



# Ethiopian News

December 2019

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# Happy Holidays!

**Wishing you peace, love, and joy this holiday season and throughout 2020**

*From all of us at the Ethiopian Embassy in London*





# Editorial



## YEAR IN REVIEW 2019

Since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in April 2018, Ethiopia has undergone major political and economic changes. Broad-ranging measures were introduced, including the establishment of a committee to solve border issues between regions, increasing the number of women cabinet members and recognition of all political parties (both internal and those who were previously designated as terrorists). The Government then developed plans that would lift Ethiopia out of crisis and usher in true democracy and sustainable economic growth.

This year, major political developments included a referendum, held on 20<sup>th</sup> November, when 2.3 million people in the Sidama region voted on whether to become a new regional state, or to remain within the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples state - 98% voted overwhelmingly for an independent regional state of Sidama.

The referendum was applauded for being peaceful and democratic, despite speculation to the contrary in the run-up to the referendum. On the day of the vote, people exercised their democratic right to become a separate regional state as per the electoral procedure laid out in the Constitution. The referendum was largely viewed as a test case for the upcoming general election (May 2020).



Voters at the Sidama Referendum

Also in November, came the decision by the Executive Council of the ruling coalition Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to merge the coalition into a single party to be known as the "Prosperity Party," - a clear demonstration of the Prime Minister's synergistic "*medemer*" philosophy in action.

Ethiopia's adoption of free market economics and the impending liberalisation of state-owned companies in sectors, including telecoms and sugar, made news around the world. The government is to issue two licences for private telecom companies to operate in Ethiopia and 49% of the state-owned Ethio telecom company will also be made available. Regarding sugar, the first phase of the privatization

process will start before the end of the fiscal year (June 2020).



The Going Big in Ethiopia campaign was launched in June showcasing the immense investment opportunities the Ethiopian economy offers to global investors

The Government also architected the “home-grown economic reform agenda”, driven by the desire to create a path to prosperity through greater job creation, inclusive growth and poverty reduction.

The adoption of the “Green Legacy”, a landmark reforestation campaign spearheaded by Prime Minister Abiy, saw the planting of over 350 million indigenous trees on 29<sup>th</sup> July this year, a new world record.



Prime Minister Abiy planting a tree at his offices' compound

In recognition of his many achievements, in December PM Abiy was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 2019. The Nobel Committee praised him for

bringing peace with Eritrea and for efforts made in Sudan's peaceful transition. In addition, President Sahle-Work was also selected as one of Forbes Magazine's “22 Most Powerful Women in Politics and Policy.”

Here in the UK, the month of March saw the successful conclusion of a long-running campaign for the return of the hair of Emperor Tewodros, which had been on display at the UK's National Army Museum for many years; it was taken at Maqdala. There was great joy at the handing over ceremony which gained world-wide press coverage. The return revitalised the wider restitution issue both in the UK and abroad.



Ethiopians celebrate the historic return of Emperor Tewodros' hair

But there were also challenges this year, including an attempted coup in the Amhara state in June which saw the heinous assassinations of the President of the Regional State, the army Chief of Staff, a retired General and two other regional officials.

Across Ethiopia, large numbers of people were displaced from their homes as a result of ethnic conflict; when the new government opened up the political space, some, silent for decades, began to declare their autonomy and longstanding border and land issues came to the fore. Since, the Government, with the help of community elders and many other stakeholders, has resettled many of the previously displaced.

Though challenges to the transition remain, the Prime Minister's progressive vision for Ethiopia and commitment to real reform remain a guiding light illuminating the hope on the horizon.

## ETHIOPIA IN UK

### Message from the Ambassador

My wife, Asegedetch Amberber, and my dedicated staff at the Ethiopian Embassy in London join me in transmitting our heart-felt wishes to Ethiopians in the United Kingdom and to British friends of Ethiopia celebrating Christmas and ushering in the New Year.

It has been a very productive year for the Embassy as we, for the first time, opened the facilities of the Embassy for use by the Ethiopian community following Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's pledge to "open up our Embassies to the communities they serve." Numerous social and community gatherings were held, and I would like to reassure my compatriots that the Embassy is committed to continuing to serve as a gathering place for our community in the new year.

In March 2019, I chaired my maiden meeting with the Community in the UK, with 1,200 Ethiopians braving the cold weather to participate in the Town Hall event. I was encouraged by the sense of patriotism and concern I witness from attendees and am very keen to further enhance my engagement with the Diaspora in 2020.

My work in consolidating the vibrant and productive relations my country enjoys both with Her Majesty's Government and the people of the British Isles would not have been possible without the excellent cooperation we enjoy with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the House of Commons All Party Parliamentary Group on Ethiopia and a growing galaxy of British businesses and institutions. I therefore want to avail myself of this goodwill occasion to assure that I will continue to be at your disposal in the year ahead.

2020 will be a milestone year for Ethiopia as we will be holding a historical free and fair election as the culmination of the transformation Ethiopia has undergone over the last two years.

With this in mind, I wish you all joy, health, love and peace this holiday season and beyond.

### Ethiopia's first Equity & Merit Scholars graduate from Manchester University

The very first batch of students from Ethiopia to be awarded Manchester University's Equity and Merit Scholarships have graduated.



They are: Aida Bayissa (MSc International Development); Binyam Andargie (MSc International Fashion Marketing); Brook Makonnen (MSc Environmental Governance); Ruth Bezu (MSc International Development: Poverty, Inequality and Development) and Yacob Tsegaye (MSc Communications and Signal Processing).

The Equity and Merit Scholarships are for academically excellent students who have the potential to make a significant contribution to sustainable development in their home countries.

Now in its eleventh year, the Equity and Merit Scholarship has been awarded to nearly 300 students from Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania, with Ethiopia being the latest country to benefit.

Joanne Jacobs, from the University's International Office, who oversees the Equity and Merit Scholarships, said: "Having the full cohort of Equity and Merit scholarships from Ethiopia attend our Winter Graduation is a really special occasion.

"Graduations are always a time of celebration and our Equity and Merit scholars really do change lives but that's only because of the calibre of the recipients and the amount of hard work and effort they put in. That's why it was such an honour to welcome them back."

## **Broomwood Hall's annual Carols by Candlelight raises more than £14,000 for St George's School in Gondar**

The festive season began in earnest with the annual Carols by Candlelight concert hosted at St Luke's Church on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, which saw £14,500 raised in aid of St. George's School, in Gondar, Ethiopia.

Around 320 people, including parents, students and guests attended the evening, which featured a wonderful programme of music, words and carols. Among special guests were HRH Princess Beatrice of York, who is patron of the North African Education Fund, and her fiancé. The Embassy was represented by staff from the Public Diplomacy Department.



