

## **ESFNA: Police Chased president Getachew Tesfaye's Harsh Critic**

By LJD

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In regards to Mr. Tesfa Awoke, he was treated in a prejudicial manner by the ESFNA's president Getachew Tesfaye for opposing unfairness and the alarming corruption within the federation's executive committee members.

Awoke felt great sadness because president Tesfaye had him chased away from the 2014 ESFNA festival by the use of three armed police officers. In the future, Awoke thinks the federation may not ever allow him to participate in its festival.



Awoke is the Bay Area vanguard activist – whose placard got the most attention – against the TPLF's ethnocracy, and to his credit, he participated in majority of protests and/or meetings resisting ethno-nationalism in Ethiopia for the last 25+ years.

He believes that the media is powerful to effect social and governmental change. So whenever he gets an opportunity, he uses the media to speak his mind about ethnic politics. He thinks ethnic nationalism is a source of armed conflicts. Unfortunately, he isn't part of a political party because he didn't find one he likes to join.

### **President Tesfaye's Action Angered the Bay Area Ethiopian Community Members**

Awoke, is a board member (BM) of one of the federation's clubs, Abebe Bikila Sports Club's (ABSC), for the last four years. He was a member of San Francisco Walya's soccer club for several years. After he left the San Francisco Walya's, he independently and proudly escorted the federation's honoree, including Ababa Tesfaye Sahlu, Roman Bezu – the wife of Tilahun Gessesse – Mulatu Astatke and Haile Gebrselassie.



**Stunned and angry by  
Getachew's despotic act**

Representing ABSC at the federation's 2010 annual board meeting as a new board member, he nominated Judge Birtukan Mideksa for guests of honor. He recommended her out of compassion for her sufferings in the TPLF's prisons and as his recognition for her aspiration to establish democratic rules in the Ethiopian government. When the federation's executives –

Mideksa's adversaries those on Sheikh Al Amoudi payroll – reversed the votes casted in her favor, it turned out to be a real double-edged sword, which made the federation more popular and triggered a revolution against corruption within the federation's members.

About the reversal of the board's vote in favor of Mideksa, Awoke spoke his mind on various radio stations, including VOA Amharic and Addis Dimits Radio – which Al Amoudi's flatterers didn't like. They caused his membership to be canceled from ABSC by using ex-president Mekonnen Demisew to lean on ABSC's owner to end Awoke's membership from its club, and in turn, the federation. ABSC gave in to the peer pressure and revoked his membership. After the dust settled, Awoke was eventually reappointed to ABSC's board membership.

Blindsided by the corruption they are engulfed, most of the federation's current and former executives who currently seat on the board [for more than ten years] don't like to see Awoke around them. They blamed him for bringing change to the federation, and for that, they are against him. They fraudulently refused to recognize him as the federation's board member representing ABSC.

Specifically, Mr. Million Gebreyesus is a sole owner of ABSC that the law gave power to change his board members whenever he likes to do so. However, president Tesfaye fraudulently blocked Gebreyesus to change his board member, and he blocked Awoke's nomination to the federation's board membership.

### **A John Doe took Action against Awoke**

On July 3, 2014 with Mr. Million Gebreyesus - ABSC's president - Awoke went to the San Jose City College stadium control room – which the ESFNA used as its office – to get his team members IDs, including his own. When they got to the office, Gebreyesus felt sick, so he needed to seat\_down. He asked them to allow him to take a seat; however, John Doe told Gebreyesus in his face that he wasn't the only one there who was sick but so was Awoke. Then he yelled at Awoke, and told him to “get out of here, you insulted our president” [he was referring to president Getachew Tesfaye.] And John Doe confronted Awoke, which triggered an altercation between the two.



Then Awoke felt threatened, and he thought John Doe was going to hit him, so he called 911 to seek help. To calm the situation, six board members in the office immediately gathered around them. They told Awoke not to call 911 because it would hurt the federation's name. He agreed, and he hung up his cell phone in the 911 operator's ear. The BMs told him not to

report this incident to the police. He concurred. Then John Doe left the office. They let ABSC's president take a seat before the IDs were printed. They received their own IDs and their players IDs and then they left. Immediately after they left the office and without telling Gebreyesus, Awoke reported the quarrel to the campus police while a supporter, which also happens to be a Bay Area respected community member watched him talk to the campus police. Then he went back to the field to continue watching a soccer game.

### **President Tesfaye's Act Angered Awoke**

Shortly after he made a report to the police, three police officers approached him at the field where he was watching the game. And they told him president Tesfaye instructed them to ask Awoke to leave the stadium because "he thinks you are a threat to the federation." Also, they asked him to not be near the federation's events until the festival is over. They informed him that he didn't commit any crime, but if he disobeyed their order to leave, they would arrest him for a crime of resisting a police officers' order.

