

The Ritual of Impunity: Ethiopia's 2026 Sham Election and the Genealogy of Aggression – A Rebuttal of the IFA's "Federal Recomposition" Thesis

Dr. Gebre Gebremariam

***Context:** As an Eritrean scholar dedicated to the long-deferred dream of a democratic transition in my homeland, I have always maintained that the struggle for internal reform is inextricably linked to the preservation of national sovereignty. Sovereignty is the foundational bedrock upon which the house of democracy must be built; without a secure, recognized, and inviolable state, the quest for constitutional governance and the rule of law in Eritrea remains an impossibility. It is this conviction that compels me to closely monitor the political and strategic developments within our neighbor, Ethiopia.*



*The current political trajectory in Ethiopia, characterized by the consolidation of power under Abiy Ahmed and a shifting ideological landscape, represents an existential threat to the stability of the entire Horn of Africa. The rhetoric emerging from Addis Ababa is no longer merely about internal governance; it has evolved into a **Revisionist Neo-Imperialism** that seeks to challenge established colonial borders and resurrect imperial ambitions.*

The following evaluation of the article “[Abiy and the Making of the New State: From Party Command to Federal Recomposition](#),” published by the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), is a timely and necessary exercise in my duty as a scholar. By deconstructing the “recomposition” narrative promoted by the IFA, I aim to expose the dangerous reality behind the mask of “reform.” What is presented by the Ethiopian state as a move toward stability is, in fact, a transition toward a centralized autocracy that utilizes expansionist gambits – most notably the “Red Sea Mirage” – to deflect from its own domestic collapse. For those of us struggling for a democratic Eritrea, understanding these dynamics is not a choice, but a necessity. We must confront the “Genealogy of Aggression” that threatens our sovereignty if we are to ever realize a future defined by peace, stability, and democratic accountability, where “Rule of Law and Justice” prevails.

The Architecture of Amnesia and the “Recomposition” Myth

The article published by the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), titled “Abiy and the Making of the New State: From Party Command to Federal Recomposition,” presents a sanitized reading of Ethiopia’s political trajectory. It frames the current transition as



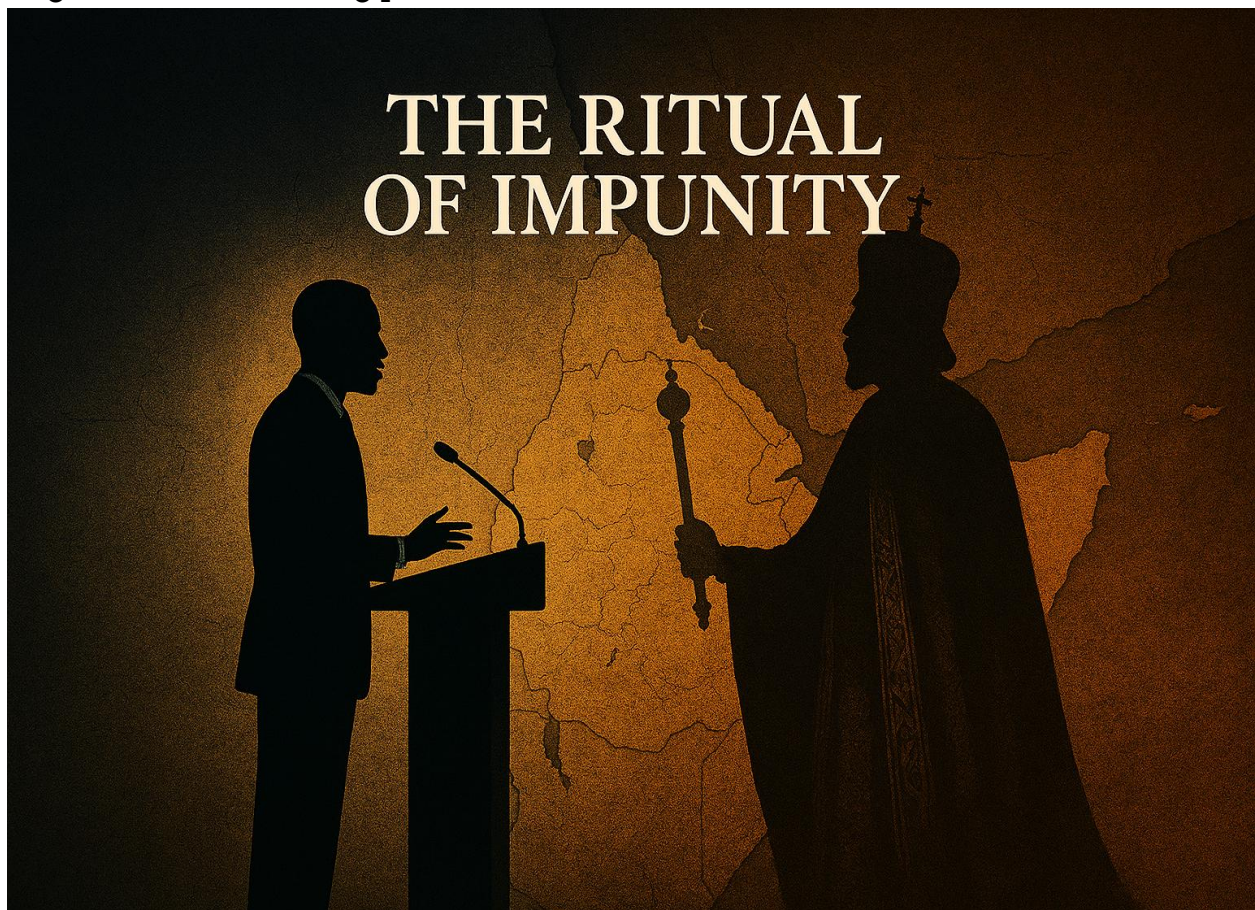
a sophisticated “reallocation of authority” following the exhaustion of the previous party-command system. However, as I have documented extensively over the last several years, this narrative is analytically thin and ignores the empirical reality of state decay. What the IFA describes as “recomposition” is, in fact, the systematic dismantling of the federal distribution of power to facilitate a one-man, one-party

