



NOVEMBER 3, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

IT HAS BEEN 365 DAYS SINCE THE WAR ON TIGRAY STARTED: WE CALL FOR MORE SOLIDARITY FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Ladies, and Gentlemen

November 4, 2021 marks the 365th days anniversary of the war on Tigray that waged by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed with his allies Eritrean government, Amhara forces and other foreign actors. On this day, we in solidarity with the people of Tigray observe the torturous year; pay tributes to victims, and honor those who were murdered; reflect on the suffering of the victims of the genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing; recognize the unity, resilience, integrity, and determination of the people of Tigray in heroically defending their rights and winning the unjust war waged against them. We also renew our resolve to continue the fight until the people of Tigray are free from occupation, siege and threat from forces that try to subjugate them from exercising their fundamental rights of self-determination.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the international community, especially:

- ⇒ all countries, organizations, leaders, and representatives who firmly denounced the brutal war in Tigray by supporting and consistently voicing the suffering of the people at global forums and in assemblies of parliaments and public hearings.
- ⇒ all journalists of credible outlets who showed their professional integrity, truthfulness, and ethical standards in exposing and reporting the barbaric murder of civilians, sexual and gender-based violence of underage girls, young and old women, and destructions and desecration of monasteries and religious sites.
- ⇒ the United States and European Union, who made efforts to sanction perpetrators and called for a ceasefire, peaceful resolution, and inclusive political dialogue to end the genocidal war, declared to annihilate the people of Tigray.
- ⇒ individuals, countries, leaders, and organizations who are calling for an independent and transparent investigation to hold perpetrators of the war accountable at international criminal courts.

The Tigray community as a whole use this day of commemoration as an opportunity to appeal to the international community to uphold its responsibilities set out in the genocide conventions, to recalibrate its understanding of the nature and complexity of the war, to seriously examine perpetrators' intentions and deceptions, and to take concrete actions to end the genocidal war on Tigray.

Ladies, and Gentlemen

We would like to make sure that the international community doesn't lose sight of the fact that Tigray has been under complete siege since June 2021 and under partial blockade since 2018. Mr. Abiy's government has turned off basic services including communication, electricity and banking. The people of Tigray have been denied access to their money in banks. As we commemorate the 365 days anniversary, the entire population of Tigray is living in total darkness. The government has blocked and continues to block all Tigray-bound transportation to deliberately obstruct the supply of food, medicines, and other basic necessities. Pipelines have been purposely destroyed to shut off water supply. Telephone and internet services have been blocked to impede information flow and to prevent media outlets from reporting and letting the international community know what is happening in Tigray. Mr. Abiy's government hasn't even shown any sign of fear and shame to declare seven UN officials "persona non grata" and expel them based on unfounded allegation.

To the surprise of the Tigray community and people, as of today, the international community has not taken sufficient measures to stop the scourge of egregious atrocities that amount to violations of human rights and extermination of the people of Tigray. This partly attributed to the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments' continued spreading of lies to confuse the facts on the ground and justify the barbaric slaughter of innocent civilians. The narrative that the war waged by a Nobel Prize Laureate is a "Law Enforcement Operation" has

given Mr. Abiy and his allies cover to continue their agenda of exterminating the people of Tigray.

This needs to stop as soon as possible through the joint efforts of the people of Tigray who are fighting on the ground for their rights and the international community. The war crimes and humanitarian catastrophe is continuing because Mr. Abiy is not held accountable by the international community for his genocidal acts.

Ladies and Gentlemen

While we have published written reports on the genesis of the war on Tigray, we find it relevant to provide abridged bona fide information to help the international community appreciate the root causes and to clear the cloud of suspicion they may have regarding the war on Tigray. Briefly, the war on Tigray didn't really start on the 4th of November 2020. There exist irrefutable excerpts of speeches by government officials to prove that the war did not erupt overnight. It was launched after well-orchestrated and meticulous planning for multiple years including the war pact with Eritrea that earned Abiy Ahmed a Nobel Peace Prize. Examples of such facts included but were not limited to the following.