HRH Princess Beatrice with Broomwood Hall Students

The London Nordic Choir began the evening with the atmospheric and traditional candlelit Lucia procession. They were joined on stage by the award-winning mezzo soprano, Friedereke Krum who not only wowed with her voice but brought a glamorous touch to the evening, as did soprano, Alys Roberts from Opera Holland Park.

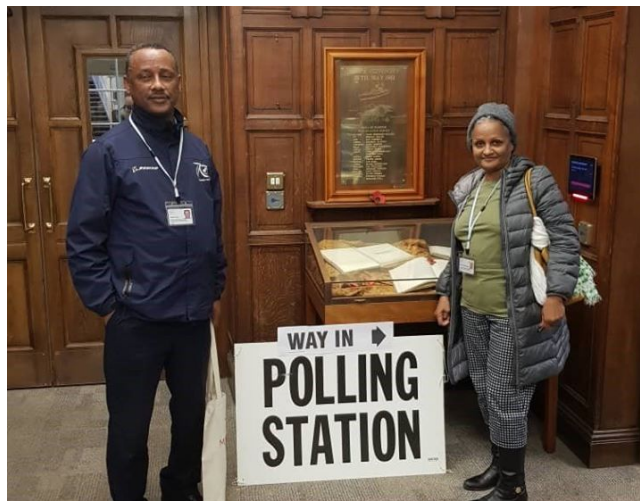
Performances from Game of Thrones actress, Natalie Emmanuel, renowned author Nadia Cohen and a moving piece inspired by WW1 composed by Adrian Munsey, were also welcomed, as were the Northwood schools' choirs and adult choir.

With the continuing support and generous donations made, the North African Education Fund can continue their journey to give more children an education and ultimately a future.

A video on the progress of St George's School in Gondar can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/StGeorgeET>.

## **EMBASSY NEWS IN BRIEF**

Ahead of Ethiopia's upcoming elections next year, officials from the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) were invited to the UK to observe the polling stations and counting mechanisms used during the UK's parliamentary General Election 2019, which took place on 12<sup>th</sup> December and saw the Conservative Party win a majority.



Bizuwork Ketete Shibeshi (r) and Getahun Kassa (l), both of the NEBE

A delegation led by H.E. Awol Wegriss, State Minister of Transport, the Ethiopian Maritime Affairs Authority, and Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Service Enterprise, attend the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly in London, in early December. Ethiopia has been a Member State of the IMO since 1975.

On 13<sup>th</sup> December, a delegation from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE), led by Mr Bacha Gina, President of the Bank, visited the UK where they met and held discussions with Ambassador Fesseha and Embassy staff.

During their meeting, various issues were discussed including the commencement of the 8-9% interest mortgage loans for the purchase or construction of residential homes; a new diaspora-focussed CBE Branch and the development of a new system that will help Ethiopian Diaspora open bank accounts online. For further information, please contact the Diaspora Department by email at [diaspora@ethioembassy.org.uk](mailto:diaspora@ethioembassy.org.uk).

**LOCAL NEWS**

## Prime Minister Abiy Awarded Nobel Peace Prize

On 10<sup>th</sup> December, the world's eyes were on Oslo, host city for the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony. This day will also go down history as it saw the first Ethiopian to be awarded a Nobel Prize.

Back in October the Norwegian Nobel Committee decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2019 to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali for his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea.

This year's prize, which is the 100<sup>th</sup> Nobel Peace Prize, is also meant to recognise all the stakeholders working for peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia and in the East and Northeast African regions.

Opening the ceremony, which was attended by distinguished guests including the Norwegian royal family. The chairperson of the Nobel Committee,

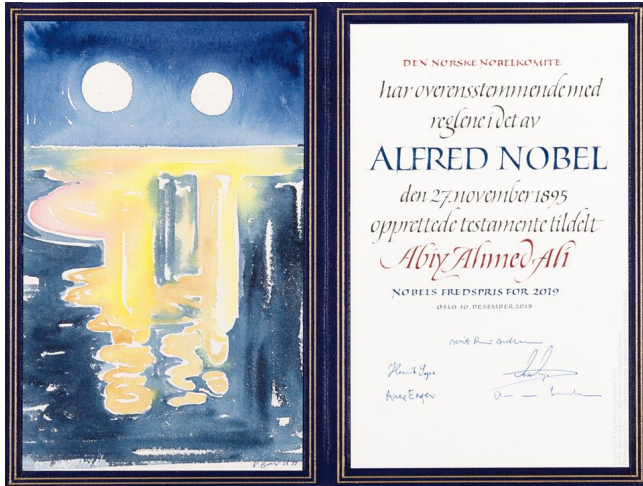
Berit Reiss-Andersen, said that Prime Minister Abiy represented a "new generation of African leaders who realise that conflict must be resolved by peaceful means". "You seized the initiative and were the main architect behind the peace negotiations that were successfully conducted with Eritrea," she said.



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, signs the Nobel Protocol on his arrival in Oslo. The Prime Minister signed it in Amharic.

“We are awarding the Peace Prize to you as an individual because you have personally made an extraordinary difference across several arenas. It is the totality of your efforts that convinced us that it is you, Mr Prime Minister, who have made the most significant contribution to peace in the past year,” she said.

Recognising that Ethiopia is the cradle of humanity she said that “we are all Ethiopians”.



Prime Minister Abiy's Nobel Peace Prize diploma

**...an award for those who made the ultimate sacrifice for peace**

In his Nobel Lecture, titled “Forging A Durable Peace in the Horn of Africa”, the Prime Minister thanked the Norwegian Nobel Committee for “recognising and encouraging my contribution to a peaceful resolution of the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea.”

“I accept this award on behalf of Ethiopians and Eritreans, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace.

“Likewise, I accept this award on behalf of my partner, and comrade-in-peace, President Isaias Afewerki, whose goodwill, trust and commitment were vital in ending the two-decade deadlock between our countries.”

“I also accept this award on behalf of Africans and citizens of the world for whom the dream of peace has often turned into a nightmare of war,” he added.

The Prime Minister said his horrifying experiences as a young Ethiopian soldier fuelled his determination to seek an end to the long conflict with Eritrea.



**“War is the epitome of hell for all involved. I know because I have been there and back.”**

“During the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, an estimated one hundred thousand soldiers and civilians lost their lives.

“The aftermath of the war also left untold numbers of families broken. It also permanently shattered communities on both sides.

“Following the end of active armed conflict in June 2000, Ethiopia and Eritrea remained deadlocked in a stalemate of no-war, no-peace for two decades.

Tens of thousands of troops remained stationed along both sides of the border. They remained on edge, as did the rest of the country and region.

