

## **First Anniversary of Genocide: Yes, a full year of Genocide on Tigray – Can there be any good in it?**

For any person with a minimum understanding of political dynamics and their interplay from local –regional to international levels – he/she can very well understand that the war on Tigray has been international one from the word go. The war in its violent form started on Nov.3/2020 but the political war i.e economic deprivations, denial of rightful shares in several aspects including in consultation at national issues was clear by Ethiopian government’s side. The Ethiopian medias outside Tigray have been abused to profile anything Tigrayan and to reinforce this intention, Abiy and lieutenants promoted the narrative that TPLF was corrupt and violator of human rights in Ethiopia for the last 27 years. This was against the reality where even Abiy himself has been member of the party who climbed EPRDF ladder, coalition of parties where TPLF was a member-in security sector for that matter. So selective hunting and profiling of Tigray officials for alleged corruption and human rights violation in Ethiopia was precursor to whole sale attack on Tigray which was premeditated. So, Eritrean government and Amhara forces for their long term vendetta against Tigray, and Abiy to quench his passion for populism among Ethiopians who were fed up with monotonous EPRDF rule for 27 years, the escalation kept growing and reinforced by narratives and counter narratives. Forces against Tigray were full support and access to all resources by Abiy government. Global community awarded him Nobel Peace Prize for making ‘peace’ with Eritrea, which was a mere pact to destroy Tigray. They also eulogized him for perceived ‘reformist’ agenda which all emboldened him to go genocidal on Tigray. Note that EPRDF-TPLF was not wanted by the west due to its developmental state and less democratic tendencies, perceived or real high level leaning to China and so forth by the western world. The Ethiopian population was also tired of dictatorial tendencies of EPRDF, which led to public uprising. Change came and led to war on Tigray with a lot of processes in between. A year now and what can be said of the genocidal war?

### **Reflection points:**

1. *Oromara* (alliance between the Oromos and the Amhara) may not be mentioned again as a rallying call. Its political funeral has been going on silently for the last three years. It is now replaced with a more organic political alliance of federalist forces TDF and OLA which rekindles the suppressed federalists’ momentum. So *Oromara* died but it led the

nation to hell before its eventual death. Federalists have been reborn on its ashes though in costlier ways. TDF and OLA alliance has sent shockwaves to power centralizers and usurpers in the name of unionists or the hegemonic 'Ethiopianists'. There is now already ready-made alliance of federalist elements in the wait in Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella, Oromia and parts of South including Sidama regions. Therefore, federalist sentiment among majority of Ethiopians is well and is actually more inclusive than the tyranny of numbers on which *Oromara* bragged to own the country and everyone else was doomed to perpetual subservience. *Oromara* was dead on arrival and now it is buried. Federalist alliance is organic and loaded with principles of self-determination, subsidiarity and respect for cultures as opposed to suffocating *Oromara* with its unfounded propaganda of lies. Linguistic federalism may look primordial mode of organization for outsider, but in a political context of historically predatory nature of some groups, it remains the last political safety zone.

2. The war on Tigray has been, qualitatively speaking, a '**coup on federal constitution**' by Abiy and his alliances – by defused means. On the war and on all national affairs, Abiy surely violated the constitution of Ethiopia with which he was sworn in. So it was coup in the form of war on federal constitution, on the letter and spirit of it. Remember, in Ethiopian constitution, the regions have rights up to secession if they wish, and this right is not restricted even in state of emergency. He postponed election under the pretext of Covid-19, did whatever he liked with external relations or appointment of state officials without following any law. He became a law unto himself. He forged unclear relations with Eritrean government and declared war on Tigray. Due to all-rounded violation of the constitution, it is now clearer that more advanced federalism is the only way for regions to insulate themselves from such kind of weird intrusions! Tigray, Oromia, Benishangul Gumuz, Ethiopian Somali region, Gambella and other people have learned it hard way that, their earned right of self-governance is at stake through sweet talking and yet manipulatively centralist Abiy government. During his three-year reign, regional states lost even the minimum autonomy they had in the most rudimentary activities and appointments. Therefore, more formidable federalist alliance might be loading, which might even lead to semi-autonomous or even to the independence for some depending the situation, given the

unpredictable and highly volatile situation. All the same, idealistic unionist version of Ethiopia is dead, and for good. Ethiopia's existence as we know it is also in question.

