



Official Correspondence GSTS-O.C-2022-373  
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars  
and Professionals (GSTS)<sup>1</sup>

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### **Call for Immediate International Condemnation and Response to Ethiopian Airstrikes against a Playground and Civilian Residences in Tigray**

The Global Society of Scholars and Professionals (GSTS) strenuously condemns the airstrikes conducted by the Ethiopian Federal Government on civilians in Mekelle, the capital of Tigray, including a playground and hence targeting children, on the 26 of August 2022. We are deeply devastated by this barbaric carnage that has murdered many innocent children and adults, leaving dozens heavily injured. GSTS strongly decries this scandalous crime and calls for an immediate and unequivocal condemnation and response to this unconscionable and criminal act from all members of the international community.

We at GSTS are dismayed by the lack of attention from the international community to the grave situation in Tigray. The failure to establish a genuine peace process with credible instruments and stakeholders has cost lives and livelihoods. For over fourteen months, Tigrayans have been waiting for a meaningful response from the international community, while they continue to perish due to the medieval siege and chokehold imposed by the regime.

The lack of progress and commitment by the international community has emboldened Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to launch a second round of the brutal war he has waged on our people. For those who have followed the inattention and inability of the international community, the resumption of the war was a matter of when, and not if. Predictably, we are witnessing the regime in Addis Ababa restart the bombardment of civilians and civilian infrastructure, at a time when millions in Tigray expected the removal of the siege.

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<sup>1</sup>GSTS is a 501(C) and 33/2011 legally registered non-partisan and autonomous Global Knowledge Network of over 5,000 Tigray Scholars and Professionals aimed at creating Knowledge-based economy and society in Tigray, and beyond. It stands for academia, multidisciplinary and cross sectoral research and applied policy development, human capital development, fostering and advancing science, technology, and innovation, technology and knowledge transfer, youth and gender development, migration and displacement, and other educational and development related endeavours. It also works in educational advocacy and collaborates with various stakeholders towards promoting peace, good governance, human rights, and humanitarian activities.

In the build-up to the airstrikes today, the international community failed to pay heed to several red flags, including the completely false claims by the Ethiopian government and air force of having intercepted and shot down a foreign enemy aircraft transporting weaponry to Tigray. This malicious narrative was no doubt intended to create a pretext for indiscriminate airstrikes such as we have seen today.

Moreover, the legitimate appropriation by Tigrayan authorities, of fuel that had previously been loaned World Food Programme (WFP) was wilfully misconstrued by the Ethiopian regime and its allies to orchestrate outrage by international leaders who did not wait to take into account evidence from the ground. This served as tacit approval to justify brutal airstrikes targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The impunity of the Ethiopian government is such that it issued a warning to civilians in Tigray on social media hours after its airstrike. This statement revealing the regime's intention to conduct more indiscriminate airstrikes is rendered an absolute mockery when we note that the people of Tigray have been under a total communication blackout since the onset of this genocidal war on Tigray.

At various junctures during the genocidal war on Tigray, GSTS has lodged appeals to the international community to live up to the principles on which the international order is founded. We have been repeatedly disappointed to discover that these principles do not hold equally for all human beings regardless of their origin, race, and geographic location. Silence regarding the horrible reality imposed on Tigray has allowed the Ethiopian government to continue committing genocide on the innocent civilian population of Tigray. This is tantamount to complicity. Today we are forced to ask bluntly, how the international community would have reacted had Russian planes bombed a Ukrainian kindergarten. Tigrayan children deserve the same consideration and protection.

Tigrayan scholars and professionals, across the globe, demand that the United Nations, European Union, African Union, and members of the international community, including the US, UK, and others, urgently address this barbaric escalation by the Ethiopian regime and ensure that measurable steps are taken to prevent the planned indiscriminate aerial strikes that it has publicly announced today.

GSTS also urges the international community, mainly UN agencies and the AU, to rectify their previous mistakes and place robust instruments and appropriate pressure to realise a peace process to the ongoing genocidal war and catastrophic humanitarian crisis, in Tigray.

