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October 26, 2013

**OPEN LETTER:**

To His Holiness Pope Francis I

From: Kidane Alemayehu

Subject: **Application of Justice to Fascist Rodolfo Graziani Similar to Nazi Erich Priebke**

Your Holiness,

Please permit me, Your Holiness, to express my respectful regards and to submit this humble appeal for justice for your consideration. I hope and pray that Your Holiness will grace me with your kind response unlike the Vatican's stunning silence concerning my previous letter dated August 18, 2005 to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and the other one to Your Holiness dated February 14, 2013.

I have the honour to refer here to the AP (Associated Press) report dated October 14, 2013 in the various media concerning Your Holiness' decision to forbid a church funeral in the city of Rome for the recently deceased Nazi war criminal, Erich Priebke. It is interesting to note that according to the same AP report, the Foreign Minister of Argentina, Mr. Hector Timerman has also decided that Priebke's remains would not be allowed to be buried in the latter's adopted homeland, Argentina's territory. The report has also stated that Rome's Mayor and Chief of Police have forbidden the Nazi SS criminal, Erich Priebke's funeral from taking place in Rome.

It is well known that Erich Priebke was a former SS who participated in the massacre of 335 civilians in Italy.

The Vatican's decision not to allow a church funeral for the Nazi criminal indicates that it has a clear policy of justice with regard to former war criminals. I, therefore, humbly and respectfully applaud Your Holiness' directive on the issue.

I should, however, bring to Your Holiness' kind attention that a worse war criminal has been honoured, **in the presence of a Vatican representative**, with a mausoleum inaugurated, in his name, in Italy, at a town called Affile. I am referring here to the "Butcher of Ethiopia", Rodolfo Graziani, who, as I feel sure, Your Holiness is aware was responsible for the massacre of one million Ethiopians of whom 30,000 were murdered within three days in the city of Addis Ababa in 1937. It is well known that Graziani used mustard poison gas and other arms as well as the use of hanging some patriots while cutting others' heads off. Among the numerous victims of the Fascist war crimes were Abune Petros and Abune Michael, both of whom were bishops of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church as well as over 400 monks and nuns at the Debre

Libanos Monastery in Ethiopia. The Fascist army is also responsible for the destruction of 2,000 churches, 525,000 homes and 14 million animals in Ethiopia. Mention should also be made of the fact that huge quantities of Ethiopian properties were looted from Ethiopia including over 500 documents currently in the possession of the Vatican.



Fascist atrocity in Ethiopia



A Vatican priest blessing the Fascist Army

The BBC report of August 15, 2012 entitled: “Italy memorial to Fascist Hero Graziani sparks row” states:

“The mayor of the village of Affile attended the opening ceremony on Saturday,

**together with a representative from the Vatican.**” .....

“Graziani was honoured with a mausoleum and memorial park, built at taxpayer’s expense, in a village south of Rome.” (Affile).....

“He (Graziani) was a notorious as Benito Mussolini’s military commander in colonial wars in Ethiopia and Libya where he carried out massacres and used chemical weapons.”

It is obvious that if the Vatican would not allow a church funeral in the city of Rome for a Nazi war criminal who was responsible for the massacre of 335 people, the Holy See should apply the same principle of justice by not being party to an action that honoured a worse Fascist, namely, Rodolfo Graziani who committed a much more devastating war crime on humanity in Ethiopia.

I, therefore, submit this fervent appeal to Your Holiness so that the Vatican would express a consistent policy against war criminals be they Nazis or Fascists by calling on the Italian Government for the removal of the Graziani monument or renaming it to a true anti-Fascist patriot. I also take this opportunity to call on Your Holiness to facilitate the Vatican’s apology to the Ethiopian people for its complicity with the Fascists in terms of the Lateran Treaty between Mussolini and the Vatican as well as the blessing of the Fascist army by the Vatican. Since the Vatican has apologized repeatedly to the Jewish people for no other reason than for its silence during the Nazi holocaust, there is no reason why the Vatican should not perform its Christian duty of apologizing to the Ethiopian people for its unbridled support of the Fascist invasion and war crimes in Ethiopia.

The restitution of Ethiopian properties currently in the Vatican's possession to the rightful owners i.e. Ethiopians is another important Christian obligation required from the Vatican.

I also take this privilege to call, by copy of this appeal, upon the United Nations to include the Fascist war crimes in Ethiopia in its historic annals as well as the Italian Government to render adequate reparations for the Fascist war crimes in Ethiopia, return the properties looted from

Ethiopia as well as to remove the mausoleum installed at Affile for the Fascist war criminal, Rodolfo Graziani.

With my utmost respect,

Kidane Alemayehu

Executive Director.

CC: Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, Ethiopia; and Chairman of the African Union

CC: Prime Minister Enrico Letta, Italy

CC: President Barack Obama, USA

CC: Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, United Nations

CC: Commissioner Nils Muiznieks, Human Rights, Council of Europe

CC: Governor Nicola Zingaretti, Lazio Region, Italy.