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THE CROWN COUNCIL OF ETHIOPIA

HIS IMPERIAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ERMIAS SAHLE-SELASSIE HAILE-SELASSIE
PRESIDENT

On His Imperial Majesty's Birthday

Remarks at the Ethiopian Embassy, Washington, DC, on 16 Hamle 2011 (July 23, 2019) by

His Imperial Highness Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie
President of the Crown Council of Ethiopia

Today, the 16th of Hamle, 2011 (July 23, 2019), marks the 127th anniversary of the birth of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I. In another month, we will mark the 44th anniversary of his murder.

Today, we mark the achievements of his remarkable 83 years of service to Ethiopia, to Africa, to the World, and to God.

The Emperor is generally regarded as the inspiration and guiding hand in creating the Organization of African Unity on May 25, 1963, in Addis Ababa. But that act was but one aspect of his inspiration to all Africans, and while he remained alive he totally embodied the concept of African dignity, African harmony, and the leadership which Ethiopia could demonstrate to all Africans and those of African descent.

His forebear, His Imperial Majesty Emperor Menelik II, gave the initial rallying call to Africans when, in 1896 in the Western calendar, he and his forces staged the first major defeat in Africa of an invading European power at the Battle of Adwa. But it was Emperor Haile Selassie's defeat of the invading Italian forces in 1941 which gave the West its first victory in the war against fascism. In that, he inspired not only the West, but all of Africa, and with that action ensured that European colonialism in Africa was to become a thing of the past.

The Emperor, who was the foremost proponent of collective global action, was the great prophet of what would happen if the world succumbed to fascism, when Italy invaded Ethiopia again in 1935. He told the League of Nations: Today it is us; tomorrow it is you.

His Majesty was not only a globalist, but a profoundly passionate nationalist, and an inspiring regionalist. He saw no conflict in his belief that the nation-state of Ethiopia — a collection of jewels of different peoples, languages, and cultures — could become a vibrant and self-reliant entity, while also championing the rise of all African societies within a context of global trade and cooperation. Today, as we see such a great schism between globalists and nationalists in many countries around the world, we would do well to learn from Emperor Haile Selassie. And in Ethiopia itself, we would do well to understand why he championed each and every group and culture within our great common identity as Ethiopians. He did not belittle any component of our great Ethiopian society, but, rather, sought for each facet of our cultures and religions a place in a glittering Ethiopian identity.

In so doing, the Emperor pioneered the creation of modern states in Africa; states which could each embody diverse cultures and peoples. He was, then, the great exemplar of unity, of inclusion, of cooperation, and of ensuring that all people felt valued, inspired, and had the ability to contribute and soar to their fullest destiny.

We thank H.E. Ambassador Fitsum Arega for opening his Embassy doors to us on this historic day. We also wish to thank the organizers of tonight's event. It has been an amazing year to witness the erection of the statue of His Majesty at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa. We are grateful to H. E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and his Administration for working with the A.U. to make this a reality. We pray that peace prevails in Ethiopia. May God Bless Ethiopia; to Bless and inspire the work of a harmonious and cooperative Africa for which the Emperor worked, and to ask God, most humbly, to Bless the sacred memory of Emperor Haile Selassie I.