

In Ethiopia, the growing worry of the Tigrayans of Addis Ababa

Since the beginning of the conflict between the government Abiy and the region of Tigray, the Tigrayans in Addis Ababa fear discrimination on background of ethnic tensions.

November evenings fresh and clear on the high plateaus of Ethiopia. Yet it is not wood that Gebremehdin (not his real name) burns in his yard. The flames consume bills and identity documents. A burning intended to clear his Tigrayan origins .

Gebremehdin says he can “no longer trust anyone” since the beginning of the clashes between the Prime Minister and Nobel Prize Peace recipient, Abiy Ahmed and the dissident Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), now called: “junta” and “mafia” by Addis Ababa .

He rarely leaves home since 4 November, the date of the beginning of hostilities in Tigray. Outside, Gebremehdin is careful not to speak his mother tongue, Tigrigna , and confines himself to Amharic “so as not to attract attention” .

In Addis Ababa , however , the government will defend the Tigrean people asking the Ethiopians to “to become guardians to ensure that our Tigrayan brothers be protected from any pressure ” , as written the Prime Minister on his Twitter account . He assures his citizens that he conflate the TPLF and the rest of the Tigrayans, who make up about 6 % of the Ethiopian population . “Ethiopians must engage firmly not to mix the two”, adds his head of press, Billene Seyoum .

Officers arrested

Despite these calls for calm, Gebremehdin cannot help but to feel targeted. A fear reinforced by tales of “the many arrests Tigreans”.

Starting with seventeen officers of the federal army accused of sabotage and treason for having cut the systems of communication between Tigray and Addis Ababa . Police have issued an arrest warrant for 140 members of the TPLF and officers of the security forces. One of them was issued at the request of the Ministry of Defense of Ethiopia for a Tigrayan General responsible for the security of the African Union.

A diplomatic source says that other Tigrayan officers installed in the capital and in Somalia have been ordered not to show up for their posts . The instructions

are also circulating in the ministries , where the Tigrayan officials have been confined to their homes since the beginning of November . Le Monde was able to see a circular summoning the Tigrayan employees of a construction company to take forced leave , without specifying the reason.

The authorities have arrested 287 individuals suspected of conspiracy,” of which some report that they have been detained solely on the basis of their ethnicity” , says the Ethiopian Commission for Human Rights (EHRC). The government denies making arbitrary arrests .

This process of dismantling was started by the freezing of bank accounts of 34 companies , among the most major of the country, including an endowment fund administered by the TPLF. This was quickly followed by the suspension of 14 companies private security operating in the capital which were accused by the police “to have robbed the bank and prepared attacks against the authorities by the orders of the TPLF”. Finally , the arrest of six journalists for ” insulting the Constitution ” has been criticized by Reporters Without Borders .

Extensive checks at the airport

Thursday 19 November , the Chief of Staff of the Army Ethiopia , Berhanu Jula , has even accused the director of the Organization World of Health of Ethiopia Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus native of Tigre , to act in favour of its region of origin and try to him to get the weapons . ” This man is himself a member of the TPLF, said the General Berhanu in speaking of Mr. Tedros , who was minister of health from 2005 to 2012 in the government of Meles Zenawi, leader of the TPLF.

In the field, international organizations report having had to provide the authorities lists specifying the ethnicity of their employees , as was the case with the Program Food World in the Amhara province. A version of the facts disputed by the power that says have ” received credible and specific information on agents TPLF , integrated and active in various local organizations and international ” .

These practices concern society civil and the ECHR , which states they “fear ethnic profiling and discrimination has emerged ” among the citizens Tigray, particularly after controls pushed to the airport in Addis Ababa, where several of them will be denied access to a flight after having presented their card identity which is mentioned their original ethnic .

Some members of the family of an entrepreneur who owns several businesses in Addis Ababa , have not been able to take a flight abroad,” even they hold an identity card from other countries. The atmosphere has changed since the beginning of the fighting. I fear that the struggle between politicians will finish by invading the heart of each and completes us divide as Ethiopians” , he said , after having seen a stiffening in its relations with its employees home Amhara and Oromo , the two main ethnic groups in the country.

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