened again and, for ten days, tens of thousands of Ethiopians flooded in to revere a head of state who had brought change to the lives of tens of millions of ordinary Ethiopians who now openly expressed their appreciation.

The body of the late Prime Minister arrived in a flag-draped coffin on a car-drawn hearse, escorted by a marching band of the Defence Forces and accompanied by his family, relatives and ministers and high-ranking officials.

Launching the ceremony, Acting Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn said the Government was ready to realize the dreams of late Prime Minister Meles. He said the policies that helped the country contribute to peace in neighbouring countries will continue to be strengthened. "Meles was a leader who established a strong developmental state"; and "he devoted his life to the peace and security of the African continent especially the Horn of Africa."



“One of the greatest sons of Africa” and a “truly visionary leader”, PM Meles will be remembered for his achievements in bringing about peace and development by building a democratic order.



Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was the architect of a number of development strategies and

policies, poverty reduction and alleviation programmes including the Growth and Transformation Plan, which envisages realizing Ethiopia's renaissance that would lead to its joining the community of middle-income nations in the coming decade or so.



African leaders and other dignitaries, paying tribute to the late Prime Minister's lifelong achievements noted his "intellectual brilliance", his "vision" and his "untiring capacity as an "uncommon leader".

Eulogies were given by President Boni Yayi of Benin and current Chairperson of the African Union; President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda; President Jacob Zuma of South Africa; President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria; President Omar Al-Bashir of Sudan; President Salva Kiir of South Sudan; former South African President Thabo Mbeki; Ambassador Susan Rice, the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations; and the Co-chair of ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Louis Michel. They paid tribute to the late Prime Minister's lifelong achievements, and expressed their admiration and high respect for his person and the huge legacy he left to his country, and indeed to the continent and the world.

President Boni Yayi of Benin said the late Prime Minister Meles had managed to put Ethiopia among the fastest growing economies in the world. He stressed he had been fully supporting the African Union's efforts to ensure peace, security and good governance on the continent.

Former deputy Prime Minister, Addisu Legesse, delivered a profile of the late Prime Minister Meles whose life was "inseparable from the struggle and politics of the EPRDF". Meles, of course, always shunned the limelight and ignored fame and popularity. Nevertheless he achieved renown as a statesman and won great acclaim and respect.

Meles was a visionary leader of change. His message to youth was "it is my wish that you will not have to experience the strife and suffering that was the lot of my generation, and that you shall enjoy a brighter future", adding that "our struggle is not a marathon but more akin to a relay race where those who ran earlier pass on the baton to those who came later."



The concluding remarks were made by PM Meles' widow, Azeb Mesfin, who in an emotional speech thanked the Ethiopian people for standing with her and her family at these trying times. She said PM Meles "never cared for himself, but only for his country" and emphasised that "Meles has been struggling for the democracy, peace and development of Ethiopia and the people of Ethiopia have understood his efforts".

The procession left Meskal Square towards the Grand Palace and the Holy Trinity Cathedral where the burial took place. After a final service at the Cathedral, a 21-gun salute took place and the Prime Minister Meles' body was laid to rest in the presence of family and friends.

In addition to the thousands of people in Meskal Square, millions of others in Addis Ababa and in regional cities throughout the country watched the State Funeral ceremony broadcast live on giant screens. The ceremony was also broadcast live on Ethiopian satellite channels for the Diaspora around the world.

Here in London, over a thousand Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia honoured and paid their last respects to the late Prime as his funeral was taking place in Addis Ababa. Members of the Ethiopian community were seen streaming to the Ethiopian Embassy from the early hours to follow the live television transmission.

Addressing the gathering, Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK and the Scandinavian countries, H.E. Berhanu Kebede, paid tribute to the late Prime Minister who dedicated his life to the emancipation and equality of the Ethiopian peoples and under his leadership steered Ethiopia on the path to democracy and development.



The great leader, he said, has put in place a federal democratic order that laid the foundations for peace and accelerated economic growth, essential for the realisation of a viable Ethiopia. Huge projects including the Grand Renaissance Dam initiated by Prime Minister Meles were highly inspirational in fostering public confidence and self-reliance by tapping into Ethiopia's natural resources to maximise gains made in improving livelihoods.

He noted that the visionary leader was among those African sons at the forefront in firmly upholding and highlighting African issues and was always steadfast in his principled stance for peace and stability in the Horn of Africa and beyond. Prime Minister Meles will be

remembered for his wise leadership and for his outstanding development and democracy legacy.



The Ambassador urged all Ethiopians to stand united and continue with development schemes for the realisation of Ethiopia's renaissance, the vision of late Prime Minister Meles.

