



An Initiative of CEF ★

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December 20, 2017

Mr. António Guterres, UN, Secretary General
Dr. Jim Yong Kim, World Bank, President
Ms. Christine Lagarde, IMF, Director General
Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission, President
Mr. Angel Gurría, OECD, General Secretary
Hon. Mathias Cormann, Minister of Finance, Australia

Dear Sirs and Madam:

Re: Do the WB, EU, OECD, IMF, and UN have the moral high-ground to condemn slave trade in Libya?

In a recent interview with DW, Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker stated: "The European Union must not remain silent in the face of slave markets in Libya, which dates to another century. It is neither conceivable, nor acceptable, for Europe to close its eyes to this tragedy."

It is with this commendable denunciation of racial injustice in mind, and with the belief that you all agree with it, that I write to request your intervention to resolve a blatant and systemic racial injustice against an Ethiopian national (Dr. Yonas Biru) that your organizations are directly and deeply involved in.

I, along with several civil rights leaders, took interest in this case because it provides a flashpoint for a broader discourse on the systemic confinement of people of African origin to underclass global citizens.

Dr. Biru was the Deputy Global Manager of the International Comparison Program (ICP), the world's largest statistical program that compares economic growth and living standards in over 180 countries. The ICP is co-sponsored by several international organizations and has an Executive Board consisting of high-level officials representing international agencies and participating countries. It is managed by the World Bank and follows its administrative and fiduciary rules and regulations.

While serving as the Deputy Global Manager of the ICP, Dr. Biru applied for promotion to Global Manager. In response, he was told that he could not be promoted because 'Europeans are not used to seeing black man in a position of power.' ~ [A Report by US Senator Chris Van Hollen](#)

A confidential memo by an Australian government official (Dennis Trewin) made it clear that the European Union (EU), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a Washington-based organization run by Europeans, were not prepared to accept Dr. Biru as Global Manager. The email discussed a consolation agreement whereby he would run the program behind the scenes and a white consultant would be fronted as Global Manager.

"Since World Bank rules would not allow consultants to perform managerial duties, Mr. Biru managed the day-to-day coordination of the program, supervised staff and administered the program's trust fund. There was no business reason to maintain [the consultant] as Global Manager when he was not managing anything" ~ [Government Accountability Project \(GAP\)](#)

The above-noted Australian government official and the Chair of the ICP Executive Board wrote: "I understand it is not possible even on an informal basis to designate a consultant as global manager." However, he convened the Executive Board at the United Nation (UN) to use it as a rubber stamp to legitimize the race-based preferences of the EU, OECD and IMF.

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At the time, the Board had 18 members, 11 representing international organizations and 7 representing member countries. Of the 18, only 9 attended the “closed session for principals only,” including the World Bank, EU, OECD, IMF, UN and representatives of the UK, Russia, Australia, and Uganda. In a reckless violation of Board decorum, the Australian invited seven non-board members to fill a quorum.

The meeting designated a consultant as Global Manager, declared the decision confidential and denied Board members who did not attend the meeting access to the Board minutes. Those who were denied access included Principal Board members representing the Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, two UN regional agencies for Latin America and the Middle East, as well as China, India, Senegal and Canada.

Since the WB is immune from US laws and courts, the only venues available to Dr. Biru were the WB Peer Review Panel and the WB Tribunal. His case was first heard by the Peer Review Panel.

The Peer Review Panel - During the Peer Review proceedings, an Iranian World Bank executive (Shaida Badiee) admitted under oath that the consultant was designated as Global Manager months before the Board meeting after she received “unsolicited sensitive feedback” about Dr. Biru through “a confidential e-mail” that she did “not feel comfortable to [discuss].” When the Panel asked for a copy of the email, she changed her story under oath. “The consultations were oral, not written.”

Dr. Biru managed to get a copy of the email. It was authored by the above-noted Australian government official. The email that the World Bank promised him “Yonas will not get a copy or see it” identified the EU, OECD and IMF as the sources of the “unsolicited sensitive feedback.” Evidently, the Executive Board was convened to cover up for them.

