

Date 22 April 2021

Some Members of Alliance of Civil Society Organizations of Tigrai

Mekelle, Tigrai

To: The Office of United Nations Human Rights Commission

Geneva

Re- Objection to Ethiopian Human Rights Commission joint investigation with UN Human Rights Commission in Tigrai

Dear Sir/Madam,

The applicants are non-governmental and non-partisan consortium of local civil society organizations working to (I) enhance the role of civil society organizations in the development and democratization of Tigrian peoples; (II) ensure that government affairs are conducted in an accountable, transparent and participatory manner; and (III) facilitate the realization of the freedom of association as enshrined in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian constitution as well as international human right instruments ratified by Ethiopia.

Based on their constitution and inspiration, the applicants have been a voice for many voiceless citizens through the facilitation and support of the establishment and capacity building of many local civil society organizations.

Despite, the constitutional guarantees and mandates of the local civil society organizations to be a voice and expressing concern on the protection of citizens' fundamental rights, the war declared in Tigrai on November 4/2020 by the Ethiopian federal government in collaboration with the Eritrean government, the government of UAE and Somalia from abroad and with the Amhara Regional State special force, militia and the irregular forces called itself Fano is causing human and material destruction all over the Tigrai region. The local civil society organizations as an institution and their members as residents of the region are also victims of the war too.

Being we, some members of the Alliance of Civil Societies Organizations of Tigrai, our involvement with in the people of Tigrai because of our mandate in general and being as part of the community in particular, we have a better observation and understanding about what is happening now in Tigrai as a result of the war. As the UN human Rights commission



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other international organizations are expressing their concern many times regarding the war in Tigray and the atrocities resulted in because of the war for the last five months, different international crimes are committed in Tigray and are still continuing.

All of a sudden, putting all into a nutshell, Tigray became war torn and its economy including private and EFFORT's (Endowment Fund for Rehabilitation of Tigray) major assets are looted or get destroyed by Eritrea and Amhara forces.

The war in Tigray is becoming so disastrous, violating many international humanitarian conventions. By considering all the facts given from different sources and our observations, the following human rights abuse and human rights crisis are still conducting.

To mention some; About 1.5 million people are forcefully displaced from western, north western and southern zones of Tigray for being Tegararu; their properties get destroyed or looted by the perpetrators of the act and the area is now replacing by peoples coming from the Amhara Regional State having Amhara origin. Tegararu originated dwellers of the aforementioned districts are dispossessed their lands by the Amhara expansionist forces and they get displaced to different urban and rural areas, so that extreme social problems arising from broken families, and vulnerability of children left behind.

The fact that all scars of Tigray genocide, being having Tigrayan identity are not fully included here; but to mention the major drastic scares that can infer to those globally concerned bodies and the world community from worm's eye view the CSO; deliberate extrajudicial killing has been committed in all massacre towns and villages: namely Mykadra, Dansha, Debre-Abay, Waldba, Mahber Dego, Shire, Axum, Selekleka, Wukro-maray, Ahse'a, Abyi-Adi, Hawzen, Mariam Dengelat (Edagahamus), Hayelom (Guetolo), Fredasum, Erob, Negash, Teka-Tesfay, Atsbi, Togoga, Samre, Gijet, Bora, Adigudom, Wejerat, Hiwane, and many other places. With this unprecedented civilian strikes and bombardments, we wonder as what the world is coming to, due to the fact that intensive mass killing has been committed and not yet stopped.

The other gross international violation which is still conducting by the aggressors is causing serious bodily and psychological harm to the people of Tigray. Those who are survivors of the massacres particularly mothers and youth girls are raped, tortured, and most of the girls are exposed to physical bodily harm which even caused on them many permanent physical disablement and mental harm. Abduction, Sexual assault and harassment on child girls aged 4-12 in row, on pregnant women including and women with disabilities had also committed.

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*[Circular stamp: Champions of Change HIV Positive Disabled Fighters Association of Tigray]*



Many people are also forced to commit rape to their own beloved family and those who refuse to do so were killed, to bring psychological trauma on the society.

Failing not remember, an ever terrible rape of a youth girl, an incredible gender violence of sexual assault and harassment more than ten soldiers for a single lady; and it's quite unfortunate that unprotected sex and forced sex with multiple partners had become a common practice.

Following the war, tens of thousands of civilians are also murderously bombarded including the major cities of Tigrai, that highly aggravated protection concerns (like human rights abuse and loss of lives). It has been complete black-out in the whole region except for Mekelle (the capital city which gets seldom access due to many reasons) for the last five months. People in Tigrai are denied access to all basic necessities such as the right to access to health facilities, electric city, water, bank, logistics and communication challenges- blocked roads, blocked airspace, internet and phone cuts; disruption of basic services- such as markets, schooling facilities including COVID-19 pandemic case. Here, millions of students withdraw from schooling that they have already been stopped for above a year due to Covid-19 incidence too.

