



## *Security and Justice for Tigrayans Canada (SJTC)*

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### **Petition to Canadian Civil Society Organizations**

*Organized by the Security and Justice for Tigrayans Canada (SJTC)*

### **Help Us Put a Stop to the Mass Arbitrary Detention of Ethnic Tigrayans across Ethiopia**

Ever since the Federal Government of Ethiopia declared its genocidal war on the region of Tigray in November 2020, it has actively targeted Tigrayans across the country for ethnic profiling, arbitrarily arresting Tigrayans in Addis Ababa and other parts of Ethiopia, dismissing Tigrayans from their jobs solely based on their identity, freezing their bank accounts and shuttering their businesses. Ethnic Tigrayans serving in Ethiopian peacekeeping missions abroad have been rounded up and forced to return to Addis Ababa, while an estimated 17,000 Tigrayan military officials and members of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) have been detained since the start of the war and continue to languish in military concentration camps to this day.

While the ethnic profiling and abuses perpetrated on Tigrayans for the past eight months since the war started were already alarming, the situation has escalated multifold following the recent battlefield losses of the ENDF in Tigray. In the month since the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) took control of Mekelle, the capital city of Tigray, the Federal Government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali has visibly and openly stepped up its attacks on Tigrayans outside of Tigray.

We will recall that Prime Minister Abiy sent his troops into Tigray last November under the pretense of a "law and order" operation, with the ostensible aim of deposing the region's duly elected governing party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front. It became apparent that the Ethiopian government's aim was in fact the wholesale destruction of Tigray and Tigrayans as evidence of the horrors inflicted on the civilian population quickly piled up. Along with its allied forces from Amhara region and Eritrea, the Ethiopian government visited unimaginable horrors on the civilian Tigrayan population including indiscriminate bombings and multiple massacres, systemic rape of girls and women used as a weapon of war, burning of crops and looting of livestock, and near-total economic destruction.

Since late June, when Prime Minister Abiy lost most areas of Tigray to the TDF, he has had, per Amnesty International, arbitrarily arrested likely hundreds or maybe even thousands of ethnic Tigrayans in Addis Ababa and elsewhere, many of whose whereabouts remain unknown. These include politicians, activists, journalists as well as random civilians caught with any signifier of Tigrayan identity (music, pictures, social media, etc.). As states Deprese Muchena, Amnesty's East and Southern Africa director, "Former detainees told us that police stations are filled with people speaking Tigrinya, and that authorities had conducted sweeping mass arrests of Tigrayans." Some have been beaten and transported hundreds of kilometres to a military concentration camp called Awash Arba.

This is not only happening in Addis Ababa but in the rest of the country as well. In Humera, in Western Tigray, people who have recently fled to the refugee camps in Sudan report that the mass arrest of Tigrayans continues, with all police stations full and multiple concentration camps have been set up in the city. Even more worryingly, it is reported that part of these detained civilians have been sent to Eritrea where they are likely to face torture, even execution.

**We are concerned that these actions will only continue to worsen as the ENDF continues to suffer battlefield losses against the TDF. We urgently appeal to all persons and organizations of conscience in Canada to help us put a stop to the dire situation untold numbers of Tigrayans currently find themselves in, and ask the Canadian civil society to join us in:**

- 1 Demanding the immediate end of arbitrary mass arrests of Tigrayans in Ethiopia**
- 2 Demanding for the release and safe return of those that have been arrested**
- 3 Requesting the Government of Canada put pressure on the Government of Ethiopia to cease its ethnic profiling and unjust imprisonment of Tigrayans**

We thank you for your support and solidarity.