The war and the stalemate that followed were a threat to regional peace, with fears that a resumption of active combat between Ethiopia and Eritrea would destabilize the entire Horn region.

And so, when I became Prime Minister about 18 months ago, I felt in my heart that ending the uncertainty was necessary.

I believed peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea was within reach. I was convinced that the imaginary

wall separating our two countries for much too long needed to be torn down.

And in its place, a bridge of friendship, collaboration and goodwill has to be built to last for ages.

That is how I approached the task of building a peace bridge with my partner President Isaias Afewerki.

We were both ready to allow peace to flourish and shine through...We agreed we must work cooperatively for the prosperity of our people and our region.

**“It takes a few to make war,  
but it takes a village and a  
nation to build peace.”**

The Prime Minister also highlighted the historic strides Ethiopia has made over the past few months in peace, including the release of all political prisoners and the closing of notorious detention facilities where torture and human rights abuses took place.

He further said, “Today, Ethiopia is highly regarded for press freedom. It is no more a ‘jailor of journalists’. Opposition leaders of all political stripes are free to engage in peaceful political activity.”

“We are creating an Ethiopia that is second to none in its guarantee of freedoms of expression.”

He further added that the country has laid the groundwork for genuine multiparty democracy, and “we will soon hold a free and fair election.”

The Prime Minister called upon all “my fellow Ethiopians to join hands and help build a country that offers equal justice, equal rights, and equal opportunities for all its citizens.”

He also urged them to avoid the path of extremism and division, powered by the politics of exclusion.

Read the Prime Minister’s full Nobel Lecture at <http://bit.ly/PMAbiyNobelLecture>.

### **...a source of great pride and inspiration**

In a statement released shortly after his award, the PM said that he was deeply honoured and humbled by the recognition of the Nobel Committee. “The award is both a source of great pride and inspiration both in Ethiopia and the broader region.”

The Prime Minister also extended his congratulations to the Nobel Committee and the Norwegian people for the extremely important work they are doing to highlight the cause of peace, justice and human dignity around the world.

**“Our problems are far from resolved. But with *Medemer* as our guiding philosophy, we are determined to ensure Ethiopians are free from fear and want, that their hearts and borders remain open to new ideas and opportunities, and that, together, they shall overcome.”**

The Prime Minister reaffirmed his commitment to upholding the ideals of the Nobel Prize throughout his term in office and beyond.

Read the full statement via our website at <http://bit.ly/PMAbiyStatement>.

The Nobel ceremony was also an opportunity to showcase Ethiopia’s diverse culture. Ethiopian musician Bruktawit Getahun, better known as Betty G, performed at the ceremony.

Speaking to the BBC, Betty G said, “My attire and hair style represented Tigray people. I was singing in the Amharic language, so this represents the Amhara people.”

The title of one of the two songs she sang, Sin Jaaladhaa, means “I Love You” in Afaan Oromoo, the language of the Oromo people.



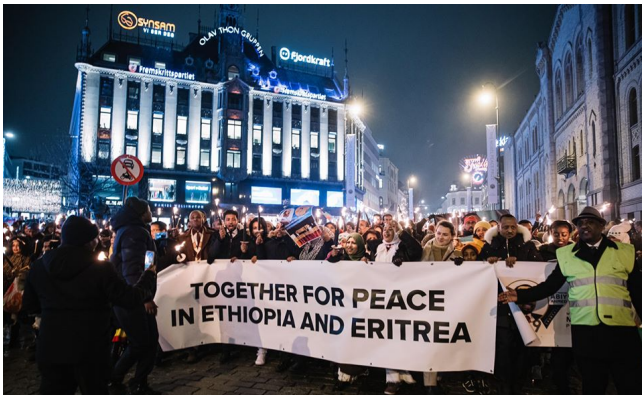
"To represent the Muslim community in Harar and DireDawa, I had henna [on my hand]."



"I had a very short time on stage, so I thought I needed to promote what every Ethiopian citizen loves and can relate to."

### ...Ethiopians and Eritreans in Oslo hold candlelit peace march

Ethiopians and Eritreans in Oslo staged a candlelit peace procession in celebration of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Nobel Peace Prize Award on 10<sup>th</sup> December.



On the side-lines of his visit to Oslo, the Prime Minister also held a bilateral meeting with his Norwegian counterpart Prime Minister Erna Solberg. The two discussed various issues including Ethiopia's efforts in building a democracy and strengthening its momentum.



PM Abiy with PM Erna Solberg at a press conference

As part of the Nobel Prize tradition, PM Abiy also held meetings with the President of the Norwegian Parliament, Ms Tone Trøen and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, led by Ms Anniken Huitfeldt. The discussions focused on political, economic and social developments in Ethiopia.

### ...Nobel Peace Prize exhibition, 'Crossroads Ethiopia' now open

While in Oslo the PM inaugurated the new Peace Prize exhibition at the Nobel Peace Centre, which opened to the public on 12<sup>th</sup> December.

The exhibition, entitled '*Crossroads Ethiopia*', portrays Ethiopia's ongoing process of peace and democracy.

At the opening of the exhibition, the Prime Minister thanked the Norwegian Nobel Committee for the recognition and said: "We will keep working together to make the world better."

The exhibition, which runs for a year until 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020, consists of a series of photographs taken by the award-winning Irish-Canadian photographer Finbarr O'Reilly who visited Ethiopia in November 2019 on assignment by the Nobel Peace Centre.

O'Reilly captured some of the women assigned to power in PM Abiy's new government and how the changes inflicts the society in Addis Ababa.



Photo of Ethiopia's first Supreme Court President, Meaza Ashenafi. © Finbarr O'Reilly for the Nobel Peace Centre

Addis Ababa, which has a thriving photograph scene, is also depicted part of the exhibition with photographs captured by Ethiopia's seven highest ranking photographers and curated by one of Ethiopia's most celebrated photographers, Aida Muluneh. The images show the transition the country has gone through.

### ...Hero's welcome in Ethiopia

Upon his return to Ethiopia, senior government officials and tens of thousands of Ethiopians, who lined the streets of Addis Ababa, gave the Prime Minister a hero's welcome.



Deputy Prime Minister, H.E. Demeke Mekonnen welcomes the Prime Minister

Speaking shortly after arriving, the Prime Minister said that "the award has helped to draw attention to

Ethiopia, Eritrea and the east Africa region...I hope we will celebrate this milestone in Eritrea soon."



A 21-gun salute was also fired in honour of the Prime Minister.

**“After witnessing the world celebrating Ethiopia, I am glad to be back home. Thank you to all who organized a heart-warming welcome and celebrating our collective victory. Together we can and we will!”**

~ Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

At a state dinner held at the National Palace in honour of the Prime Minister, President Sahle-Work called for unity, saying that Ethiopia is on a reform path and that "we should join hands to overcome the challenges facing the reform process."