In the meantime, the World Bank defended itself. The Iranian executive testified under oath on tape that she “advocated for Yonas to take over the Global Manager position” but failed to sway the Executive Board. She went on to state that “based on the directive from the Executive Board” and to avoid a “very embarrassing” discord with key Board members, she designated the consultant as Global Manager. Since World Bank rules do not allow consultants to perform managerial duties, she charged Dr. Biru to run the program behind the scenes. The HR unit sent him an email not to disclose to the Board that he was running the program. The Iranian lamented under oath on the record: “I am sorry, it broke my heart.”

Dr. Biru requested the Peer Review Panel to summon the Australian, EU, OECD and IMF officials for cross-examination. The Bank’s lawyer put the Panel “on notice,” stating: “in the event the Panel is going to request these outside people, the Legal Department is going to take it under advisement. What exactly the response is going to be, I cannot tell you.” She added: “the General Counsel of OECD is making a special trip” to Washington. They are “very nervous.” They are “being advised of the risk” of appearing before the Panel.

The Panel submitted to the thinly guised threat and told Dr. Biru he could not call external witnesses. In the meantime, the Chair (Inger Anderson) filed a complaint: “I want to put for record. This is an integral part of the conflict resolution system that we have in the Bank. We do not have access to national labor law, and national court system. I want to put that on record. Because we’ve had some sense that the Bank was unhappy with the way in which we were proceeding.”

The Panel concluded that there was “no business reason” to explain what was done to Dr. Biru. It recommended the World Bank “immediately enter into binding mediation.” The then HR VP (Hasan Tuluy), rejected the recommendation and wrote to Dr. Biru he could take his case to the World Bank Tribunal if he chose to.

The World Bank Tribunal Proceedings - The contention before the Tribunal was the division of labor between Dr. Biru (designated as Internal ICP Team Leader) and the consultant (who was fronted as the ICP Global Manager).

The job description for Global Manager is “He/She will head the Global Office and takes overall responsibility for the implementation of the Program, including providing overall leadership to staff working in the program at all levels. He is also responsible for financial management. He/She prepares annual work programs and budgets for the Board’s approval.”

The consultant who was working part time (maximum 150 days a year) was not allowed to do any of the tasks. He could not even prepare annual budget for the Executive Board's approval. Consultants do not have access to the Bank's financial books.

The World Bank acknowledged that Dr. Biru "took charge of the ICP work at its most critical time." The Iranian sent memos to the administrator of the World Bank Board of Directors and the President's front office that all questions related to the global program should be directed to Dr. Biru. The only thing he was not allowed to do was to present the program's annual budget and work program to the external ICP Executive Board. The Australian, EU, OECD and IMF would not accept a black man. The consultant became the face of the Program for them and presented Dr. Biru's work as his own for nearly two years.

The Tribunal wrote to the Australian, EU, and OECD officials to "please explain the basis for the conclusion that Mr. Biru was qualified to be the internal ICP Team Coordinator but was not ready to take on the Global Manager position."

The Australian official (Dennis Trewin) responded stating "I do not have enough information to comment on this."

The EU official (Pieter Everaers) responded: "I had and have no special opinion on the decision made for him to take on the position of internal ICP Coordinator." But he had special opinion not to deal with him as Global Manager.

The OCED Official (Enrico Giovannini) wrote: "Given the World Bank's internal rules and Mr. Biru's technical skills, it was recognized that he would be able to play the role of coordinator of the day-to-day work under the supervision of [the consultant]." The record shows he was told that the consultant could not undertake any supervisory role.

The UN Official (Paul Cheung) testified for the World Bank over the phone, stating the decision was made by "senior executives of major international organizations" and "this decision should not be challenged in any proceeding."

The four institutional witnesses proved disastrous, leading the Bank to change its legal defense. In a brazen *ex post facto* cover-up scheme, the World Bank retroactively degraded Dr. Biru's performance record, going as far as deleting his title and leadership role from World Bank publications and websites. Two World Bank officials lied under oath on the record that Dr. Biru had no management role. See [Senator Van Hollen's report](#), for copies of Dr. Biru's record before and after it was deleted.

Inexplicably, the Tribunal summarily dismissed the racial discrimination complaint, ruling that everything the World Bank and its partners did was justified by "business rationales." This was the official judgment. In a confidential memo that Dr. Biru was copied by mistake the Tribunal characterized the Bank's defense as "dishonest."

The only black judge on the Tribunal Panel, Professor Francis Ssekandi, wrote to Dr. Biru stating: "I pleaded your case, but was outnumbered... I did not find it fit to dissent at the time. I was not ready to take such a momentous step."

