



## A NATION CAN NOT SURVIVE TREASON FROM WITHIN PART I

By Ali Yusuf Issa  
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“The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history.” George Orwell

This article unveils a dark history that had a great implication on our nation. It is about the story of the most infamous and notorious traitors in Somali history; who betrayed their country, collaborated with the enemy and inflicted unbearable damage to the nation. They instigated the political mayhem and chaos the Somalis and the world are still dealing with its repercussion quarter of a century later. My aim in this article is to unmask the facts without bias and portray only facts. This list details the most notorious and most fatal back-stabbers in our history, ranked by severity of their deeds.

Marcus Gravy a great African-American scholar and a Black Nationalist said once, and I quote, “*a people without the knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots.*” On this 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 21<sup>st</sup> October Revolution, I deemed necessary to relate with you a brief history of the accomplishments of the Revolutionary government of Somalia. In October 1969 Somali Military officers staged a blood less coup that toppled the corrupted civilian government. At last, the Somali people who were disappointed with the past civilian government welcomed the new government with fanfare and rejoice.



In the first decade, we witness the military government made a steady progress in every aspect: remarkable achievements were made in the sectors of education; health; agriculture; clean water; industries, military; and civilians. For the first time in the history of the nation, it adopted its own script and their language has been written. Subsequently, a successful literacy campaign was launched which got the acclamation of UNESCO.

In the industry sector, the state owned more than hundred small, medium and heavy industries and factories, namely sugar, cement, textile, oil refinery, steel foundry, pharmaceutical, meat, fish and so on that were all in full-swing. Somali professional pilots flew our national carrier, Somali Airlines as far as heart of Europe.

In [1974 a major drought hit the Horn of African](#) countries that had resulted great loss of lives. The Somali government took great initiatives to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of its citizens, while in Ethiopia the drought took the lives of one million people and prompted the demise Haile Selassie. Tens of thousands of Somali nomads were airlifted from the devastating regions of Tog-dheer and the central regions and relocated to the fertile land and coastal towns in the South. The renowned British historian, IM Lewis summarized the government's efforts with this following glowing remarks: "the way in which these conditions were met by the government of Somalia so as to prevent an irrecoverable disaster to hundreds of thousands of nomads is a story of courage, honesty, determination, and of a unity of efforts not before seen in modern Somali history, or, perhaps, in any Somali history we know. It is the best possible evidence for the honesty, efficiency, patriotism and sound political practice of the new regime initiated in 1969 that it had been an able to confront this drought with such a remarkable degree of success". What deep, and powerful remarks by a reputable foreign scholar.

In the Military sector, a formidable military force was established with the assistance of Soviet Union and, thus Somalia became one of the most powerful military forces in Africa.



The military balance in the Horn of Africa that was in hitherto in favor of Ethiopian shifted towards the Somalis.

Somalia became a reckoned force in Horn of Africa and its sovereignty was safe guarded. Even the Israeli Special Forces who were in a mission to rescue their hostages from Entebbe airport, Uganda could not dare to violate the Somali airspace in fear of the might of the Somali air defense force, as it is revealed in the "Entebbe Raid" book.

In the foreign policy, Somalia became a reputable country with high reputation in the international arena. In 1971-72 Somalia was elected to the Security Council of the UN and assumed the presidency of the Council. It had worldwide diplomatic representations, and it owned the property of more than twenty buildings in, DC, New York, Paris, Bonn, Rome, Brussels, and so on. Somalia was also a full-fledged member of OAU, UN, Arab League, Non Aligned and Islamic organization Conference. In the 1970s, Somalia hosted in Mogadishu both the Afro-Arab and the OAU summits, and President Siyad Barre assumed the chairmanship of the OAU in that particular year. It played a great role in the liberation of fellow Africans who were then under the yoke of the colonialists. It provided material and moral support to the liberation movements in countries like, Djibouti, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, South Africa, Namibia, Eretria, Equatorial Guinea, Zimbabwe and Angola.

