



Statement on Amnesty International’s Report Regarding the Killings of Civilians: A Call for UN-Mandated Investigation

1. The Global Society of Tigray Scholars (“GSTS”) strongly condemns the ever-increasing killings of innocent civilians including those reported by Amnesty International, and the state-led human rights violations against the people of Tigray origin including ethnic profiling, arbitrary round-up, search, and detention in internment in camps and prisons, violation of free movement, confiscation of properties, and targeting of Tigrayans in NGOs and UN to be forced out of their job, solely for being Tigrayan.

2. GSTS has examined a Report that Amnesty International released entitled "Ethiopia: Investigation reveals evidence that scores of civilians were killed in a massacre in Tigray state", issued on 12 November 2020.¹ In this report, Amnesty International indicated that “scores and likely hundreds of people were stabbed or hacked to death in Mai-Kadra town in the South-West Zone of Ethiopia's Tigray Region on the night of 9 November, 2020.”²

3. Amnesty International claims that based on few witnesses and confirmation by an independent pathologist commissioned by Amnesty International, the dead bodies “had gaping wounds that appear to have been inflicted by a sharp weapon such as knives and machetes.” These witnesses are cited as also attesting that “there were no signs of gunshot wounds.” GSTS appreciates Amnesty International’s attempt to report abuses under such difficult situation amidst the war on Tigray, nonetheless, the GSTS is deeply concerned regarding the anomalies in the austerity and rigor of the investigation; the evidence on which the findings of the report rests, and thereof the impartiality of the conclusions.

¹ Amnesty International, Ethiopia: Investigation reveals evidence that scores of civilians were killed in a massacre in Tigray state, 12 November 2020, available

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/11/ethiopia-investigation-reveals-evidence-that-scores-of-civilians-were-killed-in-massacre-in-tigray-state/>

² Ibid



4. The Amnesty International's report excessively relies on source of information is "witnesses who were providing food and other supplies to the Ethiopian Defence Forces (EDF), who visited the town immediately after the deadly attacks." We wonder how Amnesty International considered witnesses that are "providing food and other supplies" to one of the parties to the conflict as reliable to draw the conclusions it did. As the witnesses were not in the place at the time of the killings and did not provide an account of killings, and actually "visited the town immediately after the deadly attacks", we question the reliability of the information they can give. Further, in the absence of the views and positions of the other party to this conflict, the Tigray armed forces, how complete is a report and conclusions based on witnesses from one of the parties to the conflict?

5. Amnesty International admits that it "has not yet been able to confirm who was responsible for these killings". Yet, based on an incomplete and unsubstantiated evidence, Amnesty International implicates the responsibility of the killings to forces "loyal to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)". This self-contradictory statement by one of the biggest human rights organizations is not only anomalous in scientific attribution of criminal responsibility of extreme consequence but also a very low standard of investigation of war crimes.

6. During such tragic time of war, GSTS believes that Amnesty International should have applied the highest possible threshold on the rigor of evidence collection and formulation of conclusions drawn from the verifiable and reliable evidences. Low standard reports may add fuel to the ongoing massive violations of human rights of civilians and ethnic cleansing of Tigrayians.

7. GSTS calls leadership of the Amnesty International to investigate if this report passed through its established clearance protocols and standard of investigations for such complication.

8. Furthermore, the GSTS notes with appreciation Amnesty International's pledge "to continue to use all means available to document and expose violations by all parties to the conflict". The GSTS encourages Amnesty International to conduct scientific and evidence-based investigation on the on-going hate crime, mass



detention and dismissal of thousands of Tigrayan serving in the security, army, police and intelligence, banking, aviation as well as a regional multilateral organization, restriction of movement, solely for their identity.

9. The GSTS supports Amnesty International's call for the restoration of all communications in Tigray. Civilians in the region have rights to get essential services such as communication (telecommunication and internet), banking, transport, medical supplies, fuel, electricity, and other humanitarian assistances. The restoration of communication and transportation services will also help the media and human rights organizations such as Amnesty International to conduct a transparent and evidence-based report that also reflect the views of all parties to the conflict.

10. Therefore, GSTS calls on the international community, in particular, the United Nations Security Council, and UN Human Rights Council, and other human rights bodies to conduct thorough, comprehensive and credible investigations on all killings of civilians, and human rights violations against people of Tigray origin.

The Global Leadership, GSTS

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