The tribunal separately heard Dr. Biru's termination and found it "unlawful, and a violation of due process" but ruled he should not be reinstated because "He had criticized his managers."

As Senator Van Hollen documented, long after the Tribunal summarily dismissed Dr. Biru's racial discrimination case, "the World Bank internally restored his original, correct personnel record." Nonetheless, it refused to correct the record on its website, claiming that the restored official record is "hagiographic" - beyond the natural capability of a black man. It stood by its decision to give the public credit to white World Bank and IMF managers.

On its face, the allegation may appear a hyperbole but for the question that if it is "hagiographic" for a black manager, why would it be suitable for white managers? The answer is in a 1998 World Bank [memorandum](#) that revealed "Sub Saharan Africans are rated inferior" and a 2003 World Bank [diversity report](#) that brought to light blacks are regarded as "not bright or competent" to perform at par with other races.

What is considered beyond the natural capability of a black man? Dr. Biru's restored internal record reads in part: "Yonas has multiple roles in terms of the Bank's global management of the ICP, managing one of the most critical programs the Bank

has ever managed. He is praised for his many skills in handling difficult regional ICP implementation cases. His work in managing sensitive relationships between stakeholders is very impressive. He managed important methodological innovations in critical areas that have created a lasting-legacy... The Program just couldn't be successful without his expertise and knowledge of key players." This is Dr. Biru's internal record.

His public record is tarnished by defamatory remarks attributed to the Australian, EU, OECD, IMF and UN officials. His record on the Bank's website reads: "He doesn't have the judgment and relationship management skills. He lacks credibility with the international community, they do not think he listens or tries to understand their perspective. Some regions do not want to work with him. They are concerned that the whole project would be put at risk if he was made the Global Manager."

In 2014, and 2015, Dr. Biru filed two appeals with the Tribunal. First, the Bank's decision to restore his management record internally represents an admission of perjury that subverted the course of justice. Second, there are no legal or moral grounds for the World Bank to maintain the defamatory remarks on its website after it corrected the record internally.

The World Bank filed two motions to dismiss both appeals and the Tribunal obliged. As far as the Tribunal was concerned, the Bank's decision to correct the record internally has no effect on its original judgment because "*the ultimate decision in the appointment of the ICP Global Manager rests with the ICP Executive Board.*" This means, only the Australian, EU, OECD, IMF and UN officials can undo the injustice, because the defamatory remarks are attributed to them.

A Clarion Call to the Global Citizen Forum - The Bank's legal position that Dr. Biru's record is "hagiographic" for a black man is an insult to the black race. Its decision to correct his record internally and still refuse to withdraw the perjured evidence that its lawyers used in its defense is morally and legally indefensible. Moreover, the fact that the World Bank ignored the Peer Review Panel's complaint is disturbing. The Peer Review Panel is the Bank's fact-finding body. No credible institution will uphold a judgment when there is evidence showing the fact-finding process was breached under threat.

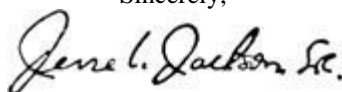
Dr. Biru's supporters led by Dr. E. Faye Williams, President of the National Congress for Black Women, are calling upon Artists of moral standing, who offer their time and talent to Global Citizens Annual Festival, not to share the Global Citizens Festival stage with officials of international organizations who use their immunity from lawsuits to legalize racial discrimination.

I share their view that the actions of members of your senior management teams as manifested in Dr. Biru's case represent the antithesis of what Global Citizens stand for. In that regard, I am confident that the Global Citizen Forum will find it difficult to maintain the #World Bank, #IMF and #UN pages on its website. I also believe artists of moral standing will find it an affront to their moral standing and detrimental to their brand to share the Global Citizens Forum with people who are engaged in systemic discrimination against people of African origin.

I write this letter with confidence, believing in your sense of justice and conscience to discharge your moral duty. Considering that the injustice has been prolonged for far too long, I ask your kind and expedited response.

I have taken the liberty to copy Mr. Hugh Evans, CEO of Global Poverty Project; Mr. Jay Brown, Board member, Global Citizens; and Ms. Demi Lovato, Global Citizen Ambassador through Ms. Katie Farhat to draw their attention to the problem and to ask them to add their voice to the chorus of call for justice.

Sincerely,



Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.
Founder & President