



Official Correspondence GSTS-O.C-2021-027
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)

H.E. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield
Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations
President of the Security Council for the Month of March
New York, NY

H.E. Antonio Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN)
New York, NY

The Need to Deploy a United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Investigation Commission in Tigray

Excellencies,

The Global Society of Tigray Scholars and Professionals (GSTS)ⁱ has noted that a statement has been released from the Ethiopian Prime Minister's Office on his discussions with the Eritrean President during his working visit to Asmara. The statement highlights the agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea to withdraw Eritrean invading forces from Tigray effective immediately.

GSTS appreciates the leadership of His Excellency President Joe Biden and his emissary, the Honorable Senator Chris Coons, for their relentless effort in pressuring the Abiy administration and Eritrean government to accept realities on the ground and the demands of withdrawal Eritrean and Amhara forces from Tigray by the international community. The GSTS further welcomes the European Union's concrete punitive measures and the United Nations Security Council members, UN agencies, and international organizations demanding the end of the war on Tigray, addressing humanitarian disaster and atrocities in Tigray.

The Ethiopian Prime Minister's Office statement is hard to trust, based on earlier repeated official denials, by both countries, of the presence of Eritrean forces in Tigray, the recent statement of Abiy on his decision to keep Eritrean forces in Tigray indefinitely. In contrast, the recent statement from the State of Eritrea mentions nothing about the presence of Eritrean forces in Tigray nor the agreement regarding withdrawal from Tigray pronounced by the Ethiopian government. On the contrary, several sources from the ground reports that Eritrean troops and Amhara sectarian forces are still heavily involved in ethnic cleansing and horrific atrocities daily in many parts of Tigray wearing Ethiopian army uniforms and stationed in the border areas with Eritrea, Sudan, Amhara, and Afar.

GSTS wishes to discernibly warn the international community that this announcement could be a delaying tactic and a convenient fig-leaf to cover another sinister arrangement to keep Eritrean forces in Tigray. We, therefore, still suspect they would apply more of such and other choreographed drama to remain and conduct more offensive on Tigray by stationing forces in the border areas of Eritrea, Sudan, Amhara, and Afar and continue their egregious crimes against civilians.



GSTS believes that the removal of Eritrean forces needs to be unambiguous, total, and claims of immediate withdrawal agreement need to be verified by a United Nations observers and verification commission. Without such a verification mechanism on the ground, it is impossible to verify the claims of the decision and implementation of the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Tigray.

Moreover, GSTS calls the total withdrawal of all Amhara special forces and militia from all Tigray parts to their deployment lines before 4th November 2020 and the demilitarization of Tigray to facilitate rapid, unconditional, unfettered, and sustained delivery of humanitarian aid and items essential to survival, including establishing a "lifeline humanitarian corridor" from Sudan to Tigray under a de-militarised route designated for safe passage of humanitarian supplies.

Therefore, GSTS once again calls on the Security Council to take concrete measures to ensure the protection of civilians, refugees, and the safety and security of international humanitarian aid and workers. More specifically, we strongly urge the Security Council acting for these purposes under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to:

1. deploy monitoring, verification and investigation Commission in Tigray, under the United Nations auspices, of international civil and security presences, with appropriate equipment and personnel as required.
2. authorize the Secretary-General to appoint, as a matter of urgency, a UN Commission in Tigray, headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and composed of impartial and internationally respected persons assisted by the appropriate international observers, including military and police personnel, international law experts, humanitarian professionals, under the chairmanship of an eminent person.
3. ensure rapid, unconditional, unfettered, and sustained delivery of humanitarian aid and items essential to survival, including establishing a "lifeline humanitarian corridor" from Sudan to Tigray under a de-militarised route designated for safe passage of humanitarian supplies.



Sincerely,
The GSTS
26 March 2021

¹ GSTS is a Non-Partisan Global Knowledge Network of 3,000+Tigray Scholars & Professionals, established with the aim of creating Knowledge-based sustainable economy & Society in Tigray & beyond.