Global Society for Advocacy & Development of Raya
Toronto, Canada

Date: 17 January 2019

Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minster of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Office of the Prime Minister

P.O. Box 1031 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Open Letter:

Stop the orchestrated attack against the people of Raya

Your Excellency,

We are representatives of a coalition of communities of the Global Society for Advocacy & Development of Raya (GSADRA), an organization established to advocate social justice as well as promote sustainable development for Raya.

It is with great consternation and disbelief that we are witnessing the recent physical and psychological torment that our people are forced to endure in their respective towns and hamlets. Hence, we urge your Government to stop the orchestrated assault on our Rayan identity.

We are writing to express our grave concern about the recent lawlessness and violence in the country against the peace-loving people of Tigray in general and the people of Raya in particular.

Your Excellency,

The belligerence and aggressions against the innocent and peace-loving people of Raya have been committed in the name of false and nonexistent identity dispute. It must be clear to any student of history that Rayans are the first in the history of modern Ethiopia to protect their identity and defend their interest by paying the ultimate price for freedom. It is also true that in our modern Ethiopian history Raya has always been part of Tigray. Raya was bounded by former Awrajas of Enderta to the north, Yeju in the south, Awsa in the east and Wag to the west.

Emperor Haile Selassie's decision to redraw the boundaries by allocating parts of southern Tigray to the neighbouring province does not change the history of our communities. Any suggestion that an identity crisis looms in Raya is not only preposterous but also an insult to our communities.

Raya is about diversity and tolerance, as such, our relationship with our neighboring communities is exemplary. Unfortunately, many of those who are trying to reign havoc in our community are people who had never set a foot in Raya.

The current widespread lawlessness has made Ethiopia a fertile ground for territorial expansionists and hatemongers. Many of them are remnants of the past brutal regimes of Emperor Haile Selassie and Derg who have been resurrected from the ashes due to your government's tolerance toward those who create mayhem and disorder. In an effort to reopen past wounds, they are publicly calling for violence and war against the innocent people of Raya. They are blocking roads, destroying properties, killing innocent civilians, and burning vehicles destined to Raya, depriving free movement of people and goods with an objective of starving our people into submission.

Your Excellency,

According to the International Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), the number of internally displaced Ethiopians has reached over 1.4 million in 2018. We believe this is a disgrace to our country. Among the internally displaced people more than 3,000 university students are from Raya. This fact demonstrates that the Ethiopian constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is being grossly violated in our country.

Contrary to Article 32 Freedom of movement of the Ethiopian Constitution states that " every Ethiopian or any other person lawfully within Ethiopia shall have the freedom to freely move and establish his residence within Ethiopia as well as to travel abroad", our people are being displaced, brutalized, and looted by these mobsters.

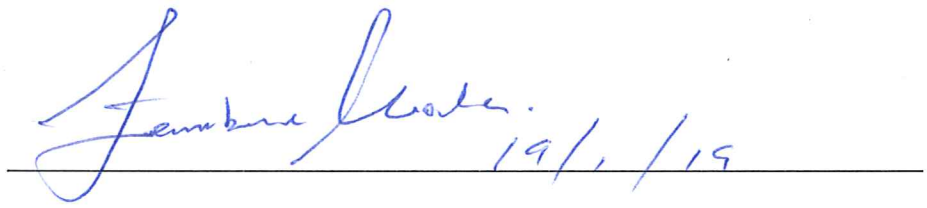
Despite Article 16 of the constitution which articulates that "every one shall have right to protection against body harm", it is becoming evident that these fundamental rights are not heeded to and not given priority by the Government of Ethiopia.

- We are of the view, that the internal displacement, ethnic based violence and attack on identity, and illegal land claims in different parts of the country to be manifestations of absence of rule of law.
- We, members of the Rayan communities condemn in the strongest terms the crimes committed by the extremists mainly in Amhara region against our compatriots in their own country and demand that the Ethiopian government takes urgent measures against those violent perpetrators.
- We, the members of the worldwide Rayan Community stand firmly with our people to show our solidarity and to ensure their rights to live and work in any part of Ethiopia in peace and harmony.
- We demand the Government of Ethiopia preserves the constitutional order of the nation and maintain rule of law.
- We urge the Federal Government of Ethiopia to immediately take swift action to stop those expansionists and violent elements who are actively engaged in inciting ethnic based violence, disturb the peace and stability of the people and undermine the security of innocent citizens.

Your Excellency,

We respectfully wish to urge you to dedicate your utmost attention to ensure that the country honors its commitments to the constitution, to the rule of law & to protect citizens' rights to freedom of movement and to peace and security. We also believe that there is still time for you to help avert a catastrophic internal conflict in Ethiopia, particularly in Raya, by ensuring the constitution is respected and the low of land is enforced.

Sincerely,



Chairman, *Global Society for Advocacy & Development of Raya*

CC: FDRE President Sahle Work Zewde

CC: FDRE House of People's Representative

CC: FDRE House of Federation

CC: Tigray Deputy President Dr. Debretsion Gebre Michael

CC: The Ethiopian Embassy -Washington DC, USA

CC: The Ethiopian Embassy -Ottawa, Canada

CC: M. Reda'e Halefom , South Tigray Chief Administrator

CC: UN Human Rights Commission