3. New alliances will likely emerge. Perhaps, the Eritrea –Amhara alliance will be the only remaining force out of the genocidal alliance against Tigray. Abiy might use few remaining days or weeks for looting of remaining cents from national coffers as he talks rambling and incoherent lies on media and masquerading as a defiant leader. In actual sense, whether federalist forces secure total win, or even slow on their advancement, parts of the country continue to become off limit for central government, Abiy's political star has fallen - his political sun is set on him. His political obituary is already drafted waiting publication. You can take this to the bank and cash it!
4. Economically Tigray is grounded and for a long haul. Its mutilators: Shabia, Amhara forces and Ethiopian Army led by Abiy – all overseen by Isayas Afework, have successfully destroyed Tigray's robust economy, social harmony, institution of family, traumatized the people in Tigray, destroyed heritages, vandalized all social amenities like hospitals, schools, universities, businesses such as factories and it reduced the region to rubbles. Tigray is under siege and starved to death with no medical, electric, communication or fuel supplies. The intention is to break the society once and for all to the point of no recovery, to reduce Tigray to non-consequential and totally reduced it to timid group that follows orders.
5. Politically and militarily: as of now – Tigray stands stronger in terms of military capability to the level of its deadly enemies if not more. It has risen from ashes to the force that is capable to lay siege on the Ethiopia and it is now dictating terms for future. It showed to friends and foe alike, that it is not any group that any country can crush at will. As we speak Tigray Defence Force is feared and already considered the most capable military in the Horn. It singles handedly fought against the alliance of nations, merger of drone technology and other resources of Eritrea, UAE, Somalia, Ethiopia, and special forces from all regional states of Ethiopia and paradoxically kept on offensive. It not only re-took most of its region but also managed to put the whole Ethiopian government on its death bed and talking nonsense before its last political breath.
6. Eritrean government is the only apparent winner to date. It scored revenge against Tigray and its governing party TPLF. Eritrean soldiers uprooted and looted all factories,

machineries and properties from Tigray without any restriction. They killed civilians and ransacked the region at will. Ethiopian soldiers who also operated under the mercy of Eritrean command, were only second fiddle in the scenario. The Amhara forces and Ethiopian soldiers also engaged on looting spree even mobiles and pair of shoe from individuals if it impresses them. Eritrean generals and soldiers were also handsomely paid by Ethiopian government, more than their Ethiopian counter parts, so they were on hired and making money as mercenaries. The Ethiopian government invested a lot to supply Eritrean army with weapons and fuel for their engagement in Tigray. So except for the lives lost from the Eritrean soldiers while fighting in Tigray. Eritrean security operatives also flooded Addis and to other key places in Ethiopia. They quickly monopolized the hard currency and financial market by colluding and conditioning fear on the bank managers, corporation leaders, customs, import and export businesses among others. In Addis these issues are public secret. So Eritrean government both settled its score with TLPF and enriched itself – in effect, Eritrea is the only gainer in this one-year war on Tigray, while Ethiopians effort to lift sanctions against it is yet another political score for Isayas.

7. **Amhara region:** looser plus. The Amhara politically connected oligarchs in cahoots with Eritrean security mafias planned to quickly annex the western Tigray while emotionally charging the popular sentiment for nostalgia of Amhara traditional expansionist fervor among gullible sections of the region. Southern Tigray is meant to add sentimental value but Amhara elite are more committed to annexing of western Tigray. This is because it serves the economic ambition of those Eritrea-Amhara mafia, weakens Tigray economically by displacing the already existing and confiscating those ready made investments, blocking of Tigray from accessing Sudan eternally. They want a situation whereby Tigray lives or dies under their mercy for access to external world. It looks hallucination but this is the real interest that is at play in Wolkait-Humera and the whole western Tigray. That is why they did genocide and ethnic cleansing at a go to free the area from any trace of Tigray. The Amhara invaders were less brutal in Southern Tigray in fact, though they were not allowing people to speak Tigrigna and forcing changing of identity but not killing at levels done in western Tigray. However, this has zero chance of sustainability. Amhara elite and forces' effort will evaporate in thin air after losing everything on other fronts. Tigray will surely regain this area once and for all. It is loading.

Amhara elite, they destroyed their economy, Ethiopian unity by being involved and mobilizing other regions to fight along them. The narratives they deploy such as those areas are their ancestral land with overall unfounded claims and falsehoods. They fought for false cause and showed themselves against Ethiopian federalist principles and values. In the course of the fight against Tigray, they showed unappreciative posture against others fighting on their side, questioning their commitment or even killing and belittling them. So there is likelihood that the Amhara elite will be further isolated from the rest of Ethiopia and their last friend will be Eritrean government mainly because both want to block Tigray by shared annexation of western Tigray. Eritrean government will train and retain Amhara forces in its soil to engage them against Tigray. Amhara diaspora will flood their money to this group through Eritrea, meaning Eritrea will generate good money through Amhara resistance activity, one scenario.