autocracy – a process I have defined as the “Bashashafication of Truth” (Gebremariam 2026a).

The 2026 Election: A Ritual of Impunity

The IFA article characterizes the 2026 election as a mechanism for “keeping politics inside constitutional form.” My research contradicts this, showing that the election is a sham where Abiy Ahmed is effectively the sole candidate. He has dismantled the federal distribution of power by installing “stooges” at the state and local levels to ensure absolute central control (Gebremariam 2025e).

Historically, such “administrative reorderings” are classic precursors to state fragmentation. A striking parallel is found in Slobodan Milošević’s “Anti-bureaucratic



Revolution” in the late 1980s. Like the rhetoric found in the IFA piece, Milošević claimed to be “reforming” the Yugoslav federation by removing “inefficient” regional leaders and replacing them with loyalists to “restore unity” (Judt 2005, 674). In reality, this destroyed the delicate federal balance and led to a violent collapse. Ethiopia’s 2026 election, conducted in what I call a “Seat of Impunity” where the regime does not effectively control territory just miles from the capital, is a similar ritual designed to manufacture a mandate for a failing center (Gebremariam 2025f, 2026d).

The “Sick Man of the Horn” and Economic Deception

The IFA’s portrayal of macroeconomic reforms as “governing through reform” ignores the catastrophic socio-economic failure currently defining Ethiopian lives. Through my analysis, I have shown that Ethiopia has become the “Sick Man of the Horn,” suffering from skyrocketing inflation and a cost-of-living crisis that has paralyzed the populace (Gebremariam 2026d).

The regime’s attempt to frame currency devaluation and debt restructuring as “progress” mirrors the deceptive rhetoric of Emperor Haileselassie I. In the early 1970s, Haileselassie maintained an international profile as a “modernizer” while his administration ignored the Wollo famine and the structural rot of the imperial system (Marcus 1994, 181). Ultimately, the gap between imperial mythology and the lived reality of the people led to the 1974 revolution. Today’s “Architect of Amnesia” strategy attempts to mask current policy failures by promising a return to a mythical, prosperous “Imperial Abyssinia” (Gebremariam 2025d, 2026b).

The Red Sea Mirage: Scapegoating as Strategic Policy

A central pillar of the IFA article is the framing of Ethiopia’s maritime agenda as “geo-economic insurance.” In my work, I have deconstructed this as a “Revisionist Logic” aimed at violating the sovereignty of neighboring states, specifically Eritrea, under the guise of “national survival” (Gebremariam 2026c, 2026f).



This pattern of “externalizing domestic decay” through maritime expansionism was famously employed by Benito Mussolini. Facing internal economic stagnation, Mussolini invoked the “Imperial Roman” past and the concept of *Mare Nostrum* (“Our Sea”) to justify aggression in the Horn of Africa (Mack Smith 1982, 118). Similarly, Siad Barre of Somalia attempted to deflect from internal clan divisions by pursuing a “Greater Somalia” irredentist policy, leading to the 1977 Ogaden War and the eventual total collapse of the Somali state (Laitin and Samatar 1987, 139). Abiy’s “Red Sea Mirage” is not a pursuit of connectivity; it is a “pretext for aggression” that risks a similar “Suicide by Geography” (Gebremariam 2025g, 2026b).