Messages of condolence and tributes were read by representatives of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the Ethiopian Consensus Forum, the Amhara Development Association, the South Ethiopia Peoples Development Association, the Ethiopian Somali Diaspora Forum, the Tigray Development Association and performing artistes.





Prayers and benedictions were given by religious leaders and poems celebrating PM Meles' achievements were read at intervals at the gathering, at which refreshments were served by members of the community.



A day earlier on Saturday 1st September, a candlelight vigil was held in memory of the late Prime Minister in front of the Houses of Parliament at Westminster, in London, in the presence of hundreds of Ethiopians mourning the visionary leader.

Jointly organised by the various Ethiopian Development Associations and Ethiopian communities residing in London, the event was marked by chants and slogans paying tribute to the late leader, widely known for his pro-poor development programmes that have lifted millions out of poverty.

In a speech he gave at the vigil, H.E. Ambassador Berhanu Kebede hailed Ethiopia's achievements under the leadership of the Prime Minister and called upon Ethiopians to rededicate themselves to the implementation of the development programmes charted by the great leader.



Fifty-seven candles were lit from a single candle to pay tribute and recognize the extraordinary lifelong contributions and sacrifices by the great leader for Ethiopia's development and later hundreds of candles were lit from those 57 to symbolize readiness on the part of 80 million Ethiopians to make Meles' vision a reality.

A two-minute silence was held during the vigil and prayers and benedictions were given by religious leaders.



Similar vigils were also held in Ethiopia and around the world.



Detailed coverage can be found in 7th September issue of A Week in the Horn. Please send an email to info@ethioembassy.org.uk, for more information.

World leaders hail PM Meles



Leaders from Africa and around the world have praised PM Meles' legacy since his death. On learning of the Prime Minister's death, Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron said, "Prime Minister Meles was an inspirational spokesman for Africa on global issues and provided leadership and vision on Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. His personal contribution to Ethiopia's development, in particular by lifting millions of Ethiopians out of poverty, has set an example for the region. Our thoughts are with his family and with the nation of Ethiopia. He will be greatly missed."

Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown said that with Mr Meles's death, the world's poor had lost one of their greatest champions.

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso in a statement said "Prime Minister

Meles was a respected African leader. He demonstrated his strong personal commitment over many years to improving the lives of not just his own but all African peoples, through his work on African unity, climate change, development and in promoting peace and stability, particularly in the Horn of Africa. In his time, Ethiopia made great advances towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals."

US President Barack Obama in a statement said, "Prime Minister Meles deserves recognition for his lifelong contribution to Ethiopia's development, particularly his unyielding commitment to Ethiopia's poor. I met with Prime Minister Meles at the G-8 Summit in May and recall my personal admiration for his desire to lift millions of Ethiopians out of poverty through his drive for food security."

US Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, said, "I admired the Prime Minister's personal commitment to transforming Ethiopia's economy and to expanding education and health services. He was an important and influential voice in Africa, and we especially valued his role in promoting peace and security in the region."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said "Prime Minister Zenawi will be remembered for his exceptional leadership and advocacy on African issues within and outside the continent, as well as for overseeing his country's economic growth and development." The Secretary-General said he will remember, in particular, Prime Minister Zenawi for his "active commitment to working with the United Nations on numerous global peace and development challenges."

President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya described the late PM as a pragmatic and visionary leader who helped stabilize his country and placed it on the economic growth path, adding that his death is a devastating loss. President Kibaki further pointed out that the late PM's leadership and negotiation skills will forever be missed.

South African President Jacob Zuma praised Meles as "a strong leader, not only for his country but on the African continent" and the Horn of Africa in particular. "It is an absolute tragedy for Africa and the people of Ethiopia to mourn such an exceptional leader who contributed as an active role-player in various continental and global initiatives, especially in playing host to the African Union," Zuma said in a statement.

President Paul Kagame of Rwanda described the late Prime Minister as a 'visionary and gallant leader with genuine concern for the social-economic transformation of Ethiopia, and of Africa as a whole - with a commitment to Africa's rightful place in the world.'

President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria said, "His death is a major loss for Africa. He was a great African statesman, who is also a friend of Nigeria, a nation-builder and a great servant of the Ethiopian people...Prime Minister Zenawi will be remembered for his vision and integrity."

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo said the death of Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles has robbed Africa of a "committed, forthright, visionary and fearless leader".

Kofi Annan, Chair of the Africa Progress Panel, former Secretary-General of the UN, and Noble Laureate said, "Ethiopia, headquarters of the African Union and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, has historically played a key role in both the region and on the African continent, a role bolstered under the stewardship of Meles Zenawi."

