



Looking down from the windows of the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU)

A day in Addis Ababa/Ethiopia - 1979

In 1979 I entered the gates of the then named Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa/Ethiopia.

I was called for a job interview. After I went through the many sequences of said interview, I stopped by the office of a friend of mine who was an employee there. My friend held a high position and could move freely within the long and majestic corridors of the organization.

The atmosphere was serious and kind of heavy. I was told that the then Secretary General – Mr. Edouard Kodjovi Kodjo {known as Edem Kodjo} was trying to implement a strict rule of discipline among the employees, thus the reason movements from one floor to another were strictly monitored.

My friend wanted at any cost to make me see – from afar - the mass grave where the prominent 60 Ethiopian government's officials were murdered and buried. Just below the window of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). These officials were summarily executed under the orders of Menghistu Hailemariam, then ruler of Ethiopia. No one was positively sure of the place of execution, for secrecy was the utmost rule of a criminal like Menghistu HaileMariam. But that specific spot was whispered to be the one.

Among them there were some elderly Eritreans who held high positions under the rule of the deposed Ethiopian Emperor Haile Sellasie. Their kids grew up with me in Asmara.

We made it to a higher floor and my friend asked me not to expose myself at the window, but to try to look while holding the curtains as a shield.

She pointed out at a large patch in the ground below that seemed like a wet area dominating the large field. There was no grass growing. I asked my friend if it was possible to take some photos. But I was told that those who tried were spotted by the notorious secret agents of the Derg surveying the area and also explained the need of a camera with powerful lenses because of the distance.

I looked at that particular spot as large as a school's play ground. I could only imagine body after body being thrown in the same grave without any consideration for humanity or for justice.

I was told that the soldiers who carried out the executions were later liquidated by their own Government.

But such secrets can never be buried for lifetime. Beside, nature itself refused to cooperate and did not allow for the grass to grow or the ground to level. It was like a circle with its own center constantly sinking like an epicenter of death.

It made me wonder how people went by their daily work life trying to built an Organization that was supposed to bring justice and rule of law to Africa, all while ignoring the many lives screaming silently right under their windows.

I also wondered how many times Menghistu Hailemariam himself smiled ironically at this organization that is known for the marathon of meetings it holds and for the below zero results it achieves for an Africa that should stand on its own and be able to bring its own dictators to face a court of law for the immediate and unlawfully killings without any consideration for legal formalities. Above all for the audacity to burry said victims right under the large windows of this organization all while letting the air circulate in those meetings. An air filled with human bodies' natural decomposition.

This took me back to the fields surrounding the beautiful capital city of my own country – Eritrea- who was then colonized by Ethiopia itself.

I had just left my children with my mother and above all I had just left Asmara where my husband was declared "missing" by the Ethiopian security that arrested him in 1978. My husband was tortured to death and declared missing from each and every prison in Asmara. I was offered the opportunity of employment in Addis Abeba; thus the reason of my staying in the Ethiopian capital. This gave me also the opportunity to search for my husband in the many jails of the Ethiopian capital where many Eritrean prisoners were transferred.

I wonder how much those windows could tell us and if any of the Secretary Generals who served then and until the demise of Menghistu will own their responsibilities to opening and closing those windows without uttering a word of all the crimes they witnessed. If they will ever accept that on that day of November 23/1974 Ethiopia crossed the point of no return and so did they as African leaders.

That particular ground where the 60 officials were killed and buried, did not look different from the many Killing fields the Ethiopian occupier left behind in my country.

My standing at that very window of the OAU organization, made me compare the screams of those officials to the screams of my own husband when he called my name and our children's names while the torturers enjoyed beating him some more and inflicting tortures that are too vivid and atrocious to recall on paper.

What about the OAU officials? Did they shake hands with Menghistu and alike and pretended not to feel the blood on his hand and later on their own hands? Did it take a warm and perfumed towel to clean it all and seat at a table dressed with the finest china and crystal glasses? Did they pretend? You bet! They still do!

I truly would like prominent African intellectuals such as Mr. Edem Kodio, author of the premonitory book "Et demain l'Afrique" {"Africa tomorrow"} to enlighten our young generation and reply to questions of my own children, who were too young then and young adults today about their disillusionment of the motherland - Africa – they inherited from such Secretary Generals leading such Organizations.