Their military cadres were trained in the Somali Military academies, and in the aftermath of their independence, technical teams were sent to train them. In fact, Somalia was a beacon of hope for the Africans, as President Mbeki of South Africa stated in his speech at the AU Summit in 2007 in Addis Ababa. In the 1970s Somalia mediated between Tanzania and Uganda and averted a war between the two neighboring countries and the heads of the two countries signed a peace treaty in Mogadishu.

### **THE QUEST TO RECOVER THE LOST TERRITORIES:**

All Somali governments since independence, its foreign policy was centered to retrieve its lost Somali territories respectively under French, Ethiopia and Kenya occupations. Somalia's relation with these countries were stern, and sometimes in turmoil and turbulent. This has led to decades of conflicts and periodic outbreaks of skirmishes, wars and years of diplomatic wrangling. To achieve this noble cause, the Somali government left no stone unturned. 1963 Somalia severed its diplomatic relationship with Great Britain after Britain nullified the referendum it held in NFD in which Somalis in NFD voted unanimously to join their brothers in Somalia. Britain in defiance of the outcome of the referendum unilaterally incorporated NFD with Kenya. A decade of disturbances and fighting pursued in the territory, until a peace deal was brokered between Somalia and Kenya in Arusha. The accord had been widely seen as a betrayal and Prime Minister Egal had survived vote of no confidence motion in the parliament.



Also during the struggle for the Djibouti independence, the Somali government and its people fully supported their brothers in Djibouti against the French colonialist, and there were at times when the Somali government came close to brink of war with France. It had trained and equipped the liberation movement of Front de Liberation de la Cote des Somalis (FLCS) that waged liberation wars against the French government. I believe without Somali's efforts and its full support, Djibouti would have not attained its independence. In regard to Ethiopia's occupied territory, Ogaden, when all options of diplomatic channels to resolve its territorial dispute with Ethiopia was exhausted, the Somali government fully supported and equipped the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) which fought for the independence and self-determination of the Somali West (Ogaden). The war went well for the Somalis and in a short period the Front liberated extensive territory of Ogaden from the Ethiopians. During the conflict the Soviet Union dramatically changed sides, abandoning Somalia as an ally to aid the beleaguered and demoralized Ethiopians. The Government of Somalia decided to enter the war and accomplish the mission before the Soviets enter the fray.

The Somali army forces under the commander of brilliant Gen. Ali Samatar captured town after town until the battle of Jigjiga which was the greatest victory for the Somalis achieved. The Somalis were close to attaining their strategic goal, but turned into a battle of attrition that Somalia could not sustain. The war turned against the Somalis after the Soviet Union, Cuba and the eastern socialist countries enter the war in the Ethiopian side.



Cuba alone deployed tens of thousands of its troops in the battle field, and even Israeli mercenaries and Yemeni flew for the Ethiopian air force, while the Russian generals and Military experts commanded the battle against the Somalis.

Latest military arsenals were air lifted to Ethiopia and the Horn of African conflict turned into a war between the WARSAW block against a small country called Somalia. Unfortunately, Somalis were left alone in the blitz and fire power of the WARSAW pact, led by the Soviets. The western countries, including USA were reluctant to come to the Somali side to confront the expanding Soviets that would control one of the most strategic areas in the world and threatened international security. Brzezinski, then US National Security Advisor alarmed at the large scale of Soviet and Cuban intervention in the Horn of Africa conflict, quoted saying, “Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) lies buried in the sands of the Ogaden.”

Back to my subject, first let us look the definition of the terms traitor and treason from the dictionary and then will see who falls in this net of hell. “A traitor is a person that betrays his/her country: turning against his/her country, government, perhaps by selling secret information to an enemy or abetted the nation’s enemy”. Black’s Law Dictionary defines also “treason as attempting to overthrow the government of the state to which one owes allegiance either by making war against the state or by materially supporting enemies.”