Senior government officials, the diplomatic community and invited guests attended the dinner held in honour of the Prime Minister's Nobel Prize.

Echoing President Sahle-Work, Prime Minister Abiy said "We should stand together to add momentum to the reforms launched in Ethiopia and realize the country's move towards prosperity."

The Prime Minister urged all Ethiopians to contribute their share to the economic growth of the country by working day and night with unity.

## President Sahle-Work among Forbes 100 Most Powerful Women

President Sahle-Work Zewde is in Forbes list of the 'World's 100 Most Powerful Women' of 2019.



At number 93, President Sahle-Work is the only African to be included in Forbes' annual list and is noted for being Ethiopia's first female president and the only serving female head of state in Africa.

A seasoned diplomat and veteran of the United Nations, President Zewde was appointed with a unanimous vote by parliament, after being nominated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

In her first address to parliament, she promised to be a voice for women and stressed the importance of unity.

The appointment joins a series of unprecedented shifts as part of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's reforms focused on easing government control.

Traditionally a ceremonial role, Zewde's appointment is a tremendously symbolic move for the conservative country, opening the door for gender parity.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel retained the top spot for the ninth consecutive year, followed by Christine Lagarde, head of the European Central Bank in second place and Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in third place. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the longest-reigning monarch in British history ranks 40<sup>th</sup>.

Last year, President Sahle-Work was ranked number 97 in the list.

## Freweini Mebrahtu named 2019 CNN Hero of the Year

After weeks of online voting, Freweini Mebrahtu was named the 2019 CNN Hero of the Year.



Selected from the Top 10 CNN Heroes finalists, Ethiopian Freweini is recognised for her years of dedication and incredible work at keeping girls in school by designing a reusable menstrual pad to help end the cultural stigma around periods in Ethiopia.

Receiving the award, Freweini said, "I am so humbled and grateful for CNN...this is for all the girls and women everywhere. Dignity for all."

Freweini, who studied chemical engineering, designed and patented the reusable pad in 2005. She and her team produce 750,000 pads a year at her factory in Ethiopia. Nearly 800,000 girls and women have benefited from her work.

More than 80% of the pads she manufactures are sold to non-governmental organizations that distribute them for free.

Teaming up with the non-profit, Dignity Period, to end the stigma around the issue, Freweini speaks at schools and teaches girls and boys that menstruation is natural, not shameful.

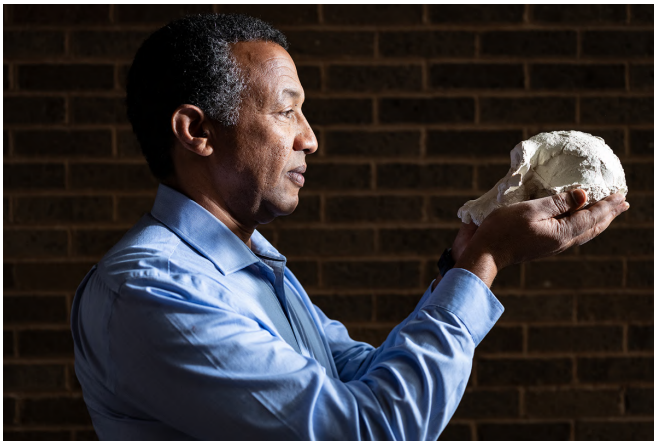
Dignity Period has distributed more than 150,000 free menstrual hygiene kits purchased from Freweini's factory. Data gathered by the group shows that schools visited by Dignity Period had a 24% increase in attendance among girls.

As the 2019 CNN Hero of the Year, Freweini will receive \$100,000 to expand her work.

## Dr Yohannes among Top 10 People Who Mattered in Science in 2019

Dr Yohannes Haile-Selassie has been named among “Ten people who mattered in science in 2019” by the prestigious journal *Nature*.

Dr Yohannes, Curator of Physical Anthropology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, is recognised for his discovery of a 3.8-million-year-old fossil cranium of an early human ancestor in Ethiopia.



Credit: Michael McElroy for Nature

It was a pale, circular shape on the ground, about the width of a grapefruit, that caught the attention of Dr Yohannes when he was investigating a site in the northern Ethiopian desert in February 2016. The object was jutting out of the parched earth just 3 metres away from a jawbone found by a goat herder a few hours earlier. “Before I picked it up, I said, ‘Oh my goodness, this is something.’”

The fossils together formed a remarkably complete early hominin skull, which Haile-Selassie’s team dated to 3.8 million years old. It belongs to a species called *Australopithecus anamensis* — the oldest and most elusive known human relative.

The skull, known as ‘MRD’ and revealed to the world in August 2019, gave researchers their first look at the face of this enigmatic ancient relative, which was previously known from just a few bone fragments. Palaeo-anthropologists are impressed by the specimen, and some say it is rivalled only by Lucy, the 3.2-million-year-old skeleton fossil of the closely related species *Australopithecus afarensis*.

Dr Yohannes is considered one of the field’s most talented fossil finders. Many treasures have surfaced from his project in Woranso-Mille, a region scattered with hominin fossils from the Pliocene, a key period in the evolution of the genus *Homo* and its close relative *Australopithecus* between 5.3 million and 2.6 million years ago. He is also one of a crop of Ethiopian palaeo-anthropologists who lead major scientific projects in their homeland - a big shift from a generation ago, when foreigners oversaw most of the research in this fossil-rich nation.

*Nature’s* 10 is the journal’s annual list of ten people who mattered in science this year. They might have achieved amazing discoveries or brought attention to crucial issues. Although not an award or a ranking, *Nature’s* 10 highlights individuals who had a role in some of the year’s most significant moments in science.

## Signing Marks Establishment of Prosperity Party



On 1<sup>st</sup> December, leaders of seven of the nine parties governing Ethiopia’s regions met to sign a document that officially marked the unification of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) into a new party.

The Prosperity Party, PP, is a national party that was formed following the dissolution of the current four-member ruling coalition, the EPRDF.



# Ethiopia at the Global Refugee Forum

A high-level delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen attended the first-ever Global Refugee Forum, held in Geneva from 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> December.



Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen Hassen arrives for the Global Refugee Forum and is greeted by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

The Forum brought together some 3,000 participants, ranging from government representatives, international financial organisations, business, civil society, and humanitarian and development organisations, as well as refugees, and is a key element of the Global Compact on Refugees, which the international community signed last December. It calls for Global Refugee Forums to be held every four years.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, co-hosted the Forum together with Switzerland, and it was co-convened by Ethiopia, Costa Rica, Germany, Pakistan and Turkey. The aim of the Forum was to generate new approaches and long-term commitments from a variety of actors to help refugees and the communities in which they live.

