



Official Correspondence GSTS-O.C-2021-060
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)¹

For Urgent Release

Urgent Call to the Ethiopian Peoples, Elders and Religious Leaders, Political Parties, Civil Societies and Intellectuals

Eight months into the genocidal war on Tigray, the combined Ethiopian National Defense forces (ENDF), Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF), and the Amhara Region special forces and militia have committed heinous mass atrocities, and egregious crimes in different parts of Tigray in violation of international law. The crimes include ethnic cleansing, systematic sexual violence – including gang-rape and sexual enslavement; deliberate infection of women and girls with HIV/AIDs and other STDs, destruction, looting and pillaging targeting all infrastructure, health services and schools; burning of food and agricultural and products, and destruction of heritage and religious sites. These acts have been extensively reported by the international media; humanitarian organizations and denounced by the International Community at large. As a result, at least 5.2 million people out of 6.3 million in Tigray are now in need of emergency food assistance, of which more than a million are currently in famine stage (Phase 5) and over 33,000 children were said to at immediate risk of death from the man-made famine. In addition, tens of thousands have been murdered, nearly two million have been internally displaced and more than 70,000 Tigrayans have fled into the Sudan. These crimes amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide committed against the people of Tigray. The mayhems have been committed in the dark with electricity, telephone, internet, banking, transportation, and media being completely blocked.

The Amhara Regional government deployed Special Forces and militia with publicly declared aims of subjugation and complete destruction of Tigray, the starvation and impoverishment of the people of Tigray and the illegal annexation of Tigrayan territories. These forces have been credibly reported to be responsible for ethnic cleansing of large parts of Tigray by forcefully displacing close to 1 million Tigrayans to other parts of Tigray and the Sudan; the death of thousands of Tigrayans; the systematic and widespread sexual violence against women and girls; and the looting and destruction of their properties. Only this week, Tigrayan civilians were murdered in the Amhara Regional state and their bodies dragged in public. This was previously done in Tigrayan cities that had come under the control of the Amhara forces and militia.

Although Abiy's Government had announced a unilateral cease-fire in the Tigray war as of June 28, a large swath of Tigray's territory remains controlled by the allied forces and fighting continues. Contrary to the deceptive unilateral declaration of ceasefire by Abiy's government, the Amhara Regional state and entities with extreme views continue to beat war drums. The Amhara Regional government has now officially called civilians from all walks of life to mobilize and deploy for an all-out war against the Tigrayan people under the pretext of preserving Ethiopian unity. The Amhara government has also put out a call for other regions and peoples of Ethiopia to join the war with the sole aim of annexing Tigray's territory into the Amhara region by force.

Following the significant defeat of the invading forces, the elected government of Tigray had called on the Amhara people and other nations and nationalities to reject the call to war from



Amhara forces to avoid unnecessary loss of lives and sufferings. Even so, however, it is reported that Special Forces from other regions such as Oromia are being deployed to the war front. In view of this, GSTS reiterates its call to the Federal government of Ethiopia and Amhara Regional government to withdraw their forces from all territories of Tigray to their pre November 4, 2020 positions and seat for a peaceful and negotiated political solutions.

GSTS believes that a swift and principled action by all concerned parties will save many innocent lives. Failure to act will be inexcusable and will most certainly lead to horrific bloodshed and add to an already dark chapter in the annals of history.

Therefore, the Global Society of Tigray Scholars and Professionals (GSTS) calls on the:

1. Ethiopian Peoples, Elders and Religious leaders, Political Parties, and Civil Societies to strongly condemn and stop the mobilization of any regional Special Forces and militia to take part in the war on Tigray. The Ethiopian people should reject the presence of foreign forces, which has become a disgrace to a country that has been claiming free of colonization and preserved its sovereignty in its history, and call for the immediate and verified withdrawal of the atrocious Eritrean forces and their intelligence as well as security personnel from Tigray, Oromia and other parts of Ethiopia, in accordance with the recent UNHRC47 resolution.
2. Amhara people to foil the political plot by Abiy and Isaias to use the Amhara forces and civilians as cannon fodder and refuse to take part in this atrocious war on Tigray. They should take actions that would lead to the immediate withdrawal of the Amhara forces from all the annexed territories of Tigray and to a peaceful resolution of all causes of conflict.
3. Amhara Regional special forces, militia, and the fano to stop serving as fire power of the few ill-interest and irresponsible political authorities of the Amhara region and Abiy's regime; reject the renewed call by these authorities and thus save their precious lives from being lost in this genocidal war.
4. Particularly, the latest news concerning the mobilization and deployment of Special Forces from Oromia region and other regions to the war front is very alarming and, if carried out, would represent a grave historical mistake. Therefore, GSTS calls upon the Oromo people and other peoples of the region to stop this madness designed to pit the Oromos against Tigrayans. We also call upon the authorities of the Oromia (Oromia Prosperity Party) Region to refrain from deploying Oromia Special Forces following calls from the expansionist Amhara government and its forces, tacitly authorized by the administration of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.
5. Ethiopian National Defense forces (ENDF), and Special Forces of the regional states to refrain and reject the renewed call for intensified war on Tigray and stop being used for the hidden agenda of the Amhara authorities for an illegal annexation of territories from Tigray. The eight months genocidal war on Tigray has already claimed tens of thousands of lives that has brought nothing other than misery and destruction, and therefore we call the above forces to rethink of the atrocities they have been committing on their own Tigrayan people and not be victims of this worthless war. Of special emphasis, we would



like to note that the hands of the ENDF leaders have been tainted with the blood of Tigrayans and other innocent Ethiopian people. Ethiopian National Defense forces should reject orders and missions that will end up on the massacre of civilians, the bombardment of towns and villages, rape of women and girls and the looting of properties. GSTS once again calls all members of the ENDF to take a stand in support of peaceful resolution of the war on Tigray and other regions.

6. Ethiopian media of different constituencies to play a constructive role to avert bloodshed along ethnic lines and stop misinformation and disinformation; to halt the spread of hate speech and propaganda further exacerbating ethnic cleansing and genocide of the Tigrayan people. Trying to evade truth, inciting violence against ethnic groups and promoting the hidden interest of one party (at the expense of the collective interest of all people of Ethiopia) will only aggravate the current crises in the country.
7. Ethiopian academics and intellectuals to break their silence, rise for the truth and play constructive role in averting the war or distance themselves from being part of the culprit of this genocidal war. Of particular note, GSTS strongly calls on the Amhara intellectuals and elites at large to reject the recent war pronouncement calls by the Amhara Region authorities and Abiy's regime and instead play a positive role in pushing for political solution and avoid unnecessary bloodshed and incitement of ethnic conflict between the Amhara and Tigray people that have co-existed peacefully for thousands of years.
8. Ethiopian people, political parties and other actors to push for a negotiated ceasefire and an all-inclusive national dialogue for a lasting peaceful solution. GSTS stands and supports in all its capacity for the success of such efforts that lead to lasting political solutions.

Sincerely,



The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)
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ⁱ GSTS is a 501(C), and 33/2011 legally registered non-partisan, not-for-profit, and autonomous Global Knowledge Network of over 3,000 Tigray Scholars and Professionals aimed at creating Knowledge-based economy and society in Tigray, and beyond. It stands for academia, multidisciplinary and cross sectoral research and applied policy development, human capital development, fostering and advancing science, technology, and innovation, technology and knowledge transfer, youth and gender development, migration and displacement, and other educational and development related endeavors. It also works in educational advocacy and collaborates with various stakeholders towards promoting peace, good governance, human rights, and humanitarian activities.