



**TO: Mr. Binai Boran, Chairperson BEDiSA Group
Mebusevleri Mahallesi Iler Caddesi
No: 38 Tandogan 06580
Cankaya, Ankara, Turkey**

CC:

- **Turkish Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**
- **Turkish Embassy in Washington, DC**
- **Turkish Embassy in London, UK**
- **Embassy of Turkey in Berlin, Germany**

Subject: Open Letter to BEDiSA Group, with regards to Purchase of Tana Beles Project – Located in Amhara Region, Ethiopia

The Amhara Professionals Union (APU) based in Washington DC, United States, has learned from the African Business Communities website that the BEDiSA Group is purchasing 75% of Tana Beles project from the Government of Ethiopia. We are writing this to request that you should not proceed with this planned purchase. First, this project, which is located in the Amhara Region, does not benefit the Amhara people who are the inhabitants of this region and make up 40% of the Ethiopian population. Instead, the profit from foreign business ventures goes directly into the pocket book of the regime. Thus, the Amhara people are resentful and not supportive of these foreign investments. Second, as an executive, you have a fiduciary duty to be a warden of BEDiSA Group shareholders. The current unstable climate in Amhara Region is not conducive for such a large investment.

The current political leadership in Ethiopia, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is a minority brutal regime that has been in power for the past 25 years. TPLF assumes to represent the Tigray ethnic group, which makes up only 6.1% of Ethiopian population but control all aspects of Ethiopia: military, economy, and politics. TPLF has forcefully taken millions of acres of land from the various endogenous ethnic people in Ethiopia and have sold them to foreign companies like the BEDiSA Group. This illegal land grab has caused the displacement of millions of Ethiopians, untold suffering, and resentment towards the TPLF regime and foreign investors.

The Ethiopian Government has one of the worst human rights record as documented by all major human rights groups including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

- Freedom House ranks Ethiopia as “Not Free” in its “FREEDOM STATUS” ranking, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/ethiopia>, including Internet.
- The Fund for Peace which ranks the fragile state of each country has a Fragile States Index Score of 97.2 for Ethiopia with a status of Alert”, <http://fsi.fundforpeace.org/2016-ethiopia>.
- The World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) ranks Ethiopia 8.1/100 for Political Stability and Absence of violence/Terrorism, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>. A very low and dangerous ranking.



- In 2013, the US Intelligence Report describes Ethiopia as a Failed State! <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/countries-at-risk/>.

Additionally, there is an active civil war in the Amhara Region where people are retaliating against investments that jeopardize their livelihood. The regime has responded by declaring a State of Emergency on October 8, 2016 for an indefinite period of time and shutting down the Internet to halt communication. Multinational corporations operating in the country are now unable to use emails and many other applications that are vital for communication and exchanging (ordering/shipping/receiving) business related matters. Right now Ethiopia is a very unstable country not favorable for investment or even travel.

Amhara and Oromo Regions are now at war with the TPLF regime. Together, these two ethnic groups make up 70% of the Ethiopian population. Thousands of Amhara's and Oromo's have been killed, arrested, and tortured. The State of Emergency is simply to suppress the rights of Ethiopians who seek freedom, dignity, and equal representation.

Many companies have pulled out of projects from Ethiopia due to the yearlong instability of the country and/or corrupt nature of the regime's bureaucracy. A Netherlands based company, Esmeralda Farms and "flower farms owned by Israeli, Italian, Indian, and Belgium companies were among nine commercial properties damaged in the protests" in the Amhara Region, (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-01/ethiopian-protesters-burn-dutch-owned-flower-farm-in-north>). Juan Carlos Vallejo, co-owner of Esmeralda Farms, stated "Right now, everyone is really scared." He added, "We never expected something like this to happen. I don't think anyone is going to want to invest here anymore." (<https://www.ft.com/content/a1ceca0e-8b11-11e6-8cb7-e7ada1d123b1>).

"Atlas African Industries" has exited Ethiopia "after Ethiopian authorities forcefully seized its \$2.4million capital following a tax dispute." (<http://www.nation.co.ke/business/Atlas-seeks-new-acquisitions-in-Africa-after-Ethiopia-exit/996-3458850-8a4g05/>). On October 5, 2016, a Turkish owned plant by Saygin Dima was attacked by locals in retaliation for exploitation. (<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2016/10/05/487807/Ethiopia-Addis-Ababa-Turkey-Sebeta-Fatih-Mehmet-Yangin>).

As adumbrated above, the reason for the locals attacking foreign owned businesses in Ethiopia is because they (natives) do not directly benefit from those "investments" but more often are gravely affected because they are forcefully displaced from their homes (without adequate compensation) where they have lived in their entire life.

The state of foreign investment in Ethiopia is summed up by Anuradha Mittal, executive director of the Oakland Institute, "If I am a foreign investor, I look for opportunities. I understand that there are risks but in the face of this growing unrest where foreign companies have been targets, given all that



has happened in terms of displacement of people and their lands given away to foreign investors, it would be astute to not go into a country like that” (<http://allafrica.com/stories/201610130455.html>).

For a more insightful detail on foreign investment in Ethiopia, please review the report by Global Risk Insights, <http://globalriskinsights.com/2016/10/radar-foreign-investors-attack-ethiopia/>.

Understanding the dire humanitarian crisis that is unfolding in Ethiopia which has resulted in the deaths and arrest of thousands of innocent Ethiopians for simply wanting respect, dignity, and equal representation, and forceful displacement of people leading to additional suffering. Understanding the lack of accountability and rampant corruption by the Ethiopian Government, and instability across the whole country, we believe it is ill advised for the BEDiSA Group to invest in the Tana Beles project. We are certain the grieving Amharas will dismantle the project and frustrate the business if the BEDiSA Group dares to invest in the Tana Beles project in the current atmosphere.

Therefore, the Amhara Professional Union (APU) suggests the BEDiSA Group to hold off all of its investment in Tana Beles until a government that represents the concerns and aspirations of the Amhara people is installed. The BEDiSA Group can invest in Amhara region ones a government that represents the wishes and aspirations of the Amhara people is in place and by then the hospitable Amhara people will welcome the group to invest in the region that will surely boost the investment’s value, safety, and profitability.

Respectfully,

Amhara Professional Union – Working to defend and protect the ideals and interests of the Amhara of Ethiopia in all sectors.

Signed:
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Washington D.C.

12/01/2016