The Forum focussed on six themes: arrangements for burden and responsibility-sharing, education, jobs and livelihoods, energy and infrastructure, solutions and protection capacity.

## ...Ethiopia's doors are always open for refugees

In his keynote address, Deputy Prime Minister Demeke called for a comprehensive response to refugees.

**“Ethiopia has a proud history of providing protection of and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers which dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century.”**

“While we have our own developmental challenges and limited resources and in spite of the significant strain on our natural resources, Ethiopia has kept its doors open for refugees. We strongly believe that

such a longstanding generosity is a demonstration of exemplary levels of solidarity to our brothers and sisters of our region,” he said.

“My Government has always been committed to initiate and implement comprehensive approaches towards refugee response. In this regard, at the Leaders’ Summit on refugees in September 2016 in New York, the Government of Ethiopia made bold commitments through the nine pledges that aim to sustainably improve the lives of refugees and host communities. Since then, in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, Ethiopia has already made significant progress in achieving some of the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees. This is particularly evident in the increasing number of refugee enrolments in all levels of education including tertiary education and jobs and livelihood opportunities. In addition, the number of refugees residing outside the camps have significantly increased. The new refugee law, adopted in 2019, sets a legal framework to enhance freedom of movement and inclusion of refugees in our national systems.”



“Furthermore, the Government of Ethiopia formally launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework at national and local levels in November 2017, and it also embraced the subsequent adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees in December 2018. A National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy is tabled for approval by the Council of Ministers, with a view to gradually creating self-reliant and resilient refugees and host communities, through enhancing harmonized and integrated services and solutions.”

The Deputy Prime Minister announced Ethiopia’s new pledges that are strongly linked with existing commitments and aligned with the focus areas of the Forum.

The Government of Ethiopia commits to:

1. **Create up-to 90,000 socio-economic opportunities** through agricultural and livestock value chains that benefit both refugees and host communities.
2. **Provide quality and accredited skills training to 20,000 hosts and refugees** on an equitable basis, taking into account the labour market demand and linkages with existing and new commitments in expanding socio-economic opportunities.
3. **Provide market-based and sustainable household and facility-based energy solutions for 3 million hosts and refugees** through promoting clean and renewable energy sources.
4. **Strengthening the Government of Ethiopia’s Asylum System and Social Protection Capacity.**

He concluded by calling upon all stakeholders to “work together in tackling the root-causes of forced displacement” and expressed the Government of Ethiopia’s commitment to deepen inclusive policies towards refugees.

The Forum concluded on 18<sup>th</sup> December with more than 770 pledges of support, covering areas such as protection, employment and education, for refugees and the communities which have taken them in.

“I want to salute the efforts pledged by many countries - both donors and host countries - and by business leaders, civil society and refugees themselves, to redouble efforts in support of refugee inclusion, self-reliance and solutions,” UN High Commissioner Filippo Grandi told the first-ever Global Refugee Forum closing session.

“The energy and commitment that has resonated over the last three days is a testimony that despite a difficult global environment, there is a shared commitment to protecting those fleeing in search of refuge.”

### **...Ethiopia’s long-standing history of hosting refugees**

Ahead of the Forum, a two-day regional conference on “Delivering the Global Compact on Refugees: Local Approaches to Inclusion,” was held in Addis Ababa on 31<sup>st</sup> October. The conference brought

together representatives and stakeholders from the East Africa region to share experiences and identify opportunities to achieve the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, with a focus on local approaches to the inclusion of refugees within their host communities.

In her remarks at the event, Ethiopia's Minister of Peace, Muferihat Kamil said "Ethiopia is happy to host this conference as an extension of its long-standing and proud history of hosting refugees for centuries. Equitable partnerships and responsibility sharing are key to the success of the Refugee Compact, to ensure refugee and hosts receive the support they need."

Ethiopia currently hosts close to a million refugees from neighbouring countries. Earlier this year, the country approved a historic new refugee law which allows refugees to obtain work permits, access primary education, obtain drivers' licences, legally register births and open up access to national financial services.

A copy of H.E. Mr Demeke Mekonnen's statement at the Global Refugee Forum is available on request. Please email [press@ethioembassy.org.uk](mailto:press@ethioembassy.org.uk).

## **National Durable Solutions Initiative for IDPs launched**

Ethiopia's National Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI), which will promote conducive conditions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) to rebuild their lives, was launched on 6<sup>th</sup> December.

The Initiative – developed by the Government of Ethiopia, the United Nations, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors – seeks to ensure internally displaced communities in the country are supported to either return, integrate or relocate voluntarily.

Opening the meeting, Ethiopia's Minister of Peace, Muferihat Kamil said: "Those of us who have solutions at stake cannot simply rely on a project-based approach. We need development actors to systematically integrate the concerns of displaced persons and affected communities as active participants in programmes."



Ethiopia's Minister of Peace, Muferihat Kamil making opening remarks at the launch of the national Durable Solutions Initiative. Photo: IOM

The DSI will support interventions across national development policy, legislative reform, institutional strengthening and mainstreaming of IDP-friendly solutions in spatial and town planning. It also supports area-based, government-led and community driven programmes in areas of voluntary return, relocation or local integration, additionally ensuring that internally displaced households and individuals have access to livelihoods.

The initiative comes at a critical time when ethnic-based tensions and communal violence, drought and floods in some regions of Ethiopia have forced millions of people to flee their homes over the past two years, leading to a complex crisis of population displacement in the country. This has driven the government, in collaboration with humanitarian and development partners, to increase its focus on an approach that cultivates long-lasting solutions to the situation of IDPs in the country.

More than 200 delegates from government and partner agencies discussed how the DSI will be implemented in the country, highlighting the ongoing development challenges and peacebuilding agenda in Ethiopia.

UN Resident Coordinator and UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Ethiopia, Steven Were Omamo, said the Initiative is a vital step in fulfilling and restoring the rights of citizens in distress, and in assisting them to rebuild their lives. He added that much more work needed to be done to ensure those in search of durable solutions will be able to access basic rights.

## Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt conclude Trilateral Technical Dialogue

The fifth trilateral technical dialogue between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt on the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam concluded in Cairo on 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

Representatives from the US and the World Bank also attended the two-day meeting, which discussed the outstanding issues over the filling and operation of the dam that were not resolved at the fourth trilateral meeting held in Addis Ababa in November.

Another meeting was held in the US on 9<sup>th</sup> December to assess the results of the recent negotiations.

In a joint statement, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan appreciated the observer role of the United States and the World Bank and noted the progress achieved in the technical meetings among the Ministers of Water Resources in Addis Ababa and in Cairo.

