

## Conditions for a negotiated Ceasefire

Since the fascistic clique spearheaded by Abiy Ahmed, in an unprecedented collaboration with foreign and domestic invading forces, has been waging a genocidal campaign to exterminate the people of Tigray, we find ourselves determined and having to shed blood in order to secure our survival as a people. Moreover, the Tigrayan Army has been registering one splendid victory after another and is now in control of the capital city of Tigray, Mekelle, and most administrative areas in Tigray. Nevertheless, after its forces were routed in a series of decisive battles and forced to flee in disarray, the fascistic clique of Abiy Ahmed is, true to form, trying to hoodwink the international community into thinking that it is an agent of peace by its apparent declaration of a unilateral ceasefire, ostensibly to allow farmers to engage in farming as well as to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. Since the people and Government of Tigray consider peace to be an existential issue, our position with regards to peace talks is quite obvious. Accordingly, the people and Government of Tigray are always ready to resolve the challenges facing us through peaceful means. Indeed, it was Abiy Ahmed, who, after closing, all peaceful avenues, initiated this bloody war to exterminate the people of Tigray, and one in which we were forced to participate to ensure our survival; war was not our first option and it never is. Because it is imperative that humanitarian organizations be able to operate freely to fulfil their mission, we would like to let all concerned parties know that the Government of Tigray is willing and able to extend our unreserved support and collaboration in order to create a favourable environment in which Tigrayans in need are able to secure sufficient aid. Furthermore, so long as we obtain an ironclad guarantee that the security of our people will not be jeopardized again by a second round of invasions, we accept a ceasefire in principle. Nevertheless, before a ceasefire agreement is formalized, the following thorny problems must be resolved:

1. Invading forces from Amhara and Eritrea must withdraw from Tigray and return to their pre-war territories; members of the Eritrean security, intelligence and defense establishment currently in Ethiopia must leave the country immediately and without any delay; any contacts, be it domestic or foreign, that bear directly on the national interests of Tigray must go through the legitimate and legal Government of Tigray; the resolution of issues related to Tigray and Eritrea must be predicated on dialogue with the Government of Tigray alone;

2. The people of Tigray have been subjected to horrific crimes virtually impossible to imagine taking place in this day and age, such as genocide and ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity, the use of hunger as a fundamental instrument of war, and horrific gender-based violence. Given the Ethiopian government's infliction of incalculable damage on Tigray and its people, and Eritrea's invasions of Tigray and consequent direct proportion to the severity and magnitude of the damage they have inflicted on Tigray and the despicable crimes committed against the people of

Tigray must be put into motion; to that end, it is imperative that there be an agreement on the need for the United Nations to establish an independent investigative body, and, once that body is established, on the need to put in place proper mechanisms for bringing criminals to the International Criminal Court;

3. Allow the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to the people of Tigray from all directions using all necessary modes of transport; facilitate the return of all Tigrayans, internally displaced and refugees, to their homes as well as ensure the return of civilians brought in by the invading forces to their previous homes; create propitious conditions for the repatriation of governmental, and private properties looted from Tigray without any form of delay; create conditions in which full compensation for the damage inflicted on Tigray, such as the destruction of basic infrastructures, and service-providing socioeconomic institutions is secured without any delay. The Government of Tigray is committed to extending its unreserved support to those who engage in the delivery of humanitarian support, such as by providing security guarantees and ensuring their personal safety.

4. The people of Tigray must have full access to all forms of services, such as electricity, telecommunications, banking, air travel, education, healthcare, transportation, commerce etc. without interruption and any form of hindrance; allow the operation of international flights directly from airports in Tigray without any preconditions;

5. Respect the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and accept the fact that the constitution is the sole basis for any negotiations going forward; enable the democratically elected Government of Tigray, with all its powers, and constitutional responsibilities, to resume its regular work;

release the budget transfer that the people of Tigray were constitutionally and legally entitled to receive in 2013 [2020-21 budget year]; no members of the defense forces, federal police, security and intelligence institutions will be allowed to enter and operate in Tigray;

6. Given the expiration of the legal mandate of the federal government as of September 25, 2013 (EC), subsequent decisions by the federal parliament (the House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of Federation), federal courts, any proclamations, directives, decisions, issued by entities at all levels of the executive branch, and judicial and administrative decisions aimed at the State of Tigray and Tigrayans lack legal force, and, as such, should be considered null and void; relatedly, Tigrayan politicians and members of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces [ENDF], who are languishing in jail solely on account of their identity must be released from their illegal detention without delay; current and former Tigrayan members of the ENDF in detention must be released, with all the benefits they are legally entitled to fully restored. Tigrayans illegally expelled from the Addis Ababa City Administration as well as from all federal institutions on account of their identity must get all the benefits that they are legally entitled to. All other Ethiopians who are in jail solely on account of their identity must also be released without delay.

7. The Government of Tigray considers the creation of an independent international entity entrusted with the task of following up on the implementation of these preconditions for a ceasefire to be a non-negotiable element of the ceasefire itself.

This statement has been issued so that a ceasefire agreement can be secured through dialogue. Finally, since most parts of Tigray are under the effective control of the Government of Tigray, we invite diplomats and journalists who wish to follow developments and objective conditions in Tigray up close to visit; we will provide all necessary support so you can do your job freely.

The Government of Tigray

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