8. **For the Sudan:** if it survives its own problems it is better for Sudan to create good relations with Tigray forces in order to get strong ally against the Amhara expansionists in Al-Fashqa and Eritrean government which manipulates the Beja tribe on the Red sea side of Sudan and can choke Sudan off the access to the ports.
9. **African Union:** With its irresponsible approach to the genocidal war in Tigray, by pettily siding with Abiy, African Union committed political suicide. It proved that it is not committed to its ideas of silencing the gun, or anything apart from being a meeting hall for government leaders in the continent. For ordinary Africans, there is nothing that can be expected from AU.
10. **Ethiopia:** politically, economically, socially, historically, militarily Ethiopia stands to lose. It lost on all fronts. Its economy is grounded and it is difficult to imagine how it can cover for the loses and start trajectory of growth, if at all. Its existence as a country is under question after suicidal project of brining foreign country to destroy one of its regions and deny everything. Many Tigrayans don't have citizen rights in Ethiopia. The nation, overall is government by lies and fear. Hard to imagine how it can go forward. It is impossible to broom all these mega problems under the carpet.
11. **Ethiopian religious leaders and public intellectuals** – have lost their moral place by supporting war on Tigray or by avoiding responsibility to oppose the Eritrean invasion, humanitarian blockade and inability to challenge lies by the government. Many religious

institutions in Ethiopia and their counter parts in Tigray may not continue as a unified institution because the Tigray faithful feel betrayed by all religious leaders and institutions in Addis, who supported the Abiy's deadly adventure on Tigray.

12. **Increased vulnerability** of state to fragility and conflict. Overall, Ethiopia now has become increasingly fragile. Deadly conflict can be caused intentionally for political ends by some groups, or it can just erupt and state remains unable to quell it. There is likelihood of religious violence emerging in various pockets of the country due to state weakness and expanded opportunity interest groups.
13. **All these in mind**, increasingly ultra-polarized context, possibility of genocide at various levels and places is eminent. Tigrayans are already under attack and threat in various places in the country particularly in Amhara region by vigilante group called *Fano*. That will end the Ethiopian state as we know it apart from suffering of innocent civilians just because they belong to this or that group.

## **Conclusion**

With the benefit of hind sight, a lot could be said about the year of genocide on Tigray. However, all said and done, Ethiopia lost. It destroyed itself. It is now clear to all and sundry that it is not advisable to start big wars on false reasons and lies. All the narratives by Ethiopian government were and are false. Ethiopian government graduated itself as the most lying government of the world, one can confidently say without fear of contradiction. Genocide against Tigrayans is going on in Amhara region and other places and through denial of access to the life supporting services and supplies due to siege. Hatred among groups and atrocities have increased elsewhere in the country. Ruined economy continuously aggravated by Covid-19 induced challenges and huge scale war on Tigray and on Oromo Liberation Army, historic level of diplomatic isolation of Ethiopian in the world, sanctions, and governments military defeat against Tigray Defense Force/TDF has reduced the government to metropolitan news agency that doesn't even have journalists in all parts of the country. In all this, through immense suffering and defiance, Tigray Defense Force has rose from ashes of defeat, to the unbelievable levels of victory. While the Ethiopian government is put on the edge of its final fall, with that Ethiopian military has been destroyed to the point of no repair! Extraordinary political and military feat for small group whose history now outsizes not only its number but the whole Ethiopia itself. The good side of it is that,

Tigray has clear political aim. It suffered a lot but now it has resource and experience to regenerate itself. Tigray is re-created. It will nurse its wounds but surely it will emerge and continue from strength to strength in socio-political and military fronts. It defended its right to self-governance. It fell, rose and defeated enemies and it did it all by itself. Yes, the pain and prices are too much but it was a must and worthy as opposed to slavery which is even costlier, thus not an option for Tigray. So there is positive side Tigray can make for its future in the form of lessons learned for its future regeneration. The future of the Ethiopian state and how exactly this war will end is not yet clear, though Tigrayans have already marched past Kombolicha town in Amhara region joining with Oromo liberation. All the same, Tigray can find some advantage for its future in this painful experience.

Mr. Gedda Komma

gedakoma43@gmail.com