

Voice of Reason

Advocacy Group for Growth and Transformation



Background to the war in Ethiopia for the international media

The illegitimate Ethiopian government has imposed a complete shutdown of communication and transportation in and out of the State of Tigray. He has now declared war and mobilized ground and air attacks against the state. This illegitimate government has controlled the local media and is disseminating false information to the international community. Unfortunately, the international media, in most cases, are now simply parroting a one-sided narrative of the situation in Ethiopia as given by the head of the government without any corroborating evidence.

As a result of this misinformation the international community has failed to understand the ongoing ethnic cleansing and genocide taking place on Tegraru. To fully understand why a genocidal war has started in Ethiopia, we need to look back and examine what has been going on since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the 2019 Nobel Peace Laureate, took office. His predecessor resigned among popular uprisings in Oromia and Amhara states, against bad governance and unemployment. The ruling party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front (EPRDF), selected an Oromo member of the party, Abiy Ahmed, to succeed him. He was tasked to lead the country toward a more democratic system culminating with free and fair elections, following the country's constitution. He was assigned to complete the remaining two years of the five-year term and then hold elections.

During his acceptance speech to the parliament on April 3, 2018, he promised to herald positive changes and hold elections. However, he started creating excuses so he can continue to stay in power. Any opposition to his idea was not tolerated, and as a result leaders of opposition parties and activists, were imprisoned. There was no tolerance for any demonstrations. All political demonstrations in the state of Oromia, Sidama, Somalia and Welaita were squashed by army loyal to Abiy. The only region that put significant resistance against the army occupation was the Tigray State. The current war between the Abiy government and the Tigray State is a result of the desire of Abiy rule Ethiopia like a king.

The following are the reasons for the serious dilemma facing the country:

- Abiy's government did not show any signs of preparation to hold national elections per the constitution.
- Later, when the coronavirus pandemic hit, it was used as a "God-send" excuse and elections were postponed indefinitely.
- Abiy Ahmed dissolved EPRDF and formed the Prosperity Party (PP) and forced the coalition that made up the EPRDF to join the PP, which some did, except for the Tigray

Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF). This party called the PM's move illegal because he did not have the mandate from the people and the constitution to dissolve the EPRDF.

- The State of Tigray repeatedly called for resolving political differences peacefully between the regional states and Abiy Ahmed's government through national dialogue that includes all stakeholders, but to no avail.
- Following the constitution, the Tigray State successfully conducted regional elections amid the COVID, disregarding the threats from the PM. The other regional states, like Oromia, Southern states and other parties could not hold elections because their leaders were in jail.
- Following elections in Tigray, Abiy Ahmed announced that he will hold national elections in a year's time.
- Tigray contested that the PM and the legislative body had no mandate to stay in office after October 5, 2020 and declared that the central government had no authority over Tigray.
- Likewise, the central government called Tigray's elections illegal. The illegitimate government of Abiy Ahmed severed any kind of ties with the elected government of the State of Tigray.
- Abiy Ahmed's government retaliated against Tigray by withholding its constitutionally mandated share of the federal budget, cut social protection resources funded by international donors that support the needy in the region, and excluded Tigray State from the list of regional states opted to receive face masks against COVID-19 to be distributed to students in their schools.
- As part of Abiy Ahmed's strategy of economic strangulation of Tigray, all banks in the state are closed.
- Investors from China heading to Tigray were prevented from proceeding and returned back to China from Bole Airport in Addis.
- Two independent aircraft owners requested to fly in order spray the locust infestation in Tigray, but were denied permission by Abiy government.
- Ethnic cleansing of Tegarau in Addis Ababa and the rest of the country is well underway. Tegarau are being fired from their jobs, including the armed forces, or told to stay home and not report to work. Some have been rounded up and sent to concentration camps or detention centers with unknown locations.
- Tegarau holding American or other non-Ethiopian passports are screened out from passengers and prevented from boarding flights out of the country.
- Additionally, the government has shut down the internet and telephone, cut off electricity, stopped air transport, and continues the blockade of ground transport that has been in effect since he took office almost three years ago.
- It is interesting to note that Abiy Ahmed timed his offensive to coincide with the elections in the United State, a time that drew the full attention of international media to reinforces his blackout of news from Ethiopia.
- In his bid to hang on to power, Abiy Ahmed is committing high treason, according to the country's criminal code, against Ethiopia by colliding with a foreign leader, Isayas Afeworki of Eritrea to kill his own country people. This is a treason never before committed by any ruler in the long history of Ethiopia.

- The existing war between the people of Tigray and Abiy's government is escalating quickly to include Isayas Afeworki's Eritrea and through him, other countries like Egypt, the UAE, South Sudan, and the US, as the supplier of the latest armaments. Sadly, Yemen's human tragedy is being replicated on Tigray.

Now is the time for the AU, EU, United Nations, non-aligned countries, and international humanitarian organization to get involved and help to resolve the conflict peacefully, before the world witnesses a repeat of another genocide as was in Rwanda.

Below are some links to relevant media reports on the current situation in Ethiopia, some of which should be taken with a grain of salt, because there is no first-hand verification:

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/55860.htm>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/ethiopia/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/08/the-guardian-view-on-ethiopia-a-tragedy-in-the-making>

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/88647/Ethiopia:%20Joint%20Statement%20by%20High%20Representative/Vice-President%20Josep%20Borrell%20and%20Commissioner%20Janez%20Lenar%C4%8Di%C4%8D

<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/w/tigray-officials-appeal-african-union-hundreds-killed-deadly-ethiopian-clashes>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/program/inside-story/2020/11/9/how-far-will-abiy-ahmed-go-with-his-operation-in-tigray-region/>

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/simmering-tensions-come-boil-ethiopia-tigray-region>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cwlw3xz047jt/ethiopia>

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