According to this definition, we find many of our best military officers and fine diplomats unfortunately, fallen in this infamy category. Immediately a year after the merger of the two regions of the Somali territory that formed the Somali Republic, young disgruntled officers from the Northern Somalia revolted against their senior officers from the South. However, the mutiny was subdued by their subordinates as it had no popular support. It is widely believed their aim was to revoke the Union and to secede from the South.



According to declassified Ethiopia’s Foreign Ministry documents, the mutiny officers had secret contacts with the Ethiopians, as the Ethiopians detested the union of the Somalis. Anyhow, they were convicted and imprisoned even though later released on political reasons: just to appease the Northern Somalis who harbored resentment in the power sharing of the country. In the newly Somali government, Northern Somalis who opted to unite with their brethren in the South rather than have their own separate independent country were excluded from top positions of the country. That is where the bitterness of the northern Somalis emanates. In an interview some of them gave recently to the Somali media outlets confessed their intention was to revoke the union. Though, they have all the hall marks of “traitors”, I will leave the readers to judge for themselves.

In this brief overview of Somalia's traitorous history, I will start with the first traitor I had heard of while I was in primary school. It was on every one's lips and talk of the day. He was **Axmed Yusuf Ducaale**, then the Somali Foreign Affairs Minister in the early 1960s that allegedly passed sensitive or classified government documents to the Ethiopian Ambassador in Mogadishu in exchange for money. He was caught by the CID while coming out at night from the Ethiopian Ambassador's premises. The Parliament, that then democratic had waived his immunity to face the justice after it became apparent the Minister committed high treason. He was later tried, found guilty of high treason and convicted. He served a long term in prison.



At the height of the war, Somali government called in all its reserves to defend the country. Among those called to defend the country was **Cawil X Cali Ducaale** a former colonel in the army and then Somali ambassador in Nairobi. He was assigned to the Somali national army at the Nageylle Front. Instead of taking up his new assignment in the war front, he sheepishly defected to Kenya, which was technically at war with Somalia, and the very country he served as an ambassador in a few months earlier. Ethiopia and Kenya had a military pact against Somalia at the time and to every body's aback they have renewed it again in 2013, when Somalia poses no threat to them. In a press conference he held in Nairobi, he went on to denounce the liberation war, dubbed as an expansionist policy of the Somali government, and passed sensitive information to the Kenyans. The Ambassador is synonymous with traitor, as he betrayed his nation at the time of war and, hence falls in the category of the most notorious traitor.

The disgraced traitor later served as Minister of Finance in Riyale's administration in Hargeisa, and unfortunately is still active in the Somaliland politics. It is important to mention here that his collogue, Ambassador Hassan Abdullahi, aka Hassan Keyad who had the same military background with the traitor recalled from his diplomatic post in Oman to fight for his country bravely fought in and around the highlands of Harar. After the war, he was decorated as war hero and reassigned to his ambassadorial post in Oman.

### **THE MAN WHO FIGHTS AGAINST HIS OWN COUNTRY IS NEVER A HERO:**

A month after Ogaden debacle, a group of army officers hatched coup to over throw the government of Somalia. Mogadishu the peaceful capital of the nation woke up with explosions and gun fires in that morning. The coup was easily put down as it was untimely, unpopular and poorly coordinated. Their ringleaders of the coup absconded but were captured, and later tried and executed as they committed treason against the government. That was the turning point in the subsequent history of the country as it had far-reaching implications for the nation.



One of the coup conspirator colonel **Cabdullahi Yuusf Axmed** and the former commander of the Somali forces in the Ogaden war fled to Kenya after the coup aborted.

He was later lured by the Ethiopians, the very country he was fighting few months earlier, and went to Ethiopia to wage war against his own country and of course, his comrades in-arms. He became the first Somali traitor who sought help from the vicious arch- enemy. The Colonel had formed an armed movement, SSDF based in Ethiopia with the aim to overthrow the Somali government. He was the first Somali military officer who sought help from the arch –enemy and opened a Pandora box. Dissent groups of his clansmen joined him in Ethiopia to take arms against the Somali government. His SSDF movement threw the country into chaos and devastation. In retaliation, the government launched lethal reprisal measures against the rebels and as well as the civilians. The colonel was later imprisoned by the Ethiopians after he adamantly opposed Ethiopia’s claim of two towns on the border seized from the Somalis.