Conclusion: The Fallacy of Equilibrium

The IFA article concludes by suggesting the 2026 election is a search for “stable equilibrium.” However, I contend there is no equilibrium in a state where the “Inviolable Red Line” of international borders is threatened to mask domestic insolvency (Gebremariam 2025a, 2025b). The “recomposition” described by the IFA is actually the deconstruction of a nation by a leader who has chosen aggression over reconciliation and autocracy over federalism. True stability in the Horn of Africa requires recognizing that sovereignty is inviolable and that no amount of revisionist rhetoric can mask the decay of a state under the grip of a neo-imperial project.

References

Gebremariam, Gebre. 2025a. “The Fallacy of Equilibrium.”

<https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/The-Fallacy-of-Equilibrium-2.pdf>

———. 2025b. “The Inviolable Red Line.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/The-Inviolable-Red-Line.pdf>

———. 2025c. “The Aggressor Host.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/The-Aggressor-Host.pdf>

———. 2025d. “The Architect of Amnesia.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/The-Architect-of-Amnesia2.pdf>

———. 2025e. “An Urgent Response to Abiy Ahmed Parliament Speech.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/An-Urgent-Response-to-Abiy-Ahmed-Parliament-Speech.pdf>

———. 2025f. “The Seat of Impunity.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/The-Seat-of-Impunity.pdf>

———. 2025g. “The Geopolitical Quagmire.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/The-Geopolitical-Quagmire.pdf>

- . 2025h. “Eritrean Sacrifice for Ethiopian Stability.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Eritrean-Sacrifice-for-Ethiopian-Stability.pdf>
- . 2025i. “The Red Sea Mirage.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/The-Red-Sea-Mirage.pdf>
- . 2025j. “Red Sea Dynamics.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Red-Sea-Dynamics.pdf>
- . 2025k. “The Genealogy of Aggression.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/The-Genealogy-of-Aggression-1.pdf>
- . 2025l. “Asab: The Cradle of Eritrea.” https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Asab_The-Cradle-of-Eritrea-2.pdf
- . 2025m. “Scapegoating Eritrea and Weaponizing Ignorance.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Scapegoating-Eritrea-and-Weaponizing-Ignorance2.pdf>
- . 2026a. “The Bashasha-fication of Truth: Abiy Ahmed’s Revisionist Scapegoating and the Red Sea Access Gambit.” https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/The-Bashasha-fication-of-Truth_Abiy-Ahmeds-Revisionist-Scapegoating-and-the-Red-Sea-Access-Gambit-1.pdf
- . 2026b. “Suicide by Geography.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Suicide-by-Geography1.pdf>
- . 2026c. “Sovereignty Under Siege: Deconstructing Ethiopia’s Red Sea Gambit and the Pretext for Aggression.” https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Sovereignty-Under-Siege_Deconstructing-Ethiopias-Red-Sea-Gambit-and-the-Pretext-for-Aggression.pdf
- . 2026d. “The Sick Man of the Horn: Domestic Decay, State Collapse in Ethiopia and the Consequences for Eritrea.” https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/The-Sick-Man-of-the-Horn_Domestic-Decay-State-Collapse-in-Ethiopia-and-the-Consequences-for-Eritrea1.pdf
- . 2026e. “From Topographical Errors to the Genealogy of Aggression.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/From-Topographical-Errors-to-the-Genealogy-of-Aggression.pdf>
- . 2026f. “Sovereignty Is Inviolable: Dismantling the Revisionist Logic of Ethiopia’s Maritime Imperative.” https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Sovereignty-Is-Inviolable_Dismantling-the-Revisionist-Logic-of-Ethiopias-Maritime-Imperative-2.pdf
- . 2026g. “The Red Sea Bastion.” <https://eritreahagerey.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/The-Red-Sea-Bastion.pdf>

Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). 2026. "Abiy and the Making of the New State: From Party Command to Federal Recomposition." <https://ifa.gov.et/abiy-and-the-making-of-the-new-state-from-party-command-to-federal-recomposition/>

Judt, Tony. 2005. *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. New York: Penguin Press.

Laitin, David D., and Said S. Samatar. 1987. *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Mack Smith, Denis. 1982. *Mussolini*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Marcus, Harold G. 1994. *A History of Ethiopia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.