More than 70 thousand people from western Tigrai are field to neighbouring country, Sudan and About 2.3 million people are internally displaced from many parts of Tigrai to major cities. Most of the IDPs have no access to shelter, food, health services and other basic necessities. As a result people are dying as of hunger and because of lack of medication in many IDP centres.

Tegaru civil servants who were working at the federal governmental institutions and government enterprises are forced to leave from their jobs. Some Tegaru members of the Ethiopian federal security forces are targeted to formal and informal arrest and other Tegaru members of the institution are harassed systematically to exclude them from the federal security forces.

Following and at the times of the war, in Tigrai civilians are taken as a hostage since the conflict, their property are looted and destroyed by the Eritrean mercenary troops and Amhara expansionist regular (Amhara militia and Special) forces and irregular (Fano) forces. Looting, Extortion and Robbery of government property, public property including EFFORT's major assets and many more civilian's resources. Whenever the joint forces defeated or loses the war or their soldiers, in return civilian survivors are tortured and treated

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inhumanly, their food items are looted and destroyed as a result, many are dying as of hunger in which international humanitarian aid is limited. In some parts of Tigrai, particularly in areas of the conflict zones the wives of the Tigrai militia are systematically subject to killing and other human rights violations.

Crops and rural shelters get destroyed by fire hazards due to war and intentionally by the mercenary troops; Livestock displacement and death; Malnutrition cases aggravated in children less than five year age and pregnant and lactating women. Infrastructures get destroyed and damaged.

The Eritrean troops officially invited by the Ethiopian government to invade the whole territorial integrity of Tigrai National Regional State are involving in dismantling the Tigrai leadership and to take all the private and public property of Tigrai.

Given the complexity and gravity of the situation and with a view to establish the truth and lay the foundation for accountability, many countries such as the UK and US, and organizations such as the EU and UN have raised the need for independent investigation.

However, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) claiming itself as independent and non-partisan sadly failed even to express its concern let alone to take measures to stop the violations nor does it report and disclose it to the world. On the contrary however, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission commissioner, Dr. Daniel Bekelle is neither impartial nor trust worthy who is tired of trying to hide the Tigrai atrocities, by telling to Ethiopians and the world in government affiliated and some Amhara affiliated media outlets that, the atrocities are not as expected rather he tried to normalize the situation as it occurred in every war. Daniel Bekelle, in one of his interviews, showed his support for the government when questioned about the arrest of journalists. Also after the Ethiopian PM Abiy claimed 'victory' and reported that the war was over with zero civilian casualties, Daniel Bekele came out with a statement that: "it is comforting to learn that the operation didn't result in as severe consequences as it was originally feared to be, there was a much-hyped about bloodbath, civilian casualties, breaking up of the country."

It is also noticed that the EHRC lacks agency. Given the high-stake nature of the case at hand, EHRC can be used to cover up crimes and sanitize the hands of criminals. EHRC is too attached to the government. The massacre in May-kadra is the best manifestation in this regard. As we all may know the EHRC did that report without conducting serious and formal investigation, while all internet and telecom services were under blackout and the Tegraru

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*[Circular stamp: Tigray National Regional State, Association of Change HIV Positive, Disabled Fighters Association of Tigray]*







Given the complexity and gravity of the situation and with a view to establish the truth and lay the foundation for accountability, many countries such as the UK and US, and organizations such as the EU have raised the need for independent investigation. However, in the mid time, the Ethiopian Human Right Commission has requested the UN High commissioner for joint investigation, and the latter accepted the offer for joint investigation. Hence, allowing the Ethiopian Human Right Commission to conduct joint investigation with the UN is to let the former to hide the core international crimes (genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing) committed by the perpetrators.

Therefore, as Tigrean based civil society organizations in general and being we are members of the people of Tigray in particular, we strongly object the proposal for the joint investigation of the atrocities committed in Ethiopia's Tigray Region for the aforementioned reasons and recommend the UN human rights commission to distance itself from the joint proposal to conduct the investigation in Tigray. We also strongly request an independent investigation which is going to be conducted by the UN -led independent investigation.

With best regards

1. Tigray Mothers martyrs' Children Association

2. Tigray Youth Association

3. Quality of Education for Sustainable Development

4. R.T TOPA ABA GGSA

5. Araya Womens and children charitable

6. HUMAN BINGS Ass. of BROTHERHOOD

7. women's Association of Tigray

8. operation Rescue Ethiopia

9. Tigray Teacher ASSATIION

10. Save Generation ASSOCIATION Tigray

11. MOMS FOR MOMS

12. champions of change HIV positive remobilized fighters ASSOCIATION

13. Chura Abusid Artistic Association

14. Yemane Gemedhin

15. Tigray Bar Association

16. Tigray Leprosy Affected Disabled ASSOCIATION

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**CC-**

- To Regional and International community
- To All Embassies in Ethiopia
- To UN Agencies

*M. Eyene*



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