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[Press Release](#)

By: Global Alliance for Justice – The Ethiopia Cause (GAJ-EC)

RETURN OF OBELISK: BEGINNING OF HEALING

GAJ-EC acknowledges, with appreciation, the return to, and installation today of the nearly two thousand-year old Ethiopian obelisk at Axum 71 years after it was taken illegally by the Fascist Italians to Rome. The Alliance extends its appreciation and thanks to all the institutions and individuals, past and present, who worked tirelessly for the return of the obelisk to Ethiopia, especially Dr. Richard Pankhurst.

The return of the obelisk augurs very well for the relations between Ethiopia and Italy only if the latter continues to apply its new policy of owning up for its past injustices and, as has been demonstrated in its case with Libya, the adequate compensation of the Fascist victims especially Ethiopia. The Libyan government deserves everyone's admiration for its success in achieving an apology and a \$6-billion compensation by Italy.

The return of the obelisk to Ethiopia is only the beginning of the healing process. Italy has yet to address the still fresh wound that has been inflicted on Ethiopia as a result of the Fascist atrocities during 1935-41 resulting in the genocide of 1 million Ethiopians, destruction of 2000 churches and 525,000 homes, the killing of 14 million animals and the devastation of the Ethiopian environment due to the spraying of mustard poison gas by droves of Fascist planes throughout the country. The ridiculous and the obviously inadequate compensation of 6 million sterling pounds Italy agreed to pay in 1947 for the horrendous crimes it committed in Ethiopia remains totally unacceptable by any standards.

It is only when Italy apologizes to the Ethiopian people for the crime it has committed against them and renders an adequate compensation that the healing process will have been accomplished. Otherwise, the wound will keep on festering until justice will prevail.



A Vatican clergy blessing the Fascist army at the commencement of its journey to commit genocide in Ethiopia.

A very important related aspect is the role played by the Vatican in supporting the Fascists when they committed the “unimaginable crime” against humanity in Ethiopia. The Vatican leadership including Pope Pius XI and the clergy had given full support to Fascist Mussolini and his war criminals to perpetrate the genocide in Ethiopia. The current head of the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI, has been requested repeatedly in writing to do his Christian duty to apologize to the Ethiopian people. His Holiness’ response is still being awaited. In the mean time, GAJ-EC has launched an international campaign calling on all people who believe in justice and human rights to sign a petition (www.globalallianceforethiopia.org) that would eventually be submitted to the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, Amnesty International, and such institutions as well as certain governments in order to put pressure on the Vatican to apologize to the Ethiopian people similar to what it has done for the Nazi holocaust against the Jews.

In conclusion, GAJ-EC is of the firm view that although the return of the Ethiopian obelisk to Axum is commendable, the deep wound that festers between Ethiopia and Italy will only be healed when Italy and the Vatican apologize to Ethiopians for the Fascists genocide committed during 1935-41 as well as Italy’s full compensation for the war crime perpetrated in Ethiopia. Any premature statement that the relations between *Ethiopia* and *Italy* are now normalized would, therefore, be inappropriate until Italy apologizes to the people of Ethiopia and a just compensation is paid commensurate with the devastation committed by the Fascists.