

## **Tigray and Africa: A Paradox of Near and Far**

Tigray is people and land, center of civilization, defiance, passion for self-rule and resistance against domination. Tigray is home of so much: Da'amat, Axum, Adwa, Al-Nejashi and home of Tigray's ancient language *Geez* alphabet, chanting and music. By all standards, Tigray stands out as an historical heavy-weight in Africa. It is located in Northern Ethiopia, as of now, and south of Eritrea and borders with Sudan. In this region with poorly orchestrated justification of '*attack on the northern command of Ethiopian National Defense Force*' genocidal war was declared on the night of Nov.3<sup>rd</sup>. 2020. It was known that Abiy Ahmed, Amhara Regional Forces and Eritrean government had already planned a war and hours earlier that very night and during those days all armies from other regions of Ethiopia, and Eritrean army from Eritrean side were already set on the boundaries while the Northern Command in Mekelle was bypassed by some commando units jetted in by Abiy to capture key figures of the Tigray ruling party, TPLF for their disobedience. Then the Northern Command was to do 'cleaning of regional forces and control the region for installation of regional puppet government by Abiy. It is tiresome now to mention all pre-bloody war phase which was political prelude to war during which budget for Tigray was already blocked by federal government and much more. Back to the point.

The genocidal war against people of Tigray for one full year, from Nov.2020 to Nov.2021 has been perhaps the most brutal in intention and intensity in the recent history of African continent if not the world, I would argue. The combination of forces that reduced the region to economic, social and cultural wreckage, looted and gang raped at will were so free from A to Z. The Western world has always been '**CONCERNED**' at first and of late, some 'upscaling' has been made to the word and now it is '**DEEPLY CONCERNED**'. Now, because Eritrea, Amhara Abiy axes refused neither to refrain nor reduce the pain and siege on Tigray; life supporting and saving amenities were completely looted and destroyed by trio. They were helped by Emirati combat drones and Somalia's Farmajo offered 3000 (three thousand soldiers). Tigray is therefore, Still under siege by those forces and due to the fact that the Western Tigray is still under the occupation of Amhara and Eritrean Army access to Sudan is denied. Afar-Djibouti road and air transport is blocked and made problematic by Abiy, Amhara and Afar governments.

So, there is **No** Medicine, fuel, electricity, banking service, transport, no humanitarian supply and access to the region for one good year. Abiy allowed limited access for few early months into some

area occupied by his forces but most of those humanitarian aid was looted by his soldiers and appointed cadres, for the months Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers occupied Tigray – now much of Tigray is freed except Western and few eastern escarpments from Eritrea sides. Now, children are dying of man-made famine, mothers and people with chronic diseases and other emergency patients are all dying due to lack of transport (all ambulances had been stolen by Amhara and Eritrean forces during occupation), lack of medicine and fuel on top of it. Tigray population is estimated somewhere between 6-8 million. These people, in this century, in Africa are left to fight alone, to fight just to live and resist genocide alone against alliance of brutal forces. Remember African Union is sitting idle in Addis Abeba with empty promise of ‘Silencing Guns’. Note that African Union has been badly tested and failed in terms of preventing genocidal war on Tigray. It is my hope that fellow African are learning a lesson or two from the situation in Tigray. In fact, it is to be remembered that AU even publicly supported Abiy’s war on Tigray while knowing well that UAE drones and Eritrean army are respectively fighting in Tigray from the very beginning of the war. On the other side, this war brought Mr. Abiy to light, in front of the world, as the most lying leader in recent history. He lied about presence of Eritrean Army in Tigray, about atrocities of civilians, about gang-rape of women in Tigray, about famine in Tigray saying there is no famine in Tigray, about unilateral cease fire and what not?

The question I want to raise in this article, the central question in fact, some Africans have not yet even heard of war on Tigray properly. How come a systematic and coordinated, collaborative genocide remains hidden like that in Africa from Africans? Africans are not aware enough, it seems, of what is happening in Tigray. And that is shocking. What happened to African media and intelligentsia, public intellectuals, religious and cultural leaders? The suffering of Tigrayans is so huge and painful that African media must make effort to play its role. Tigrayan civilians outside their region, including in Addis Abeba and elsewhere are extra judicially killed, robbed, rounded up and imprisoned at will. They are vilified through state media, state sponsored activists, government leaders, profiled and open campaigns against them. This is happening at huge scale and fast. In the midst of this, African media is still near but far from Tigray and what is happening in Ethiopia. Is it due to lack of means or interest? African people’s unity, solidarity and mutual support is only governments’ controlled? Is there anything ordinary Africans can say about this because it also shows terrible failure of AU and IGAD and of course other regional bodies. Yes, some few voices at some point came up like Paul Kagame and civil societies but it all have been

alarmingly few and short lived. It is time, then, for young Africans, media and political students in Africa to open your eyes and make your voices. The situation directly speaks to AU's failure and that should be addressed by Africans by charting alternative harnessing of citizens' synergized voice and actions. If not, AU will not address its betrayal of ordinary African population in defense for cruel governments who stave and kill their people. Tomorrow it will happen to in some corners of Africa, as it has been and waiting for solutions from AU will be yet another failure. Medias, young people and intellectuals of Africa bypass AU and listen to Africans in various corners of the continent, be their voice during tough times such as genocide as in Tigray now. It is citizens that can bring about real life based African unity and brotherhood not AU!

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