The Ministers agreed that the strategic direction of the next two technical meetings should be the development of technical rules and guidelines for the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), the definition of drought conditions, and drought mitigation measures to be taken.

The statement added that the “Ministers recognize that there are substantial benefits to all three countries in developing rules and guidelines to address drought conditions. The rules and guidelines will include drought mitigation measures based upon the natural flow in a given year and water release rates from the GERD. The implementation of these technical rules and guidelines for the filling and operation of the GERD will be undertaken by Ethiopia, and may be adjusted by the three countries, in accordance with the hydrological conditions in the given year.”

The Ministers will reconvene in Washington on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to review the results of the upcoming technical meetings in Khartoum and Addis Ababa with the goal of finalising an agreement.

## Lost ancient town that rivalled Rome discovered in Ethiopia

Archaeologists have discovered an ancient buried town in Ethiopia that was inhabited for 1,400 years.

The town was part of the powerful Aksumite civilisation, which dominated east Africa for centuries and traded with other great powers like the Roman Empire.



“This is one of the most important ancient civilisations, but people don’t know it,” says Michael Harrower of Johns Hopkins University. “Outside of Egypt and Sudan, it’s the earliest complex society or major civilisation in Africa.”

The Empire of Aksum dominated east Africa and parts of Arabia from about 80 BC to AD 825. It was one of the major powers of the time, alongside Rome, Persia and China. Its capital, also called Aksum, still exists and has many tall stone obelisks.

Nobody knows how the Aksum civilisation developed. It was preceded by a “pre-Aksumite” society, the name of which is unknown. This earlier civilisation may have been centred around Yeha in northern Ethiopia, which has the oldest writing and standing architecture in sub-Saharan Africa. So Harrower and his colleagues have surveyed the surrounding area.



After discussions with local people, the team began excavating a hill near a village. They found a grid of stone walls: the remains of buildings.



“That’s what’s great about Ethiopia,” says Harrower. “In Greece and Rome a lot of places have been explored and studied, so there’s not a lot of discoveries of major ancient towns any more.”

They called the town Beta Samati, which means “house of audience” in the local Tigrinya language.

The find is “highly significant”, says Jacke Phillips of SOAS University of London. “Most of our known Aksumite and pre-Aksumite sites are old excavations, hastily conducted and badly published by today’s standards.”

Radiocarbon dates of the site span 771 BC to AD 645. That means Beta Samati existed during the pre-Aksumite period and was continuously inhabited throughout the rise of Aksum. For Harrower and Phillips, this implies pre-Aksumite settlements were not abandoned when Aksum arose, and that there may not have been a sharp political break

between the two, as archaeologists previously suspected.

Beta Samati contains many small buildings, either houses or workshops. There is also a large rectangular building identified as a “basilica”. In the Roman Empire, basilicas were originally used for public administration and courts, and later as places of Christian worship.

Aksum originally had a polytheistic religion, influenced by traditions from the Saba kingdom in what is now Yemen. However, during the 300s King Ezana converted Aksum to Christianity, so the basilica may have been built as a Christian church. In line with this, the team found a stone pendant marked with a Christian cross.

The team also found a ring, made of copper alloy covered with gold leaf, and bearing a red stone called a carnelian engraved with the image of a bull’s head over a vine or wreath. “It looks a lot like a Roman ring, except for the style of the bull insignia,” says Harrower.



A gold and carnelian ring from the excavations

It may be that Aksum rulers brought in Roman craftspeople and instructed them to adapt Roman designs to suit Aksum culture, Harrower says. Archaeologists have long known that Aksum was a major trading civilisation, exporting gold, ivory, elephants and baboons.

The trade evidently reached Beta Samati. The team found amphorae, probably used to store wine, which seem to come from Aqaba in what is now Jordan, and a glass bead probably from the eastern Mediterranean.

## TRAVEL AND TOURISM



## Ethiopian Airlines celebrates one year of Manchester to Addis Ababa

Ethiopian Airlines marked its one-year anniversary of flying from Manchester Airport to Addis Ababa on 12<sup>th</sup> December. The airline celebrated the milestone by hosting a special celebration at Manchester Airport's Terminal 2 check-in for passengers and guests before the anniversary flight departed at 18.05. There were also celebrations at the departure gate providing traditional Ethiopian hospitality and commemorative gifts for passengers.

Manchester is the airline's second UK destination providing a four-times-a-week service connecting the north of England to over 60 destinations across Africa.

The Ethiopian route unlocked a huge number of African destinations for passengers from

Manchester, via its Addis Ababa hub, including Kenya, Zanzibar and Seychelles. In the last year, the airline has carried over 17,500 passengers and flown close to 1.5 million miles between Manchester and Addis Ababa.

Ethiopian Airlines, UK Country Manager Michael Yohannes said: "We are proud to celebrate one year of service from Manchester. In addition to our operation from London Heathrow the four times a week Manchester service makes Africa even more accessible for both business and leisure passengers from the north of the country. Passengers have been enjoying the comfort of our Boeing 787 Dreamliner's and the convenient onward connections from Addis Ababa to the rest of the continent."

Tim Bettney, Ethiopian Airlines' Traffic and Sales manager for Manchester added, "The first year of operation has been very successful. Addis Ababa has not surprisingly been our top destination with onward routes to Zimbabwe, Cape Town and Malawi proving very popular. Our Cargo service has performed well carrying 222 tonnes of goods between our continents. Our Ethiopian service and hospitality have provided passengers with close to 35,000 meals and 30,000 cups of our famous Ethiopian Coffee."

Ethiopian flies to more destinations in Africa than any other carrier and has been operating the ultramodern Boeing 787 Dreamliner on the route to Addis.

### ...Ethiopian Airlines CEO named 'Airline Executive Of The Year'

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr Tewolde GebreMariam was recognised as 'Airline Executive of the Year' at the annual Global Aviation Awards for Excellence organised by Centre for Aviation (CAPA) in Malta on 5<sup>th</sup> December.

Mr GebreMariam won the title for his commendable individual influence on the aviation industry, demonstrating outstanding strategic thinking and innovative direction for the growth of Ethiopian Airlines and the aviation industry at large.

CAPA Chairman, Emeritus Peter Harbison said, "Tewolde GebreMariam has become a giant in African aviation over the past decades. He has guided a marginal airline into becoming a major global force, with a modern fleet and a world-class operation. This past year he has been most strenuously challenged following the MAX accident and emerges with an even stronger reputation. We are proud to present him with this award and look forward to him continuing to lead the airline to even greater heights."

Having served Ethiopian Airlines in different capacities for decades, Mr Tewolde took the helm of Africa's leading flag-carrier as Group CEO in January 2011. He has received a number of prestigious accolades propelling Ethiopian to the top of Africa's aviation.