For six years, Cabdullahi Yusuf languished in the notorious prison in Addis Ababa called *Alam Baqa*. He was later released at the wake of the down fall of the military dictatorial regime in Addis Ababa. As a leopard who never changes its spots, again as the president of the transitional government, Cabdullahi Yuusuf invited Ethiopian forces to help him fight against the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and keep him in the power. For the first time in history, the Ethiopians marched through Mogadishu and committed untold atrocities, and mercilessly bombarded and destroyed the cradle of the Somali nation’s capital. The disgraceful traitor was forcefully removed from the presidency and died in Yemen where he lived as an exile.

By the year 1981 another group of traitors flocked into Addis Ababa and formed a movement with the aim of toppling the regime in Mogadishu. This new movement, The Somali National Movement (SNM) based in Ethiopia was formed by descent Northern Somali expatriates in Saudi Arabia and UK. The Ethiopians were delighted with this new rebel group which its members were drawn from Northern Somalia, as a great opportunity to dismember the Somali Republic. In David Rawson’s words, the SNM was given, “a golden handshake in the form of land cursers, artillery and automatic weapons” and sent off to Northern Somalia to launch attacks on Hargeisa and Burao.

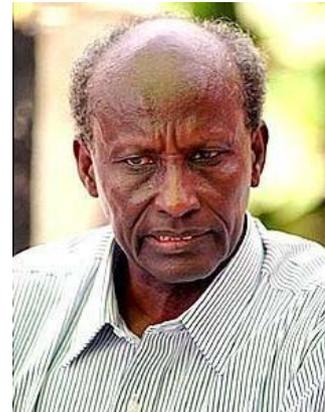
Long time loyalists and cronies of Siyad Barre switched allegiance and joined the rebel movement. Among those notorious traitors whose names are synonymous with traitors is former Somali Ambassador to Ethiopia **Cabdiraxmaan Axmed Cali (Tuur)**. He was a long career diplomat who faithfully served his country before he turned his coat and sought ignominy in the country he served as a reputable ambassador. He was the Somali ambassador who served his country in Addis Ababa, the enemy’s capital at the time of the Ogaden war. He eventually led the destructive movement SNM that had destroyed and plunged the country into chaos and mayhem. After the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, he became the “President” of the secessionist enclave of the so-called “Somaliland Republic” but again switched allegiance to Mogadishu. He died in exile.

The other infamous traitor, who fled to Ethiopia and later led SNM, was **Axmed Maxamed Maxamuud (Siilanyo)** the longest serving cabinet minister in Somalia and a staunch loyalist of Siyad Barre. He defected to the arch-enemy Ethiopia after he was relieved from his long time ministerial post and joined the traitors club in Addis Ababa.



Under his leadership, his rebel group launched suicidal attacks in Hargeisa and Buroa in northern Somalia and was responsible for gross mass killings, destruction and wide spread of human disaster. Later, he became the “president” to the non-existent entity so-called, “Somaliland Republic”. He is now in self exile in Dubai.

Another traitor that comes to my mind is **Maxamed Faarax Caydiid**, former Somali Ambassador to New Delhi, India and a senior military officer with the rank of General. After the Indian government accused him of “inappropriate diplomatic behavior”, he was relieved from his post and transferred to the Somali Embassy in Ankara. He declined to take up his new post in Turkey and defected to the arch-enemy, Ethiopia and joined the “traitors’ club” in Addis Ababa. Ethiopian authority was delighted to receive him as they were looking someone from the South with military background to command the military wing of United Somali Congress (USC), an armed group that was based in Ethiopia.



