



## TIGRAY COMMUNITY OF ILLINOIS

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### **A call to the Internal Community for Action Against an all-out-civil war in Ethiopia**

November 13, 2020

**“If we had gone in sooner, I believe we could have saved at least a third of the lives that were lost—it had an enduring impact on me.”**

The above statement was made by former President Bill Clinton—reflecting on the heinous Rwandan genocide. In the course of 100 days, majority Hutu brutally slaughtered their fellow citizens in a state-led genocide targeting the minority Tutsi ethnic in which 75% of the Tutsi population was perished.

History is about to repeat itself in Tigray, Ethiopia’s northern region, if not averted quickly.

On November 4, while much of the world was still waiting anxiously for the results of the U.S. presidential election, Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was quietly concocting war against the Tigray region and ultimately waged an all-out war on the people of Tigray for exercising their constitutional rights in electing their leaders. The timing of the declaration of war was no accident; it was done so for maximum effect. Then, the prime minister ordered the blackout of all communication links to Tigray and the region remains almost completely cut off from the rest of the world. Civilians in Tigray have no access to banks, markets, phone, electricity, transportation and other necessities. Poised to keep the Tigray people in the dark, Abiy’s warplanes destroyed the Tekeze hydroelectric dam in Tigray recently.

As part of Abiy’s military offensive against Tigray region, he ordered his military to bombard cities in Tigray, including the region’s capital city Mekelle, killing civilians indiscriminately. Instead of stopping the senseless slaughter of civilians, Abiy promised for more airstrikes on national TV. As military offensive and airstrikes continue, the Tigrayan people are enduring an unprecedented level of threat and continuous intimidation from their government that was supposed to safeguard their safety.

Consequently, the Tigray regional government had no option but to defend its people from the war of aggression declared upon them by the federal government and the extremist militias from neighboring Amhara region who were promised a fertile land in western Tigray. Amidst the war crisis, the Tigray regional government called for dialogue to avoid further civilian deaths, but its appeal was wrongly interpreted by Abiy as a sign of weakness. To the contrary, Abiy Ahmed vowed to continue his killing spree in Tigray in the name of “restoring law and order” affirming that the “war was proceeding as planned,”—further evidence that Abiy’s sole interest in initiating the war was to kill as many Tigrayans as he can.



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Furthermore, Abiy intensified his detention of peaceful Tigrayans in Addis-Ababa and elsewhere in the country just because they are ethnic Tigrayans. As part of his ethnic cleansing campaign on the Tigray people, he removed all military officers and other military personnel from their positions and accused them of bogus allegations. The truth behind the jailing of all military officers that hail from Tigray by fabricating false accusations against them is that Abiy Ahmed fears they may not obey his order to shoot and kill innocent Tigrayans, or any people for that matter. The where-abouts of many Tigrayan military officers is still unknown.

Now, we are witnessing the ugly effects of war. News agencies, citing governmental sources, reported that hundreds, if not thousands, have been killed in the conflict already. As expected, the crisis has spilled over borders as civilians and government soldiers desperately fled to Sudan in droves. To add insult to injury, Eritrea joined the war at the invitation of Abiy Ahmed and is attacking Tigray, essentially making the conflict a regional one-- with the potential of affecting the Horn of Africa region.

One of the most perplexing conundrums of the current war in Tigray is that it was started by a Prime Minister who won the Nobel Peace Prize for ending the Ethio-Eritrea war that has never been amicably ended on the ground. Now, by declaring war against his citizens merely a year after he won the Nobel Peace Prize, Abiy has essentially become a “War Laureate” camouflaged by a “Peace Laureate” honor he didn’t earn. Sadly, the Tigray people are bearing the brunt of a premature Nobel Peace Prize award through no fault of their own.

Hence, we call upon the international community to see Abiy for who he really is and act quickly in averting an all-out civil war in Ethiopia before it is too late. The aforementioned former President Bill Clinton’s candid reflection on his lack of quick action in the face of the looming Rwandan genocide should serve as a stark reminder of the consequences of not taking action in a timely manner. The time to act is now.

Sincerely,

Tigray Community of Illinois

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