Chinese President Hu Jintao, in a message to Ethiopian President Girma Wolde-Giorgis said, "Meles was an outstanding leader of Ethiopia and a renowned African statesman who was dedicated to the great cause of national development and Africa's revival...We will never forget the great contributions that he made to the establishment and development of the China-

Ethiopia comprehensive cooperative partnership.”

In his message to Ethiopia's acting Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, Premier Wen Jiabao said that, as an excellent Ethiopian statesman, Meles had made great contributions to the country's construction and Africa's peace and development.

Italy's Foreign Affairs Minister Giulio Terzi, in a message to H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, said “Prime Minister Meles led Ethiopia out of a difficult period, personally shouldering the task of fostering economic progress and institution-building. Thanks to his undeniable and widely recognised leadership, Ethiopia has become a point of reference for Africa and is today acknowledged as one of the continent's most important political actors thanks to its steady economic growth, earnest commitment to resolving regional crises and broad international recognition...The excellent status of bilateral relations between Italy and Ethiopia is also the fruit of Prime Minister Meles' farsighted and pragmatic approach to strengthening what are ancient and intense bonds, with the aim of reaping the related mutual benefits.”

Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre expressed sorrow on receiving news of the Ethiopian Prime Minister's death. “Meles Zenawi has played a key role in the international cooperation on climate change, including a close collaboration with Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg. He has also been an important driving force for development in Ethiopia in recent years. He has promoted economic growth and poverty reduction. He played a key role in particular in connection with the peace negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan.”

Norwegian Minister of International Development Heikki Holmås commented, “Ethiopia is among the countries that are on track to meet the goal of halving poverty. Mr Meles has played an important part in this work.

Norway hopes that this development will continue under new leadership.”

A mausoleum will be built to commemorate the life of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The building will include a library and an exhibition of Meles' life and achievements.

A dedicated website has also been set up for the late PM. <http://www.meleszenawi.gov.et/en/>.

Ethiopians in the UK mourn their Great Leader

Members of the Ethiopian Diaspora community residing in the UK paid tribute to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi at a condolence book signing ceremony held at the Ethiopian Embassy in London.



Many on the occasion, expressed their deepest love and respect for the late Prime Minister and their appreciation of the achievements under his leadership. The public emotional outpouring testified to the support the great leader enjoyed for his innovative, pro-poor development plans in the fight against poverty.





Carrying high the tri-colour and pictures of Prime Minister Meles, Ethiopians chanted slogans reflecting determination that the inspiration from the Prime Minister would continue, sustaining them in their drive to achieve Ethiopia's Renaissance.

Speaking to fellow compatriots on the occasion, Deputy Head of the Ethiopian Embassy in London, Ambassador Abdirashid Dulane, highlighted the major role of a truly visionary leader who made possible faster economic growth through development projects including the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan. He urged Ethiopians to stand united to see achieved the dream of the late Prime Minister of seeing Ethiopia join the community of middle-income nations in the near future.

In a prayer and benediction remembering the good deeds of the late leader, Head Priest and pastor of London's St. Gabriel Church, Gebregiorgis Dimtsu, said Ethiopians should stand united at this difficult time and carry on peace-building in a nation that cherishes tolerance and equality.

A cross-section of the community including mothers, young people, the elderly and religious leaders stood for hours in queues to express their grief and gratefulness to the late Prime Minister, who was hailed as one of the most prominent African leaders and a Panafricanist who stood unflinchingly for the interests of Africa and Africans.

Participants at the event vowed to endure the tragedy that has befallen them with the traditional Ethiopian perseverance and unity and ensure the progress of Ethiopia's peace and sustainable development.



The Embassy has been inundated with messages from Ethiopians, Friends of Ethiopia, UK Officials, Diplomats and other dignitaries on the passing of the PM. The Embassy wishes to thank everyone for their support at this difficult time.