- *Mr. Abiy himself made an explicit and chilling televised speech on May 7, 2020. In this speech, he warned "...youth will die, mothers will cry, and villages will be set on fire" if politicians continue to oppose the postponement of the elections. In the same speech, he added, "...we are prepared more than ever to take any action."*
- *Mr. Adem Farah, the speaker of Ethiopia's House of Federation, gave more direct evidence. On September 5, 2020, in an exclusive interview with ENA, he disclosed the steps to be taken by the federal government to remove the Tigray Regional Government (TRG) and establish an interim administration accountable to the federal government. The steps he outlined included the engagement of the Federal Police and the Defense Forces.*
- *Mr. Abere Adamu, Police Commissioner of the Amhara Regional Government, is another official who gave an even more direct proof that the war was planned well before November 4, 2020. In his book-launching speech, January 6, 2021, Mr. Abere candidly admitted that preparations for the war started when Mr. Temesgen Tiruneh was the president of the Amhara Regional State. He further affirmed that the war started the night they had finalized preparation in collaboration with Mr. Abiy's government.*
- *The Ethiopian Satellite Television and Radio (ESAT) spent years trashing the people of Tigray and the TPLF. On November 4, 2016, this media went as far as openly calling for genocide against the people of Tigray, making a very specific recommendation to "dry the sea—the people of Tigray—to catch the fish—the TPLF" and fight is 5 million (the people of Tigray) versus 95 million (the rest of the Ethiopian population).as a matter of fact, ESAT is still making non-stop calls for genocidal war provocations and indorsing aerial bombardments to exterminate the people of Tigray.*
- *Another government official said Mr. Abiy asked Sudan to seal its borders with Tigray prior to declaring the war, a revelation that leaves no doubt that Mr. Abiy planned this war before the alleged NC-ENDF attack.*

Unfortunately, despite the availability of abundant facts described above and many others not included in this communiqué, some governments, international organizations, and even media outlets knowingly or unknowingly accepted the narrative of Mr. Abiy at face value.

Ladies, and Gentlemen

At this point, we believe that there shouldn't be any single doubt within the minds of the international community as to what the government's intent is. It is to annihilate the people of Tigray in any way possible. Adolf Hitler has been quoted for telling his generals, just before invading Poland, that "The aim of war is not to reach definite lines but to annihilate the enemy physically. It is by this means that we shall obtain the vital living space that we need." That is exactly what Mr. Abiy has executed. He conspired to commit a full-fledged crime of genocide, preplanned and corroborated to wipe out the people of Tigray from the earth.

Sadly, the international community, who are expected to have all the power to end such catastrophic crimes, has failed to take concrete actions. Such a lack of concrete actions has emboldened Mr. Abiy and supporters to continue with their cruel actions. We feel that the measures that the international community has taken to date are not commensurate with the scale and brutality of the genocidal war. No country has intervened to forcefully stop the war. It is fair to say that perpetrators have been granted a license to kill defenseless and noncombatant civilians, commit war crimes and crimes against humanity with impunity.

Ladies, and Gentlemen

The government of Tigray has been repeatedly calling for an all-inclusive and peaceful dialogue. However, its repeated calls have fallen on deaf ears and thus remained with no choice other than fighting and defending its people and protecting basic human rights consistent with the UN's Universal Declarations and conventions. The government of Mr. Abiy, on the other hand, has continued to reject all calls for a ceasefire and peaceful dialogue. Mr. Abiy has defied all calls to withdraw the invading forces of Eritrea and the Amhara region from some parts of Tigray who are continuously committing atrocious crimes with impunity and without fear of accountability. Furthermore, Mr. Abiy has placed Tigray under siege, deliberately subjecting more than 90% of its population to starvation and death. As a result, the international community is witnessing hundreds of malnourished and emaciated children dying. The UNSC has failed to intervene to stop despite the laws in its own books. When the chronicles of the war on Tigray are written, the chapter on the role of the UNSC is not going to be favorable unless it takes measures to stop the recent open calls of Abiy Ahmed and his supporters to place all Tigrayans in concentration camps.