To paraphrase a quote about Mr. Edem Kodjo's book " The troubles of the African continent raised by the Togolese former Prime Minister, Edem Kodjo thirty (30) years ago in the book

"***Africa Tomorrow***", are still topical. It is partially the reason that urged the author to republish the work at the Nei-Ceda Editions. In press conference on Monday, 30 th March 2015 in Lomé, the former Secretary General for the Organization of African Unity (current African Union), called the African youth to consciousness in order to give to Africa the position it deserves in the concert of nations". **Appointed several times Prime Minister of Togo, Edem Kodjo was Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity from 1978 to 1983. Current chairman of the Pax Africana foundation, the Togolese is also a member of the African Union (AU) Committee of Wise Men."**

Such Secretary Generals as Mr. Kodjo (and member of a committee called none-the-less "Wise Men") should first and foremost own their personal shortcomings about the fact that they totally ignored the Eritrean occupation and the many killings carried out by Menghistu Hailemariam, all while raising their champagne glass to camouflage the sounds of the execution squad and the victims begging for mercy.

Can they face our children today? All and any African country's youth and their parents would like to meet with Mr. Kodjo and alike and have them assume responsibility for the thousands of Africans misplaced all over the world, the thousands of African women raped daily to save their children from oppression. They should answer to my own children and the grandchildren of those 60 officials killed by a knife stabbing at the back of their neck or by an execution squad. **Africa's present problems are the outcome of all that was ignored yesterday.**

I would love to have a front seat and make these officials and the organization they led, face my husband's picture. And **I would like to tell them that my husband's name was Berhane and he was only 28 years old when he was killed simply because he was a proud Eritrean.**

At 28 death is never an option by choice. I am sure these officials know very well. I am also positively sure that at that age said officials were graduating from college or entering the big gates of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa/Ethiopia, eager to build a political life of their own and shake hands with any sort of ruler pretending not to see the big elephant following them around, and ignoring the crimes surrounding their daily life.

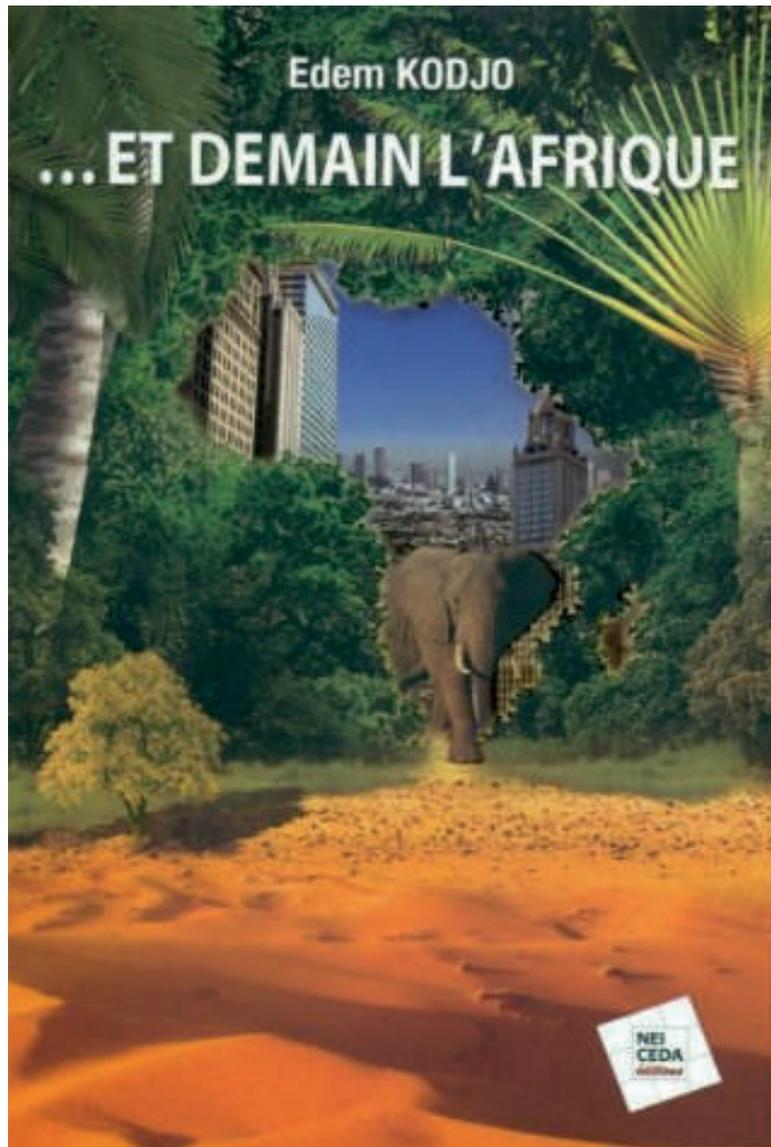


- Photo by: Ethiopian News & opinion - Photos of 60 victims murdered by Derg November 23/1974



[Mengistu Haile Mariam](#) –
Chairperson of the OAU
Took office: 6 June 1983
Left Office: 12 November 1984
[Ethiopia](#) 
[East Africa](#)

Source: Wikipedia



Posted by La Rédaction on 31 March 2015

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July 15 th , 1979 Addis Ababa/Ethiopia (one year to my husband's murder by the Ethiopian Security forces)
