

# Academic, diplomat tussle over penning of paper

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FORMER ambassador to South Africa Tesfaye Habisso has denied plagiarising a Cape Town academic's work, saying he had intended to "reminisce about the past and the Ethiopian students who sacrificed so much to realise a better liveable Ethiopia".

Habisso was accused of plagiarism by Colin Darch, an Oxford-educated academic and senior librarian at UCT's African Studies library. He has since apologised to Darch for any instances where it may have appeared he had not acknowledged him "clearly".

Darch's article is entitled *The Ethiopian Student Movement and the Struggle Against Imperialism, 1960-1974*, while Habisso's article is *The Ethiopian Student Movement and the Struggle Against Feudal Monarchy and Imperialism, 1960-1974*.

In a letter sent to the Cape Times, Habisso claimed to have credited Darch.

"As my personal records attest and confirm, what I forwarded on the subject matter, for the sake of the present generation, is a

modified and reduced version of Darch's lengthy article."

Habisso said he had acknowledged Darch as the author as well as having added "compiled by".

The Cape Times has a copy of Habisso's paper. It does not include this acknowledgement.

Habisso said in the letter that had he not acknowledged Darch, it would have been "tantamount to the vilest form of outright plagiarism which would/should rightly deserve every condemnation and contempt from any reader of the article as well as the original author."

Habisso said: "If I have not clearly and unambiguously indicated that the article is originally his and his alone, (I am) sorry indeed."

Darch said he was happy Habisso had acknowledged unambiguously that he was the real author, but the response had been sent to the Cape Times and not to him. He refuted Habisso's claim that there was any indication of source or acknowledgement of authorship of the original text.

"I am also unaware of any academic convention that allows one to appropriate somebody else's work without permission and to claim that it is a compilation," Darch said.

He said it was "disingenuous in the extreme" when Habisso wrote, "if the article has appeared on any media as if it were originally produced by me, let it be corrected asap and correctly understood by all as to its source." It implies that the paper somehow found its way onto the web without Mr Habisso's agency," he said.

Darch said an apt response would be to remove the original from the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front Supporters Forum website.

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