

Will Italy and the Vatican Emulate Britain and The Netherlands?*

By Kidane Alemayehu

Apologies and Compensations by Britain and The Netherlands

Two European nations, Britain and The Netherlands, have finally come to terms with the demand for justice by apologizing to and compensating the people of Kenya and Indonesia, respectively, for the crimes committed by the former colonial powers over half a century ago.

Status of the Fascist Crimes Against Ethiopia with the Complicit Support of the Vatican

The Vatican is still being awaited to express its apology to the Ethiopian people for its complicity with the Fascists. The Italian government needs to pay adequate reparations to the Ethiopian people for the huge war crimes perpetrated by the Fascists in Ethiopia where one million people were massacred and huge quantities of properties were also destroyed. Looted Ethiopian properties still remain in the hands of the Vatican, and the Italian government.

Britain's Apology and Compensation to Kenya

It has been reported that 90,000 Kenyans were killed and 160,000 were “forced into concentration camps” during the 1950's. For more details please check the following link at Al Jazeera (by James Reinl, June 7, 2013):

http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/06/201366133052307633.html?utm_content=features&utm_campaign=features&utm_source=twitter&utm_term=rss&utm_medium=twitter

In a news item entitled: “Kenyans celebrate Mau Mau compensation win”, James Reinl stated:

“Making a landmark apology before Britain's parliament, Foreign Secretary William Hague expressed regret over “abhorrent violations of human dignity” that took place more than half a century ago.”

In addition to the formal and public apology, Britain agreed to an out-of-court settlement for the payment of \$30.5 million at the rate of \$4,100.00 compensation per claimant to a total of 5,200 victims. Thus, although the compensation is obviously low compared with the number of

victims, nevertheless, the fact that Britain owned up to its past crimes against the Kenyan people deserves appreciation and, hopefully, leads the way for a more just settlement.

The Netherlands Government's Apology and Compensation to Indonesia

In a news item entitled: "Netherlands apologises for Indonesian colonial killings" dated September 12, 2013, AFP (Agence France-Presse) reported the historic action by the Government of the Netherlands that offered its formal and open apology at Jakarta to the Indonesian people for the "mass killings" undertaken by the Dutch military during 1945-49. It is also reported that the Dutch government has offered Euros 20,000 to each widow of those massacred (40,000) during the colonial days. For more details, the following link may be checked:

<http://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/1308843/netherlands-apologises-indonesian-colonial-killings>



Dutch Ambassador for Indonesia Tjeerd de Zwaan (centre) meets surviving family members of victims of mass killings committed by the Dutch military between 1945-1949 after a ceremony in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Thursday. Photo: AP

What Do the Actions by the British and Dutch Governments Exemplify?

The compensations offered and the formal apologies expressed by the two governments to the Kenyan and Indonesian peoples, respectively, reflect important principles of humanity and justice. Among other things, it clearly indicates the British, and Dutch governments' admirable capacity to own up for their past war crimes. The actions clearly emphasize the fact that such crimes have no stay of execution. Therefore, even though the British and Dutch massacres and

atrocities in Kenya, and Indonesia, respectively, took place over sixty years ago, the Governments finally faced their obligations squarely and apologized to the Kenyan and Indonesian people.

The British and Dutch apologies and compensations also reflect their respect for the Governments and people of Kenya and Indonesia who had suffered a massacre at the hands of an invading, colonial army. By their honorable action, the British and Dutch governments have set an excellent example for the international community, especially the Vatican, and Italy, in the war crimes committed in Ethiopia.

Therefore, the governments and peoples of Britain and the Netherlands as well as those of Kenya and Indonesia deserve the fullest accolade for facilitating a closure for the atrocities committed during the colonial days.

Fascist Italy's War Crimes Committed in Ethiopia with the Vatican's Complicity

The following war crimes and devastation was committed in Ethiopia by Fascist Italy with the complicit support by the Vatican during 1935-41:

- (a) One million Ethiopians were massacred of whom 30,000 were killed within only three days in Addis Ababa; and at least 15,000 people were killed as a result of the poison gas sprayed by numerous Fascist airplanes in many parts of Ethiopia;
- (b) 2,000 churches, 525,000 homes, and 14 million animals were destroyed;
- (c) Vast quantities of Ethiopian properties looted from Ethiopia.



Fascist Atrocity in Ethiopia



Pope Pius XI's representative, Cardinal Gaspari, and Mussolini signing the Lateran Treaty



A Vatican Clergy Blessing the Fascist Army

Justice Owed to the Ethiopian People

The Global Alliance for Justice – The Ethiopian Cause (www.globalallianceforethiopia.org) is in the process of conducting an international campaign to achieve the following objectives:

1. A Vatican apology to the Ethiopian people for its complicity with the Fascists;

2. Adequate compensation by the Italian Government to the Ethiopian people for the huge loss in lives and property they sustained as a result of the Fascist war crimes;
3. Restitution of Ethiopian properties by Italy, and the Vatican which, for example, has over 500 Ethiopian documents in its custody;
4. The dismantlement of the monument established by Italy for the Fascist “Butcher of Ethiopia”, Rodolfo Graziani, at Affile, a town southeast of Rome; and
5. The inclusion of the Fascist war crimes in Ethiopia in the records of the United Nations.

International Appeal

The international community, including the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, the Vatican, and the Italian government should take a leaf from the excellent example set by Britain and the Netherlands which have demonstrated their respect for human rights and justice by apologizing to and compensating the Kenyan and Indonesian victims of their colonial massacres. **It is time that the Ethiopian people who have been awaiting the justice that has been due to them for over 75 years are duly compensated in terms of a formal apology, reparations, restitution of properties, and recognition as stated above so that, finally, a closure will be achieved.**

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Kidane Alemayehu is a retired United Nations expert