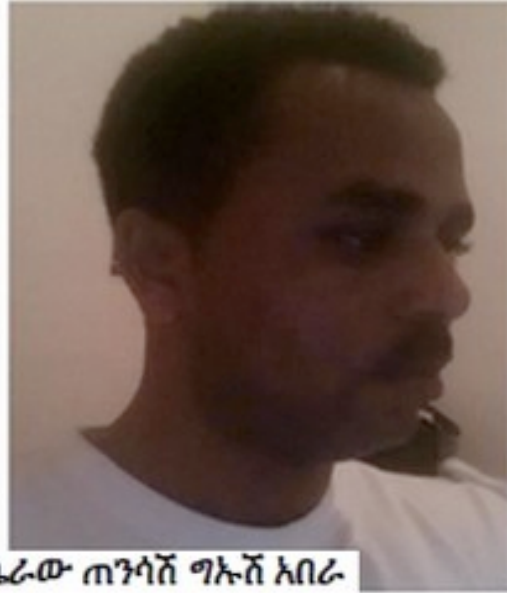


FBI foils TPLF assassination plot against Ethiopian journalist in Boston

Wednesday, January 9, 2013

Addis Voice—The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has foiled a plot to shoot and kill Ethiopian journalist Abebe Gellaw in Boston, Massachusetts.

The plot was allegedly orchestrated by a man named Guesh Abera, a Boston resident and parking lot attendant in his thirties.



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Guesh and his three accomplices, who are suspected of being spies and fanatic members of the tyrannical regime in Ethiopia, were determined to “eliminate” the journalist and press freedom activist, sources say.

Abebe, who was voted Ethiopian Man of the Year 2012 by listeners and viewers of the Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) and radio across the world, traveled to Boston last month to attend a fundraiser for the popular TV and radio channels. The suspects had planned to shoot him during his sojourn in Boston.

According to the sources, four Boston residents suspected of being agents of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, an ethnic-based rebel group that has brutally ruled Ethiopia for the last 21 years, had taken steps to execute the journalist. Guesh, the ringleader, was reportedly communicating with his accomplices using a fake Facebook account (Hailemarim Desalegn) and emails. FBI agents reportedly intercepted some of the exchanges detailing the plot.

Special Agent Greg Comcowich, a spokesperson for FBI Boston branch, declined to give details of the investigation but emphasized that the agency will take seriously any criminal activities that violate not only the civil rights of individuals but also the constitution of the United States. “Anybody who threatens people’s lives because of their political views or attempt to usurp one’s constitutionally protected First Amendment rights will be dealt with appropriately. That is not the way America works,” he said.

He further noted that the FBI takes allegations of being agents of a foreign government to attack or spy on anyone very seriously. He encouraged Ethiopians with such information to contact their local FBI branches.

The plot was foiled in the bud as FBI special agents had uncovered the plot in time and took measures to prevent the would-be assassins from executing their plot, according a source, who wants to remain anonymous due to the sensitivity of the matter.

A fortnight ago, FBI agents raided a Roxberry house where the ringleader of the plot shares with four other people. Agents also went to the workplaces of two of the residents. An Ethiopian who knows Guesh Abera said that he worshiped the late Ethiopian dictator Meles Zenawi. He was also very upset with Abebe Gellaw's dramatic protest against the former PM at such a high profile meeting.

President of Genocide Watch, Prof. Gregory Stanton, praised the FBI agents who foiled the plot and commended the agency for being strong and very reliable defender of civil rights. Prof. Stanton, who famously brought perpetrators of mass atrocities in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge to justice and also investigated mass atrocities in Ethiopia, said that the TPLF is a terrorist organization that should be labeled as such by the United States.

"The Justice Department has never declared the TPLF a terrorist organization the way it should. But it is clearly the arm of a criminal government. The FBI needs to be aware of this reality and any threats by the TPLF needs to be reported to the FBI," he said.

Journalist Abebe Gellaw says that since he confronted the late dictator Meles Zenawi at the G8 Food Security Symposium last May in Washington DC, he has received hundreds of death threats through various ways including Facebook, which is also being misused as a means of organizing crimes.

"It is unbelievable that I have faced persecution by the very people that forced me into exile. I very well know the risks of reporting and speaking truth to power. I am happy to sacrifice my life for the right cause. I will continue to do whatever it takes to make a difference and bring the truth out as much as possible."

Last July Abebe, along with 10 other prominent Ethiopian journalists and two Swedish journalists, was convicted of being a "terrorist". He was sentenced in absentia to 15 years in jail for journalistic work and his roles in ESAT, a rising media powerhouse that seems to terrify the Ethiopian government. The government constantly jams transmissions of ESAT and the Voice of America Amharic broadcasts.

"We surely know that the Ethiopian government is allergic to the truth. Those of us that are in the business of reporting and writing on so many sensitive issues such as gross human rights violations will continue to spread the truth as widely as possible. That is our mission. If this costs my life, I will happily pay the ultimate price," Abebe said.