



October 21, 2021, For Immediate Release

Urgent Call to Condemn and Stop the Indiscriminate Aerial Bombardment of Mekelle City

Security and Justice for Tigrayans (SJT) is a US 501(c (3)) registered non-profit organization that advocates for the wellbeing of Tigrayans at a global level. Today, SJT is issuing this urgent press release to call on all world leaders, multilateral organizations such as the UN, European Union, African Union, international organizations, human rights advocates, and prominent personalities to immediately condemn and act to stop the Ethiopian government's desperate and indiscriminate aerial airstrike of the civilian population in Mekelle, capital of the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

On 20 October 2021, Mr. Abiy's government carried out its third-round aerial bombardment in Mekelle. Two airstrikes had already occurred on 18 October 2021. The overall damage of the airstrikes hasn't yet been assessed and determined but is expected to impact the lives of civilian residents of Mekelle. So far, three civilians have been confirmed to have lost their lives, many others have sustained severe injuries, and homes and businesses of citizens of the country have been destroyed.

Mr. Abiy's decision to irresponsibly and indiscriminately bomb a city of half a million population with additional thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) stems out of desperation and a last-ditch effort to stay in power by averting the series of military defeats he encountered on the ground. While the world is calling for a ceasefire and resolution of the conflict peacefully, Mr. Abiy is taking a dangerous path of death and destruction.

We urge the world to take a strong action immediately before Mr. Abiy exterminates the people of Tigray and destroys Ethiopia with far reaching consequences to regional instability. We call a no-fly zone declaration over Tigray's air space to prevent further death and destruction.

Your Excellencies

The people of Tigray have been persistently pleading with the international community to intervene. The US, UN, and EU have been and still are calling for a ceasefire and peaceful resolution. However, Mr. Abiy's government has continuously rejected and ignored all the calls and efforts of the international community.

Just prior to the airstrike that occurred on 18 and 20 October 2021, the government had openly avowed a large-scale and high-intensity offensive war aiming at reinvading Tigray. If Mr. Abiy's forces succeeded in reinvading Tigray, nothing less than an intensified crime of genocide would be expected.

From what has been reported by credible media outlets, Mr. Abiy's air force has indiscriminately bombarded residential and business places in Mekelle and other parts of Tigray. These ongoing air raids which target civilians are nothing but proof showing how Mr. Abiy's government is hell-bent to wipe out the entire people of Tigray.

Your Excellencies

SJT, in its previous letters specifically described the dire and abysmal situation in Tigray. To date, Mr. Abiy Ahmed and Mr. Isaias Afwerki have done every war crime and crime against humanity that are listed in the books. As we write, Tigray is under siege, with more than 90% of its population subjected to starvation and death. Images of hundreds of malnourished and emaciated children are surfacing in media despite the blackout of information.

The war is also widely spreading to other parts of the country endangering the security of Eastern Africa. Sadly, the international community has taken no meaningful and concrete actions to end the barbaric war on Tigray. Such a lack of concrete actions from the international community has emboldened Mr. Abiy's government to continue with its cruel genocidal actions. It allowed perpetrators to commit an unthinkable and unspeakable brutal crime in violation of international laws and human rights conventions with impunity and without fear of accountability.

Your Excellencies

In this regard, SJT, once again, urges the international community to use all the power within its reach and do what is necessary to immediately stop the airstrike and to resolve the war peacefully. The international community shoulders the moral obligation to act timely and decisively to stop the indiscriminate aerial bombardment and the air scourge of new military offenses against a region where mass murder, ethnic cleansing, and genocide have already resulted in painful and immeasurable damages.

In lieu of the stated dire situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, SJT appeals to:

- 1) impose a no-fly zone, an arms embargo, and other necessary sanctions to stop Mr. Abiy's authoritarian regime from bombing civilian populations.
- 2) take all the necessary measures within their reach and power or applicable to their specific authorities and responsibilities to force Mr. Abiy Ahmed to come to the negotiating table, embrace dialogue, and peacefully end the war.
- 3) demand the opening of a humanitarian corridor to Tigray via Djibouti and Humera and thwart Mr. Abiy's bureaucratic delay tactics and deliberate obstructions of the delivery of humanitarian aid to the starving people of Tigray.
- 4) enforce a swift delivery of humanitarian aid to save children and civilians who are dying due to manmade starvation and lack of basic drugs and medical supplies.
- 5) 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.
- 6) order the immediate withdrawal of Eritrean troops and hold offenders accountable for the crimes committed against the people of Tigray.

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

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