

The Prophecy of Adi Mongonti: Issaias Afeworki's Sudan Paradox and the 35-Year Sacrifice of General Bitweded Abraha "Bitow"

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In his televised interview on Monday, 12 January 2026, Issaias Afeworki of Eritrea delivered a rhetorical performance that bordered on the surreal. As the devastating civil war in Sudan continues to bleed the region dry, Issaias emerged as an unbidden advocate for "civilian rule" and "democratic governance." To a casual observer, his words might seem like those of a concerned statesman; however, to the Eritrean people, they represent a staggering display of autocratic hypocrisy. While Issaias prescribes the medicine of democracy for the Sudan, he continues to administer the poison of absolute tyranny in Eritrea, ignoring a prophecy of dissent that was spoken in his own backyard decades ago.

The Sudanese Mandate According to Issaias

During the interview, Issaias reflected on the popular uprising that toppled the long-standing regime of Omar al-Bashir. He characterized the current role of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, as a transitional necessity – a custodian whose primary responsibility is to win the war and subsequently "transfer power to the people."

Issaias was unequivocal: the Sudanese people "deserve a democratic and civilian governance." It is a profound irony that a leader who has presided over a one-man regime for over three decades – without an implemented constitution, a parliament, or a single national election – now feels qualified to lecture a neighbor on the virtues of yielding military power to a civilian populace.

A Bond Beyond Borders: The Debt to the Sudanese People

It must be stated clearly that the Eritrean people hold a deep, unconditional affection for the people of Sudan. For generations, Sudan was a second home to any Eritrean seeking refuge. During the darkest years of our liberation struggle, Sudan did not merely open its borders; it opened its heart. Eritreans were treated as brothers and sisters, often enjoying the same rights and dignity as Sudanese citizens.

Consequently, we Eritreans do not oppose the idea of our country offering support to Sudan in its time of need. If the help offered by the Eritrean government is genuine, transparent, and aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Sudanese people, it is a noble

continuation of a historical debt. However, the problem lies not in the support itself, but in the messenger. When a dictator who denies his own people every basic right claims to seek “civilian governance” for another, we must ask: Is this a genuine act of solidarity, or a cynical maneuver to maintain regional influence?

The Prophecy of Adi Mongonti: The Case of General Bitweded Abraha

The hollow nature of Issaias’ advocacy is most poignantly exposed by the fate of those who called for exactly what he now prescribes for Sudan. Long before the “G-15” officials had disappeared in 2001, General Bitweded Abraha, known affectionately as “Bitow,” was already sounding the alarm. Please listen to this timeless speech of an Eritrean Hero and man of unparalleled courage.

A hero of the liberation struggle, Bitow issued what can only be described as the

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“Prophecy of Adi Mongonti.” In a timeless and powerful speech delivered to the public in his native village, the General spoke of the urgent necessity for democratic

governance. He recognized early on that the transition from a liberation front to a sovereign government required the EPLF to transfer its authority to the Eritrean public. He argued that the power won in the field belonged to the people, not to a small military elite.

His reward for this prophetic call for “civilian rule” has been nearly thirty-five years of indefinite detention. He remains in a cell to this day, a silent martyr for the very principles Issaias now audaciously champions for the Sudan. While Issaias tells the world that the Sudanese military must transfer power to the people, he holds Bitow in a dark cell for suggesting the exact same thing in Eritrea.

Voting with Their Feet: The Silent Demonstration

Issaias’ interview was also notable for what it omitted: the ongoing tragedy of the Eritrean youth. He lauded the Sudanese for demonstrating and changing their government, yet he ignores the fact that his own citizens are engaged in a permanent, silent demonstration of their own.

Because the prophecy of General Bitow was ignored and constitutional rule was suppressed, Eritreans are now “voting with their feet - what we call it the “Tiebout Way in economics.” Forbidden from protesting in the streets of Asmara, the youth flee the country in droves to escape a life of indefinite national service and systemic hopelessness. This mass exodus is a daily referendum on Issaias’ failure to provide the “civilian and democratic governance” he claims to wish for Sudan. If the President truly admires people who take their fate into their own hands, he must answer for the millions who risk their lives in the Sahara and the Mediterranean to escape his rule.

A Rebuttal to Hollow Advocacy

The fundamental question that Issaias Afeworki must answer is this: If the Sudanese people deserve democratic and civilian governance, why is this same right treated as treason in Eritrea? Why is the heroism of the Sudanese demonstrator a virtue, while the prophetic words of General Bitweded Abraha in Adi Mongonti are treated as an unpardonable sin?

We support the people of Sudan, and we support genuine help offered to them. But we refuse to accept Issaias Afeworki as a champion of democracy. Until General Bitow, the G-15, and other political prisoners are freed, until the 1997 Constitution is implemented, and until the youth of Eritrea no longer feel the need to flee their homeland, Issaias’ words on Sudan will remain a cruel mockery of the principles of liberty. Eritreans do not need their leader to be a mentor for Sudanese democracy; they need him to stop being the jailer of Eritrean freedom and finally honor the prophecy spoken in Adi Mongonti.