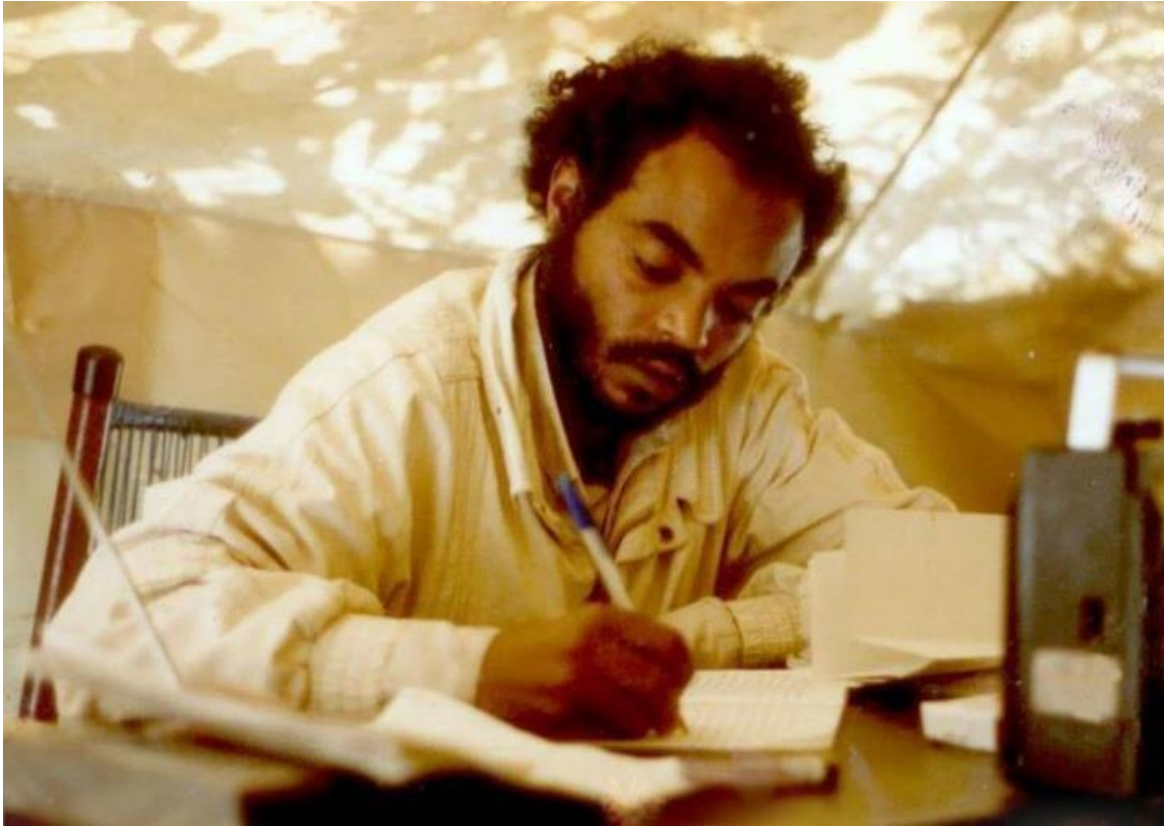
A memorial service of the late Prime Minister will be held in the coming weeks.

A copy of this publication is also available online on our website: www.ethioembassy.org.uk

For more information, please contact us on info@ethiembassy.org.uk.

**Published by the Press Office
Embassy of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia
London, SW7 1PZ**

A Biography of PM Meles



Meles Zenawi was born on 8th May 1955 in Adwa in northern Ethiopia.

He received elementary education at the Queen of Sheba Junior Secondary School and completed High School in 1972 at General Wingate School in Addis Ababa. He then joined the Medical Faculty of Addis Ababa University where he studied for two years.

Meles interrupted his studies in 1974 to join the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF). He was elected to the Leadership of the TPLF's Leadership Committee in 1979 and to its Executive Committee in 1983. He was chairman of both the TPLF and the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) from 1989 up to his death in August 2012. EPRDF is a political alliance of the four main political organisations in the country.

Upon the defeat of the military junta, Meles became president of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and Chairman of the Council of Representatives (the legislative body of the transitional government) from 1991 to 1995. He was elected Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in 1995 and re-elected for three consecutive terms in 2000, 2005 and 2010.

He served as chairman of the Organization of the African Union from June 1995 until June 1996. He was co-chairman of the Global Coalition for Africa. He was also actively involved in IGAD's efforts to end the conflicts in Sudan and Somalia, and Africa initiatives to seek a solution to the crises in Burundi. In 2004, he was appointed by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair as one of the Commissioners in the Commission for Africa. Meles was the co-chairperson of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (Nov 2006). Under his leadership, Ethiopia has become the Forum's co-chair country. Meles also represented Africa at the G8 and G20 summits. Nominated by the African Union, Meles led an African Delegation at the Global Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen in 2009. In February 2010 the UN appointed him co-chair of the new high-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing.

In 1995, Meles acquired a First Class M.A. in Business Administration from the UK's Open University and in 2004 an MSc. in Economics from the Erasmus University of the Netherlands.

The Prime Minister leaves behind a widow, Mrs. Azeb Mesfin and three children.