

Malawi - Tanzania Lake Nyasa Dispute Reveals Colonial Syndrome

News:

Widespread criticism has been recently erupted in Malawi regarding Tanzania's new maps which show the boundary between Malawi and Tanzania lies in the middle of Lake Malawi (Nyasa).

Comment:

This saga emerged following the Tanzania's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology in the past few weeks, a directive to all teachers in Tanzania using maps as teaching material that indicates border between Tanzania and Malawi located at running through the middle of the Lake Malawi (Nyasa), rather than the initial one that shows the entire lake as belonging to Malawi as claimed by Malawi.

Colonial legacy left harsh reality with severe effects to African states and elsewhere making them grappling with numerous border disputes and in some cases led to violence and war that caused catastrophic destructions.

In east Africa, there are several instances of boundary conflicts including between Somalia and Ethiopia (ongoing since 1960); Kenya and South Sudan (ongoing since 1963); and Kenya and Somalia (1963-1981). Others are Ethiopia and Sudan (from 1966 to 2002), Tanzania and Malawi (ongoing since 1967) and Uganda-Tanzania (1974-1979) and etc.

Before Western colonial invasion and division of the continent, there was no any serious conflict between the two or any part of the lake over ownership.

Locals on either side of the lake shared the resources from the lake peacefully, each part enjoyed its utilization such as fishing, irrigation, domestic usage of waters and etc.

With the arrival of the colonialists by the end of 19th century CE, Malawi was grabbed by Britain while Tanzania by Germany. The two colonialists signed the 1890 Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty from which boundary between the then British colony of Nyasaland (Malawi) and German East Africa (Tanzania) was set the along the Tanzania sides of the lake shore. According to the treaty, the whole of the lake became part of Malawi. This is how at first colonialism created the problem.

After the flag independence of the two state (Malawi and Tanzania) in 1960's the Colonialists prolonged the conflict through the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in which recognizes the middle of the lake as the boundary between Malawi and Tanzania.

Malawi challenged the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Cairo Declaration and refused to recognize the revocation of the 1890 Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty between Great Britain and Imperial Germany.

This for centuries has fueled the conflict between two sides. All the potential Africans initiatives to end this conflict failed, from bilateral agreements, SADC and AU initiates failure denote that African is still under Western neo colonialism upon which Africans can not even decide on their own matters like this. They have to depend and wait for decision from the Western Colonialists.

It seemed that the main source of the disagreement of Lake Malawi dispute is the colonial exploitation. In 2012 Malawi awarded oil exploration licenses to British-based company of Surestream Petroleum, which led to Tanzania protesting the move.

With Britain being the colonial master of both states would have indicated the boundaries but contrary to that leaves the matter pending for the Africans to kill each other while she smoothly exploits their resources.

This clearly shows that colonialists only concern is exploitative interests and in no way care about Africans.

To radically solve border disputes, a need total elimination of Western capitalist ideology that created such disputes to facilitate her exploitation agenda. That is only possible by replacing capitalism with Islam under its re-establishment of Khilafah (Caliphate) state that would be landmark liberation of the Islamic world and other developing nations.

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