Ladies, and Gentlemen

As we commemorate the 365 days of catastrophe, the government of Mr. Abiy is bombarding towns and villages, indiscriminately killing civilians. International journalists are repressed and intimidated not to document, investigate, and report the atrocities. Millions are starving to death beyond the reach of humanitarian aid. The devastating impact on the victims, communities, and society can take generations to overcome and heal.

In a nutshell, the conditions in Tigray today are desperate and catastrophic and require your prompt decision and concrete actions to save the people of Tigray from extermination. Ethiopia is also becoming a failed state and is in the process of disintegration in a hostile and destructive manner.

The international community should not remain silent or passive. It carries the moral obligation to act timely and decisively to end the barbaric genocidal war and investigate the crimes. In addition, the international community has the legal obligation to protect against the violation of international laws, human rights, and crimes against humanity.

Ladies, and Gentlemen

For the people of Tigray, both inside Tigray and the Diaspora Tigrayan community, the past 365 days were painful, depressive, stressful, frustrating, and a moment of desperation and existential crises. Many have lost their family members, friends, and neighbors. Mr. Abiy's barbaric war has resulted in inconceivable and immeasurable atrocities. The people of Tigray have lost everything they own and built.

Heroes and heroines of the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF), the Tigray government, and the people at large are selflessly fighting against enemies as one. They are making the impossible possible. They have resisted what is thought to be irresistible. They have borne the unbearable conditions of grief, hunger, anger, living in darkness, thirst, and bombardment through air and land. Instead, they remained unified, strong, calm, controlled, and determined to win the war and protect their rights with great integrity and resilience. They bitterly, resolutely, consistently, and admirably have fought to rise from ashes.

The Diaspora community has persistently and continuously made selfless struggles and sacrificed and invested their time and energy to do non-stop rallies to voice on behalf of the people who are made voiceless- rain or shine, under extreme weather conditions, and at a time when COVID-19 was declared to be dangerous public health pandemic. They regularly meet with and lobby political leaders and representatives to support the causes and stand with the people of Tigray people and push them to pass resolutions, take measures of sanctions, and call for unfettered humanitarian aid. They have been busy writing letters to the international community, government officials, bilateral and non-governmental organizations and associations, political representatives, and media outlets.

Now, they find themselves in the finish line to win the highly hyped and strongly believed to be the unwinnable war to the surprise of the world and to the shame of Mr. Abiy and his hardcore loyal supporters and sponsors.

Ladies, and Gentlemen

In the end, we appeal to the international community to collectively or unilaterally:

- enforce effective measures that allow unfettered delivery of humanitarian aid to rescue the millions of children and civilians who are dying due to man-made starvation and malnourishment and due to lack of basic drugs and medical supplies, as well, and find ways and means to assist the return of displaced people to their homes.
- allow unfettered delivery of humanitarian aid to rescue millions of civilians and children from dying due to man-made starvation and due to lack of basic drugs and medical supplies which have caused healthcare facilities to cease functioning.
- lay down a no-fly zone imposition, an arms embargo, and other tough sanctions to stop Mr. Abiy's desperate air bombardments of civilian targets.
- take unequivocal and practical steps to stop financing Mr. Abiy's genocidal war project, directly or indirectly, as this, unquestionably, enables him to procure weapons and allow the genocidal war to continue aiming at wiping out the entire population of Tigray.
- order, in no uncertain terms, the immediate withdrawal of Eritrean troops and hold offenders accountable for the crimes committed against the people of Tigray.

Should you need any further information, please reach out to us at our e-mail or phone number below.

As Martin Luther King said, '**Injustice anywhere is Injustice Everywhere.**'

Respectfully,

SJT Executive Board

Email: sjte.info@gmail.com

SJT is a US 501(c (3)) registered non-profit organization that advocates for the wellbeing of Tigrayans at a global level.