## Timket (Epiphany) inscribed on UNESCO Intangible Heritage list

The ancient, colourful festival of *Timket* (Epiphany), which commemorates the baptism of Jesus Christ in the River Jordan, has been inscribed on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.



It becomes the 4<sup>th</sup> intangible cultural heritage of Ethiopia next to *Meskel*, the *Geda* system and *Fichee Chambalaalla*.

*Timket* is usually celebrated all over Ethiopia from 18<sup>th</sup> January, but many consider the historic city of Gondar to host the best experience.



Pilgrims observe Timket at the historic Fasilides Bath in Gondar

The commemoration starts on the eve of the main festival, known as *Ketera*, when people escort their parish church *tabot* (replica of the Ark of the Covenant), to *Timkete-Bahir* (a pool, river or artificial reservoir).

Celebrants then attend night-long prayers and hymn services, before taking part in the actual festival the following day, when each *tabot* is transported back to its church.

*Timket* is a religious and cultural festival whose viability is ensured through continuous practice and the pivotal contribution of the Orthodox clergy.

## TRADE AND INVESTMENT

# UK investors explore investment opportunities in Ethiopia

Invest Africa, a leading UK-based business and investment platform, led another investment mission to Ethiopia from 3<sup>rd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> December, with the aim of providing delegates with an opportunity to engage with key political stakeholders and connect with leading local businesses who are looking to deepen their relationships with foreign investors.

The visiting delegation included 20 investors drawn from a range of strategic sectors including agriculture, telecoms, logistics, tourism, mining and power.

In one of their first meetings, the minister of Innovation and Technology, Dr Getahun Mekuria highlighted the liberalisation and privatisation agenda that the Ethiopian Government is currently undertaking to attract investors.

When the draft Investment Proclamation materialises, he said, it will help Ethiopia attract more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Abebe Ababayehu, Head of the Ethiopian Investment Commission, together with Ministers of Agriculture, Transport, Mines and Petroleum, and State Ministers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity also presented the investment opportunities Ethiopia has to offer to foreign investors.



The delegation with the State Minister of Finance, Dr Eyob Tekalign Tolina

In discussions, the delegates said they admired the reforms taking place in Ethiopia and expressed their optimism for partnership opportunities.

Former UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Ethiopia, Jeremy Lefroy said that "the [Ethiopian] government has very ambitious plans to double and triple the current 4.4 gigawatts power generation. And there are UK-based investors who are very much involved in negotiating over, for instance, geothermal, solar, wind and indeed off-grid power generation."



The delegation also met with President Sahle-Work Zewde (centre)

Manufacturing, agro-processing, especially unleashing the potential of agriculture, by particularly boosting smallholder farming are other attractive areas, he said.

Invest Africa CEO, Karen Taylor said:

**“With the growth that Ethiopia has experienced over the last fifteen years at ten per cent per annum or more, the potential for our investors is enormous and that is what is drawing them back to Ethiopia.”**

Investors go and take their money wherever they are going to get a good return, the CEO said, adding that “Ethiopia has certainly enormous potential as a market place.”

## **Ethiopia's Homegrown Economic Reform Programme gets \$2.9 billion IMF support**

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff team led by Ms Sonali Jain-Chandra who visited Addis Ababa from 29<sup>th</sup> October to 8<sup>th</sup> November have reached a preliminary agreement with Ethiopia for a three-year \$2.9 billion financing package to support Ethiopia's Homegrown Economic Reform Programme.

In a statement, Ms Jain-Chandra said:

"The Ethiopian government and the IMF staff team reached preliminary agreement, subject to approval by the Fund's Executive Board, on policies that could constitute the basis for Ethiopia's new programme supported by the its Extended Credit Facility (ECF) and Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangements. The overall objective would be to support implementation of the authorities' Homegrown Economic Reform Programme.

"The Fund-supported programme would consist of five main pillars: (1) durably address the foreign exchange shortage and transition to a more flexible exchange rate regime; (2) strengthen oversight and management of state-owned enterprises to contain debt vulnerabilities; (3) strengthen domestic revenue mobilization and expenditure efficiency to create space for adequate poverty-reducing and essential infrastructure spending; (4) reform the financial sector to support private investment and modernize the monetary policy framework; and (5) strengthen the supervisory framework and financial safety nets."

On 20<sup>th</sup> December, the Executive Board of the IMF approved three-year arrangements. At the conclusion of the Executive Board's discussion, Mr. David Lipton, First Deputy Managing Director and Acting Chair, said "With strong ownership and full implementation of reforms, the authorities' economic plan should eventually improve macroeconomic outcomes and lower external vulnerabilities. High priority is placed on removing constraints to private investment and improving the business climate, setting the stage for an acceleration in private sector-led growth."

Since taking office in April 2018, Prime Minister Abiy pledged to undertake economic reforms, with a focus on leveraging private sector investment to help provide jobs for millions of unemployed youth.

In related news, the Prime Minister also announced, that Ethiopia will receive \$3 billion from the World Bank to help strengthen reforms. No further details were provided on the World Bank funding.

The Development Assistance Group (DAG) has also pledged a further \$3 billion to help strengthen Ethiopia's home-grown economic reforms, the Prime Minister said.

"I am pleased to announce that the Government of Ethiopia is right now finalising additional funding for the on-going economic reforms. Development Partners have pledged well over \$3 billion dollars, strengthening their commitment to our homegrown economic reform agenda," the Prime Minister said on Twitter.

"This reaffirms both Governments' and donors' partnership to transition Ethiopia to a prosperous and peaceful nation," he added.

### **\$916 million earned from exports**

A total of \$916 million was earned from the export of a range of commodities and electricity over the first four months of the current budget year that started on 8<sup>th</sup> July.

Compared to the same period in the previous year, the income increased by \$101.5 million, said the Ministry of Trade.

The major export products which contributed to the income include agricultural commodities such as coffee, oil seeds, khat, flowers; minerals; manufactured goods including textiles and leather goods, and electricity export to neighbouring countries.

## EVENTS

### Book Launch: Maaza Mengiste's *The Shadow King*

Join us for the exclusive UK launch of Maaza Mengiste's second novel, *The Shadow King* and be among the first in the UK to obtain a copy of the book ahead of the publication date of 30<sup>th</sup> January.



Set in Ethiopia in 1935, *The Shadow King* is a powerful novel about female strength and what it means to be a woman at war. With the threat of Mussolini's army looming, the recently orphaned Hirut longs to do more than care for the wounded and bury the dead. When Ethiopia loses hope, it is Hirut who offers a plan to maintain morale,

and soon inspires other women to take up arms. Maaza Mengiste's beautifully crafted novel is a captivating exploration of female power, which casts light on the women soldiers written out of African and European history.



