

Official Correspondence GSTS-O.C-2021-076
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)¹

H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
President of the Republic of Turkey
Ankara, Turkey

OPEN LETTER

Call for Turkey to Stand with the People of Tigray: The Land of the First Hijra

Your Excellency, President Tayyip Erdoğan,

We, the Global Society of Tigray Scholars and Professionals (GSTS), are grateful to call to mind the friendship of the government and people of Turkey with the people of Tigray including through efforts to restore our common heritage, the al-Nejashi mosque, by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), and the support extended to Tigray refugees in Sudan by the Turkey's Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH). These Tigrayans are displaced by the ongoing war waged on Tigray by the combined Ethiopian, Eritrean and Amhara regional Special Forces and militia.

We are encouraged by your Excellency's support for a peaceful resolution to the ongoing devastating war in Ethiopia, which has been threatening the lives of millions of people and the peace and integrity of the country as well as the stability of the Horn of Africa and beyond. We further appreciate your willingness to mediate the dispute between the Sudan and Ethiopia.

GSTS appreciates Turkey's partnership, humanitarian and developmental support to the Ethiopian people in line with the good relations maintained between the two countries since the establishment of diplomatic relations, some 125 years ago.

We, however, want to draw your attention to the fact that the government of PM Abiy Ahmed has, for more than nine months, waged a genocidal war on Tigray, which has led to heinous atrocities including acts of genocide on the people of Tigray. Therefore, we are writing this letter at a critical time to express our apprehension at the recent exchanges with Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed including during his visit to your great country on 18th of August 2021. We are particularly concerned by the statement "Ankara to provide all types of assistance" and military co-operation in light of the ongoing conflict.

As has been extensively reported and noted by various governments and international bodies, the atrocities committed in Tigray amount to grave war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, the continued massacre of young men and boys, and the systematic starvation crimes perpetrated through the ongoing blockade on all access to humanitarian assistance, and the deliberate destruction of religious and heritage sites including al-Nejashi mosque are inarguable acts of genocide. Nine months into the genocidal war on Tigray, heinous mass atrocities and breaches of international law have been committed in different parts of Tigray by the combined Ethiopian National Defense forces (ENDF), Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF), and Amhara Special Forces and militia.

All these crimes have been committed in the dark for nine months, with telecommunication, internet, electricity, transport including air and roads, and banking services completely blocked by the Ethiopian

government and still continuing in parts of Tigray, which are under the occupation of the Eritrean and Amhara invading forces.

Military drones, that analysts claim belong to the UAE, were used by PM Abiy's government resulting in calamitous damage on civilians, public infrastructures, religious and archaeological sites. We are aware that PM Abiy has been in the market to acquire drones to continue unleashing more destruction on the people of Tigray. Although rumors circulating in the news had alarmingly suggested that Turkey might have agreed to supply Ethiopia with drones, we were relieved to learn from the Turkish Embassy in Ethiopia that this was not the case.

We at GSTS would like to entreat with the generous people and government of Turkey not to contribute to the systematic genocide that is being waged against the people of Tigray by giving military aid and support to the government of PM Abiy Ahmed. This would run counter to the historical brotherly relations of the Turkish and Tigray peoples and the instruction of Prophet Mohammed [peace be upon him] "not to harm the Habesha [modern day Tigrayans].

The government of Turkey, being a friend to all Ethiopian people, is in a uniquely well-placed position to support peace efforts in Ethiopia and in the Horn of Africa. The Global Society of Tigray Scholars and Professionals (GSTS), therefore, calls upon your Excellency to:

- a) Not to provide any military equipment to PM Abiy's government to further commit genocide on the people of Tigray;
- b) Facilitate an immediate end to the ongoing war, which is already having ramifications to the stability and integrity of Ethiopia as well as to the entire horn of the Africa region.
- c) Play positive role in the peaceful resolution of the crisis in Ethiopia by calling and facilitating an all-inclusive dialogue involving all concerned bodies;
- d) Strengthen the generous humanitarian support to the people of Tigray, residing both inside Tigray and to the refugees in the Sudan;
- e) Call upon the government of Ethiopia to end the siege and blockage on Tigray, and avail life-saving medical and food aid to the millions of people in Tigray facing famine; and
- f) Support the rebuilding of the Al-Nejashi mosque and other religious heritages and places of worship in Tigray by initiating and galvanizing resources.



Sincerely,
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)
19th August 2021

¹ GSTS is a 501(C) and 33/2011 legally registered non-partisan, not-for-profit, and autonomous Global Knowledge Network of over 3,000 Tigray Scholars and Professionals aimed at creating Knowledge-based economy and society in Tigray, and beyond. It stands for academia, multidisciplinary and cross sectoral research and applied policy development, human capital development, fostering and advancing science, technology, and innovation, technology and knowledge transfer, youth and gender development, migration and displacement, and other educational and development related endeavours. It also works in educational advocacy and collaborates with various stakeholders towards promoting peace, good governance, human rights, and humanitarian activities.