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Tigray External Affairs Office

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Press statement on Abiy's 'Final' offensive on the people of Tigray

For immediate release

Abiy Ahmed's threatened offensive to reinvade Tigray has officially begun. Despite repeated appeals by the international community as well as the Government of Tigray to find a peaceful resolution of the current crisis, the Ethiopian government has once again chosen to continue its genocidal war on Tigray. As repeatedly threatened and telegraphed to domestic and international audiences, Abiy's final offensive to reinvade Tigray, brutalize and humiliate our people by reprising its genocidal acts has begun. On the morning of October 11, 2021, the Ethiopian military with the support of Amhara forces launched coordinated offensives on all fronts. In addition to fielding hundreds of thousands of regular and irregular fighters, these genocidal forces are supported by heavy artilleries, tanks, rockets, drones and fighter jets, leaving no doubt about their annihilationist intent.

War was not, and is not, the first option for the people and Government of Tigray. We have repeatedly expressed our commitment to a negotiated ceasefire. But since the Ethiopian and regional Amhara genocidal forces are hell bent on bringing the people of Tigray to their knees, the people and Government of Tigray are forced into a war they do not want but must win to ensure their survival. As a secret recording of senior Ethiopian military officers established, the Abiy Ahmed government dishonestly attributes its defeat and subsequent departure from Tigray to the unaggressive implementation of its genocidal blueprint. As a result, their current drive is to pick up where they left off by annihilating the people of Tigray so that they would never be thorn in the side of the Abiy Ahmed government and for generations thereafter. To spoil this genocidal plan and ensure the security of the people of Tigray, Tigray Armed Forces are currently defending against our adversaries' coordinated, multipronged offensive.

It's to be recalled that after occupying Tigray for over 8 months, the Ethiopian and Eritrean militaries as well as allied Amhara forces suffered a series of decisive military defeats at the hand of Tigray Armed Forces, though the western part of Tigray remains under enemy control with all the brutality that it entails. The Abiy Ahmed government has churned out a series of prepackaged statements presenting their retreat from Mekelle and much of Tigray as an act of mercy—a humanitarian gesture to facilitate farming and give the people of Tigray much-needed respite from the sound of gunfire. That manufactured narrative, designed to hide its humiliating defeat, was targeted at its gullible supporters who had been fed a constant diet of lies to whom the truth would

be a hard pill to swallow. The truth is that the genocidal forces retreated from much of Tigray and left Mekelle in disarray not out of their non-existent humanitarian impulse but because their vaunted divisions were destroyed, with several thousand killed, wounded, and captured. Having its back essentially broken by our forces, the Ethiopian military fled to rearm and regroup itself for another go at annihilating the people of Tigray.

After retreating from Tigray, the Abiy Ahmed government has been on a shopping spree to acquire modern weapons from various countries. They have also been training new recruits mobilized following the national call to arms by the federal and Amhara regional governments. In short, since its hurried departure from Tigray, the Ethiopian military has been busy rearming and regrouping for the express purpose of initiating a second round of invasions of Tigray. Indeed, a number of senior civilian and military officials have publicly threatened to recapture Mekelle within weeks, if the people and Government of Tigray did not comport themselves in a manner suggested by them. In reality, initiating a second round of invasions once they were ready has always been their plan. Their incessant self-congratulatory statements about the so-called unilateral ceasefire was a calculated move to hoodwink the international community into glossing over their well-documented atrocities against the people of Tigray and, if possible, lull us into a sense of complacency. At the same time, they have been exhorting their international interlocutors to be patient for that one “final” offensive that would be wrapped up in a matter of days or weeks, thereby rendering the issue of a peaceful resolution moot.

Our priority is to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis that reestablishes the status quo ante, in which all invading forces must withdraw from all constitutionally established territories of Tigray. In practice, this entails the withdrawal of Amhara forces to their prewar territories, the departure of all Eritrean forces from Ethiopia, as well as the end of the inhumane siege on Tigray deliberately implemented so as to achieve that which has eluded the Ethiopian government on the battlefield: bringing the people of Tigray to their knees. But since the Ethiopian government is committed to a predatory path to bring the people of Tigray to their knees, our forces have no other option than to defend their people against these marauding forces. This campaign of self-defense will continue until these genocidal forces come to their senses and choose a peaceful path.

We call on the international community to condemn the latest offensive and support the people of Tigray in their hour of need. Abiy Ahmed’s fantasy about a decisive military solution to a political conflict is at the heart of Ethiopia’s current predicament. As though their well-documented abominable atrocities against the people of Tigray were not enough, these genocidal forces are once again keen to unleash devastating atrocities on our people. The international community must go beyond rhetorical condemnation and take meaningful actions by imposing punitive measures on the Ethiopian, Eritrean and Amhara regional governments to compel them to desist from their genocidal project.