Maaza Mengiste was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A Fulbright Scholar and professor in the MFA in Creative Writing & Literary Translation programme at Queens College, she is the author of *The Shadow King* and *Beneath the Lion's Gaze*, named one of Ten Best

Contemporary African Books by *The Guardian*. Her work can be found in the *New Yorker*, *Granta*, and the *New York Times*, among other publications. Her short story *Skylines* was broadcast on BBC Radio 4.

Date: Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January from 6:30pm

Venue: Embassy of Ethiopia  
17 Princes Gate  
London SW7 1PZ

Tickets + Info: <http://bit.ly/ShadowKingUKLaunch>

### Azmari Bet featuring Betty Dankira



Come and be hosted, entertained and fed by London's energetic Ethiopian community!

The night will feature amazing music, poetry and theatre, as the experience of an Azmari Bet is recreated.

An Azmari Bet is a traditional club that you can find hidden away in the back streets of Addis Ababa, where musicians entertain and amuse and customers come just to drink, eat, dance, chill and get away from the hustle and bustle of life! At the heart of the Azmari Bet is the Azmari minstrel.

Whether playing the one-stringed masinko fiddle, the 5-stringed krar lyre, singing songs – often made up on the spot to praise or make fun of customers – dancing, or reciting poetry, these are consummate performers who have learnt what it is to entertain.

Date: Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> January from 7:00pm

Venue: Richmix  
35-47 Bethnal Green Road  
London, E1 6LA

Tickets + Info: <http://bit.ly/AzmariBet18>.

# ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

## The 50 Best Places to Travel in 2020

**TRAVEL+  
LEISURE**

Addis Ababa is among Travel + Leisure's 50 best places to travel in 2020.

### 1. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



For much of the past four decades, Menelik Palace loomed over Addis Ababa as a symbol of imperial imposition. Now, nearly two years into his term and with a Nobel Peace Prize already under his belt, the country's reformist prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, has opened the 19<sup>th</sup>-century palace to the public and tapped local artist Elias Sime to build a public garden, slated to open mid-year. It's the latest sign that something has shifted in Ethiopia's capital - and thanks to a major expansion of Addis Ababa's airport that's tripled capacity and brought new routes. Last year, Sime and his partner, the curator and cultural anthropologist Meskerem Asseged, opened the Zoma Museum after a 20-year planning and building process. Situated in the Mekanisa neighbourhood, the museum blends Ethiopia old and new, using vernacular architecture as a backdrop for contemporary art - including some of Sime's own pieces. In its attention to both traditional and modern influences, Zoma parallels the aims of Addis Foto Fest, a biennial photography festival that will be held again in December 2020. Until then, find work by the country's finest artists on display at institutions such as St. George Gallery, Addis Fine Art, and LeLa Gallery.

Read more at: <http://bit.ly/VisitETH21>.

## An Ethiopian Gallery Enriches a Global Art Conversation

**The New York Times**

How Addis Fine Art got off the ground is a tale of happenstance built on the back of good timing.

Rakeb Sile, had always been interested in the arts, having even flirted with the idea of working in the music industry before settling on a career in management consulting. But whenever she travelled back to Addis Ababa, she spent time investigating the city's growing but globally undiscovered contemporary art scene. She started collecting paintings and sometimes bought works directly from the artists because there was no professional gallery scene in terms of artist development and infrastructure.

Art became her passion, and in 2012 she took a six-month sabbatical, in part because she was not sure if she wanted to stay in her career. "And I wanted to make sense of what I had collected," she said, "to see where is the narrative."

One of the people she was keen to meet was Mesai Haileleul, an Ethiopian art historian and a Los-Angeles-based gallery owner. A mutual friend connected them when Ms Sile was in Los Angeles, and over the span of a week, they talked about Ethiopia's rich art history, the growing international conversations around African contemporary art and the idea of working together to promote what was happening on the ground artistically in Addis Ababa.



Mesai Haileleul, left, and Rakeb Sile in front of works by Merikokeb Berhanu

Once she was back in London, a friend who was an art collector told her that the new Gallery of African Art was opening and that gallery officials did not want to debut a show with an artist from South Africa or Nigeria, countries whose art scenes have a lot of exposure internationally.

“I called Mesai, and I said: ‘We have an opportunity to do a show in London; we should do it. What do you think?’” she said. “And he said, ‘I am in retirement.’...‘I thought you were absolutely crazy.’”

But that idea ended up being a solo exhibition in the summer of 2013 of an Ethiopian painter and sculptor, Wosene Worke Kosrof. It was a success. So with a little coaxing from Ms Sile’s side, she and Mr Haileleul partnered to set up Addis Fine Art with outposts in both London and Addis Ababa.

“Our main goal was to be a bridge between here and the rest of the world,” Mr Haileleul said. “It’s tough on the continent as a lot of artists do not have enough collectors to be able to support themselves so we felt like, ‘Yes, we will be based in Ethiopia, be authentic and really understand the history of the art of this country.’”

Since Addis Fine Art’s debut at the Armory Show in New York in 2016, Ms Sile and Mr Haileleul have been storming across the African contemporary art scene, participating in fairs from the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair in London to Art Dubai and Art X Lagos in Nigeria.

Next year looks just as busy, not only because the gallery will move to a new permanent location in London in May. In March, Addis Fine Art will again be at both Art Dubai and the Armory Show. It will also put on exhibitions in its spaces in London and Addis Ababa.

Read more at: <http://bit.ly/AddisFineArtNYT>.

## What Makes a Church? A Tiny, Leafy Forest

**The New York Times** In this op-docs, Jeremy Seifert, a filmmaker, says, “I grew up attending churches surrounded by parking lots and populated by congregations that didn’t connect their spirituality to ecology. So when I first heard about the church forests of Ethiopia, I was intrigued.”

“I was eager to meet people whose religion had some built-in practice of respecting trees and preserving biodiversity. And that belief, coupled with the ballooning threat of climate change and a growing sense of despair, propelled me to visit the church forests of Ethiopia.”

“As I spent time with Dr Alemayehu and filmed in the little pockets of old-growth forest that surround the churches of Ethiopia, my moments of awe at the beauty of the church forests were countered by feelings of despair. They were so small. So much of the surrounding forest had already disappeared.”

“For me, these little blips of green forest rising out of vast swaths of deforested brown earth represent hope. They are a powerful intersection of faith and science doing some good in the world.”



“E.O. Wilson, in his book “Half-Earth,” declared the church forests of Ethiopia **“one of the best places in the biosphere.”** They are proof that when faith and science make common cause on ecological issues, it results in a model that bears repeating.”

Read more at <http://bit.ly/ETChurchForest>.

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