Caydiid’s predecessor was imprisoned by the Ethiopian authority when he refused to hand over the leadership of the USC to the traitor-ambassador. He waged a ruthless war against the Somali government, committed gross human rights violations and was later responsible for the devastating Civil war that had destroyed the beautiful capital city of Somalia. As it says, He, who lives by the sword, dies by the sword. The disgraced ambassador died in the hands of his former rebel henchmen in Mogadishu.

I will conclude this series of Somali traitors with this other notorious traitor, **Col. Axmed Cumar Jees**, a former commander of the 26<sup>th</sup> sector of Somali Forces in Hargeisa . He was the one who evicted SNM rebels out of Hargeisa and eventually out of Somalia. He was frustrated at being passed over for promotion he believed to have deserved, and sickened by others taking his credit for the defeat of the SNM. He later defected to the very rebel group he fought few months earlier and to the arch-enemy, Ethiopia. The Ethiopians treated him as an “important guest” and was assigned in the Southern region of Somalia to wage war against his own government. He led the rebel group of Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) that took part in the destruction of the country. His rebel group came closer to Mogadishu and occupied most of the South. He was a notorious traitor who was responsible of mass killing, devastation and human rights violations.

The Somali government was not without impunity. Its reaction to the insurgents were extreme brute and forceful. The military forces carried out wide spread of atrocities against the civilians who were suspected of harboring and supporting the rebels. The government used hunter aircrafts against the civilian and SNM rebels fleeing from Hargeisa after the rebel’s suicidal attacks in Hargeisa. Tens of thousands sought sanctuary in Ethiopia and remained until the fall of the government in Mogadishu. In 1986 the President of the State, Siad Barre was involved in a car accident and was rushed to Saudi Arabia for treatment. He had sustained a head injury and fracture of ribs and thus, remained decapitated. The country went into political vacuum and rivalry groups from within the government squabbled over the power and the country was beginning to crumble. Law and order broke down, anarchy reined and marauding groups were carrying out atrocities.

The Somali state collapsed and Mogadishu fell in the hands of marauding USC groups. The country engaged into protracted civil war, the country disintegrated, warlords curved fiefdoms and the country fell apart.

The USC turned on itself and fought over the control of the capital. Mogadishu was divided into two zones each zone controlled by different USC warlord. Mogadishu the cradle of the Somali nation and once one of the beautiful cities in Africa has been completely stripped bare, far and wide, the country was laid waste. In the North the situation was different; though relative peace prevailed, the SNM leadership committed the highest treason for declaring unilateral “independence” of what they called “Somaliland”.

**I forgive those who steal and loot because they did it out of necessity, but a traitor never.**

A nation cannot survive treason from within. Some adorn those traitors as heroes as they were fighting against a dictator. To evict a dictator does not necessary means to destroy the country. If I had to choose between to wreck the nation or a dictator to stay in power, I choose the latter to save the country. A traitor is never a hero. A hero is one who defends his country from the enemy and is not by any means someone who abetted the enemy to destroy his country. They collaborated with our most vicious enemy and betrayed their nation. They destroyed the beautiful country they wanted to rule. They all share one common thing: they were all unrepentant and driven by self-interest, greed, political ambition, and were directly serving the interest of Ethiopia.

One SNM commander, Col. Jidhif told me an Ethiopian Military Officer telling him the night his rebel group was invading Hargeisa, “Colonel Jidhif, I’m happy tonight to avenge ourselves by your own hands”. “waxaan caawa ku faraxsanahay in aan gacantiina ku aarsano.” The Ethiopian officer remembers the humiliation he suffered under these brilliant Somali officers during the Ogaden war and happy to use Somalis against Somalis. (Laf maroodi iyaga ay la isku jabiyaa). In the end no one enjoyed the fruits of their betrayal. History will never be generous with them and will treat them as disgraced traitors who betrayed their country and helped the arch-enemy to destroy their nation.

*Punishment ought to fall first on the traitor, second on the enemy. If I had but one bullet and I was faced by both an enemy and a traitor, I would let the traitor have it”.*

Ali Yusuf Issa,

Email: [Ayissa-06@hotmail.com](mailto:Ayissa-06@hotmail.com)