

The TPLF Welcomes Ethiopia's New Year with Bullets

Commentary

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Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn gave the killing machine of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) the license to take any covert and overt military action against peaceful protestors throughout the country, targeting the Amhara population in Gondar, Wolkait-Tegede, Setit-Humera, Debre Tabor, Bahir Dar, Debre Markos and other towns. No one really knows the level of human carnage inflicted on the youth population in the region. History has already recorded that this youthful population that foretells and shapes the future defied fear and bullets and made a determination to free itself from degradation, insults, injustice and marginalization. Evidenced by the meaningful slogans such as "The Amhara people are not donkeys! Amhara and Oromo are brothers! Ethiopians shall unite and preserve the country's sovereignty! The TPLF plunders!" and the like, these young women and men have already demonstrated that they are no longer docile or submissive or fearful. In this sense alone, whether in the Amhara or the Oromo region, Ethiopian youth has shattered the myth that the TPLF is invisible. If it were, it would not implant fictitious fear and airlift or move Tigreans to move in droves out of the ancient city of Gondar or other towns where they have lived with other Ethiopians peacefully and have prospered in the process. Many people ask themselves rightly, "How does the TPLF expect any Tigrean to live anywhere outside Tigray for generations to come by continuing to kill young people as young as 5 years old with impunity?"

The TPLF killing machine and its security set prisons on fire and accuse prisoners and other so called "trouble makers" of the crime. Is it not a criminal act to use snipers and machine guns to slaughter political prisoners trying to escape fire torched by their tormentors? How in the world is it justifiable to beat up spouses, mothers and other relatives in broad daylight when they demand the whereabouts of their beloved ones? In what country save those where there is civil or other war are relatives denied the right to know whether their son, daughter, husband, brother, sister or other is dead, alive, maimed? If nothing else, the blood of those killed by this cruel state-sponsored machine financed by the government of the United States, the UK and other nations-- under the pretext of fighting terrorism-- should motivate each and every Ethiopian to support this grassroots people anchored and led movement. A security and military machine that terrorizes its own people can no longer claim an ounce of moral high ground in the fight against terrorism. America's stake in the stability of Ethiopia and the rest of the Horn of Africa is in great jeopardy. It is time for President Obama and the post-November 2016 President to change policy!

I write this article after learning from reliable sources in Gondar, Debre Tabor, Bahir Dar and Addis Ababa that, as predicted, the TPLF has launched a systematic house-to-house arrest and "cleansing" Amhara activists, targeting youth. In order to ensure that its "silence" killings, maiming, arrests, disappearances and other crimes are carried out of public sight, it cut

telecommunication and electric services in the city of Gondar. Not only is Gondar sealed off; it is also made dark. Imagine being cocooned in your home waiting for the Agazi to come, knock on your door and take you or your son or your daughter to places unknown! This method of systemic “ethnic cleansing” will be scaled up and cover the rest of the Amhara region in a phased manner. Don’t be shocked if the TPLF singles out the entire Amhara population for “ethnic cleansing” so that it no longer poses danger to TPLF rule. Is there any evidence for this assertion? Yes.

The TPLF Chief of Staff made a visit to Gondar, met with notables and tried to persuade them to abandon their demand. They refused and told him that he can go ahead and do what the TPLF has been doing. Gondar and the rest of the Amhara region have been singled out and set for assault and ethnic genocide by TPLF leaders including Debretsion, Abay, Sebhat and Chief of Staff Yunus. The Prime Minister granted them to move troops, federal police, tanks, artillery and other lethal weapons as if the TPLF-led Agazi and other forces were going to fight a foreign invader. I know for sure neither Egypt nor Eritrea has invaded Ethiopian territory!

I would like for the reader to think and reflect the implication of this “war like posture” against Amhara youth who are protesting peacefully against an oppressive system. The forces moved are disproportionate to the peaceful demand of the population. What then is the intent? It is not only to crush but also to ethnically cleanse. In Oromia, the TPLF deployed its Agazi and federal forces and occupied the region with military force. It did the same thing in Gondar and the rest of the Amhara region but went beyond. The TPLF began to hunt people. This is an ominous sign.

Today, a reliable source in Addis Ababa shared information on the diabolical and sinister nature of this narrow ethnic group that survives by dividing Ethiopians against one another. The TPLF is “negotiating secretly to meet all of the demands of the Oromo people as well as Muslims.” Don’t be surprised if political prisoners from these two groups are released over the next few days. The strategic intent is to divide the Amhara and Oromo population; and zero in singularly and systematically on the Amhara population. I do not believe that Oromo activists and youth would be persuaded by this new trickery.

In brief then, the TPLF war machine welcomes Ethiopia’s New Year by targeting the Amhara population, especially youth, to uproot the Amhara using helicopters gunships in rural areas, machine guns, other lethal weapons as well as snipers in urban areas. Reliable observers, including military officers, suggest that the TPLF commandeered Agazi is “using American weapons” to kill Ethiopians.

What you can do

1. Don’t sit and moan! Do something useful in support of those targeted (see below)
2. Wherever you are on this planet, flood the White House at 202-456-1111 and urge action and not lip service

3. Use the **hashtag# stop genocide in Ethiopia!**
4. Urge Oromo and Amhara to work together and not succumb to temptation that will be short-lived
5. Tell the world that the TPLF has declared war on its own people
6. Those in the U.S. take 10 minutes and write a letter to your Congressman/woman and Senator; urge them to support House Legislation on human rights in Ethiopia
7. Speak with one voice; don't dwell on non-strategic differences while Ethiopians in Oromia and Amhara are being killed by machine guns and snipers
8. Come out and join the September 19 demonstration in Washington
9. Urge civic and political leaders to work on some form of transition to avert bloodshed and chaos