Moreover, they told him that president Tesfaye needed to talk to him. They advised him to give the president a call after leaving the stadium. They also let him know that they were



made aware about the federation's internal problems, and they offered him an opportunity to discuss his removal from the stadium at the next annual board meeting. If he needed to go back to his hotel, where the federation entertained its guests, they advised him to let the hotel security know that he was told to leave the stadium because the federation regarded him as a threat.

Disappointed by president Tesfaye's act, Awoke received a case number from the police officers. As they walked him out of the stadium, he thought Tesfaye's informant was the person who saw him reporting the quarrel to the police, the so-called honorable community leader of the Bay Area. After Awoke left the stadium, he called 911 and reported the situation.

Aware of his freedom of speech, he went back to his hotel, Hyatt Regency Santa Clara, California. Then Awoke informed the hotel security of his encounter with the law enforcement at the San Jose City College stadium. The security told him that the police restriction to the stadium wouldn't apply to the hotel, as long as he wouldn't breach the hotel rules, he could enjoy himself at the hotel. Awoke went to the bar where his friends frequented and then entertained himself all night long among them.

### Should Passing out the Truth Help the Federation?

The next day, on July 4, 2014, he returned to the hotel bar loaded with more than 150 packages that contained articles about the rampant corruption within the ESFNA. Awoke then distributed the packages to Ethiopians at the bar while president Tesfaye and his supporters stared on hatefully while Awoke distributed the packages to Ethiopians at the bar.



They raised red flags; I requested an external auditor be hired; they ignored my question. Now I have a compelling story that the nepotistic executives embezzled charity organization money.

### Awoke believes that president Tesfaye discriminated against him

First, back in June 2013, the president treated him differently, by refusing him an opportunity to ask questions in a board meeting. Eventually, however, because of peer pressure, he allowed him to ask a question. Awoke said that our CPA internal auditor is a toothless bulldog because he worked hand in glove with the executives. So he requested an external auditor be hired to examine the 2012 and 2013 financial statements and tax returns. After he made the request, the auditor felt embarrassed. So his response was to laugh long and hard. The meeting was probably recorded in a video. President Tesfaye adjourned the meeting without addressing Awoke’s big question.



Second, in September 2013, Awoke was disfavored again by the president, and again he was rejected from his reappointed federation’s board membership.

Third, in October 2013, Tesfaye declined Awoke’s participation in the annual board meeting.



He alleged that he wasn’t a board member that represented ABSC although a notice about his reappointment was sent to all board members, including Tesfaye in September 2013. Awoke thinks he was silenced by him in the meeting because he didn’t like his repeated suggestion about a need for an external auditor.

Fourth, in the teleconference meeting of January 2014, again the president refused him an opportunity to speak; however, he succumbed to pressure from board members and allowed him to speak. Awoke spoke about Tesfaye’s leadership weakness. He restated the need to hire

an external auditor to scrutinize the financial records of the federation. And he argued that Tesfaye should resign before causing further problems to the federation.

Fifth, Tesfaye fraudulently rejected Awoke's participation in the October 2014 annual board meeting. The author took this as a tipping point that the federation is at a point of no return.

Lastly, Awoke feels he was a victim of Tesfaye's abusive language. He said that he witnessed Tesfaye swearing at a former public relations officer of the federation, Yohannes Berhanu, after he realized that Yohannes disagreed with him. [Click here](#) and forward towards the middle to listen to VOA Amharic about what others think about the ESFNA members' foul language.

### **Why John Doe and Jane Roe Reacted Aggressively?**

**\$** John Doe is a relative of an executive committee member – who was suspected of selling counterfeit stadium tickets during the 2013 tournament. According to insiders, although John Doe wasn't a board member, it appeared that he was one of the key personnel who were in charge of the 2014 venue's financial activities, including processes for issuing IDs and selling all the ESFNA's merchandise such as Logos, T-Shirts, etc.

**\$** Jane Roe – another relative of the same executive committee member – was selling stadium tickets. The stadium gate supervisors, one of whom was Dallol Ethiopian Sports Club's board member, a former executive – who served as a public relations officer of the federation – didn't return the spectators' ticket stubs, which of course was the spectators' proof of purchase. And/or they didn't perforate the stubs or mark cancel/void the tickets in front of their guests as a proof that a ticket wouldn't be resold, which again raises a big red flag!!!



**Most certainly, it is a scramble for nonprofit money!!!**

Source: Images obtained from Google Images.  
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