

Medrek: Dialogue with a Hyena

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In Somalia, hyenas that are brought from the bushes are believed to have abilities to see and chase away all the evil spirits in people. Accordingly, when a person is believed to have become possessed by spirits, family and friend will pay around US \$560 to have their loved one restrained and get locked in a room overnight with a hyena. These absurd diagnosis and treatment methods resemble Medrek's idea of a dialogue between Eritrean opposition groups and the PFDJ minus Isayas.

Medrek also known as Forum for National Dialogue made two false assumptions to come up with such an absurd proposal. To begin with, they made a false assumption that the Eritrean opposition is filled with evil spirits and consequently they decided not to identify themselves as part of the opposition. Instead, they chose to be a bridge for dialogue between the opposition and the PFDJ minus Isaias.

Medrek's second false assumption is that the PFDJ should be in control and lead the movement from inside if the right change is ever going to come. The whole idea of Medrek's proposal for dialog is basically to have the opposition locked in a room with PFDJ to chase Isayas out.

If Medrek is going to categorically reject the claim that they are only asking for a reformed PFDJ, there are several questions they need to answer. Here is a quote from Mr. Andebrihan (a cofounder of Medrek) ~ "We are a bridge between the diaspora, who are important, and our colleagues inside Eritrea. But the Forum is led from inside Eritrea."

If this statement is true, Andebrihan and his colleagues are claiming they are not leaders of Medrek but those inside Eritrea are. Their claim raises a lot of questions than answers. Here are some questions we should be asking medrekawian.

- 1- What evidence should we expect to verify the existence of pro-democracy forces that are working with Medrek from inside Eritrea?
- 2- It seems a new diaspora movement wants to bridge all other diaspora movements with movements inside Eritrea. Wouldn't it be better to have a direct link between movements that are inside and outside of the country based on similarity of their programs?
- 3- If Isaias is identified as the only one who is not going to be part of the dialogue then why is dialogue preferred to take place before removing a single individual from power?
- 4- Dialogue is supposed to take place between two or more opposing parties. Was there any confrontation between pro-democracy forces inside and outside the country? Why is dialogue the preferred route?
- 5- Before

Medrek presented itself as a bridge it should have at least met with most opposition organizations in diaspora. Why didn't that step take place? 6- What is Medrek's structure in diaspora and what is the need of having only former PFDJ high ranking officials as leaders of this forum in diaspora? 7- Does Medrek believe Ethiopia is interfering in the internal affairs of Eritrea? 8- I have heard several people proposing to give Medrek a chance and for the opposition to wait and see. What is that we need to be waiting to see?