



Humanitarian Situation Update on Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) Genocidal War waged on the Amhara People: August 3rd, 2021

Background on the War in Northern Ethiopia

Following the three years escalation of tension between Ethiopia's federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the later started a war attacking the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) Northern Command and neighboring Amhara Region on November 3, 2021. In the following days, weeks and months, a coalition of forces including the ENDF, Amhara Special Forces, and Eritrean Defense Forces launched a counteroffensive against TPLF from various fronts and controlled most parts of Tigray until the Ethiopian government announced a unilateral ceasefire on June 28, 2021, to comply with incessant demands from the international community and ameliorate the worsening humanitarian situation in Tigray. The federal government's unilateral decision was accompanied by a full withdrawal of federal troops from the regional capital of Mekelle as well as other parts of the Tigray region. With TPLF rejecting the ceasefire and mounting offensive attacks, the federal government's decision to withdraw from Tigray effectively made the neighboring Amhara and

Afar Regions the new war fronts.

Amidst confusion on whether federal troops are fighting or observing the ceasefire declared, the Amhara Region has dubbed TPLF's attack as a threat to the survival of the Amhara people and is responding with mobilization of additional fighters. As of August 2nd, 2021, TPLF is in control of Raya Kobo, Angot, and Gidan Woredas in Semien (North) Wollo Zone of Amhara Region. It is also mounting offensives in three directions to control Woldia; from Dilb in the west, Gobyie in North and from Hara. In Telemt Front, TPLF has controlled Addi Arkay and Zarima towns while fighting is going on around Chew Ber (small village but strategic location). The fighting in this front is also expanding to Waldiba monastery. Though a strategic route to connect Tigray to Sudan, the Wolkait-Tegede front has not seen major fighting yet. Many believe that TPLF's advancement in Telemt and Raya front is intended to pressure the reportedly large contingent of ENDF, and Amhara Forces stationed on the Wolkait-Tegede front to move to other fronts. It is also becoming clear that areas which fall under TPLF occupation have seen extensive atrocities and human rights violations committed by TPLF forces on civilian populations. This report documents atrocities TPLF committed in areas within Amhara Region including extrajudicial killings, rape, looting and destruction of private and public property.

Methodology and Administrative Area Conventions

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) gathers primary data on the humanitarian situation on war fronts via staff on the ground in Ethiopia. The information contained in this report is verified via interviews with survivors of the conflict, internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps displaced as a result of the conflict, victims' relatives or neighbors, medical professionals and in some cases with government officials. However, our endeavor of data collection and verification is significantly hampered by shutdown of telecommunication in areas recently controlled by TPLF forces. As a result, AAA has not included multiple reported cases of extrajudicial killings, rape and other atrocities that requires further

verification. AAA is gathering evidence for more extra-judicial killings of undetermined causalities targeting Amhara youth by TPLF militias reported in villages of Degago, Addis Amba and Ambule in Raya Front. Readers are therefore advised to be aware that this report is a living document and will be updated as investigations are ongoing.

Throughout this report references will be made to various regions and subregions in Ethiopia along with the local administrative subunit system. The country is divided into regions loosely based on ethnicity (with many disputed boundary demarcations) at the top level and each region is generally divided into zones, which are further divided into woredas (districts) and those are divided into kebeles (precincts/wards) at the smallest level. In addition, some woredas are named after their major town/city (e.g. “Raya Kobo” and “Addi Arkay”). Prior to this system, administrative boundaries followed the taklai ghizat or provincial (kifle hager) system where the nation was divided into awrajjas (counties/sub-provinces), and then on to woredas. Some zones utilize Amharic terms for polar directions including “semien” or north, “debub” or south, “mirab” for west and “misraq” for east. Lastly, some regional namings may have multiple spellings when translated from the Amharic alphabet to the Roman/Latin alphabet.

Extrajudicial Killings/Civilian Causalities

- AAA’s latest investigation reveals that **since the Ethiopian government declared a unilateral ceasefire on June 28, 2021, TPLF has killed at least 37 Amhara civilians.** Of which: at least six were killed in deliberate, targeted attacks in Kobo town; about 12 were killed in Ayub Kebele (also known as Kebele 3) of Raya Kobo Woreda where TPLF fired heavy artillery; at least 14 were killed in Aradom Kebele (also known as Kebele 8) of Raya Kobo Woreda and at least five were killed in Addi Arkay Woreda of Semien Gondar Zone.
- **Survivors and witnesses narrated stories of house-to-house killing operations that targeted Amhara civilians indiscriminately.** For instance, on July 23, 2021, around

10 am local time, a group of TPLF militias conducted houses-to-house operations of killing civilians. One survivor of a shooting said that he was in his home when “the militias saw [him] and, began shooting at him” but he survived by hiding in the neighborhood. Minutes later after the first incident, this survivor watched helplessly as TPLF militias fired and killed a woman named Ergo Desalegne and within an hour killed another woman he identified as “Gebata”. The targeted include religious people like 75-year-old Monk Kirstos, who was shot dead by TPLF militias in Kobo city, around Menehariya area allegedly for wearing colors of the Ethiopian flag. Some of the victims were killed in front of their family members. For instance, Alemu Mekuriaw was shot and killed in front of his mother when he tried to collect dead bodies left behind by the TPLF militias, on July 23, 2021, in the Boya area of Kobo town.



Figure 1: Alemu Mekuriaw, was killed on July 23rd, 2021 in front of his mother for trying to collect corpses of dead people left on the street.

- Multiple IDPs in Mersa town (located in Habru Woreda, Semien Wollo Zone, Amhara Region) witnessed the killing of 14 Amhara civilians in Aradom Kebele (also known as Kebele 8) of Raya Kobo Woreda. The victims of TPLF’s execution-style killing in Aradom Kebele included Priest Abate Lemma, who was 80-years-old. The additional civilians killed included:

Table 1

No.	Name of the decedent	Sex	Address (Kebele)	Remark
1	Nigus Teshale	M	Aradom	His additional 4 family members killed
2.	Abate Lemma	M	Aradom	
3.	Sisay Woldie	M	Aradom	
4.	Fentaw Worku	M	Aradom	
5.	Ayele Shumet	M	Aradom	
6.	Addisu	M	Aradom	
7.	Molla	M	Aradom	

- **TPLF militia did not even spare people who were fleeing from their homes.** Mesfin Mekonnen, a 40-year-old resident of Kobo town (located in Raya Kobo Woreda), was killed by TPLF militias while he was attempting to transport his family out of the town. On July 24, 2021, TPLF militias also killed three Amhara civilians while they were fleeing from their homes in Raya Kobo town using a bajaj (a three tired taxi). The three victims are: Moges Degu (married, and father of one child), Alemu Kassaw (38-years-old and father of four children) and Meragiaw Teka (married and father of one child). According to AAA sources, the victims were killed in a village called Addis Sefer, near to Hormat river. TPLF militias blocked the road to stop the bajaj and ordered the three men inside the bajaj to come out. The TPLF militia proceeded shoot and killed all three men. A girl, who was the fourth person in the bajaj and witnessing the killings, fell unconscious and is reportedly still in trauma.



(a) Mesfin Mekonnen, aged 40, who was killed trying to escape the town with his family



(b) Moges Degu, a married father of one child



(c) Meragiaw Teka, a married father of one child

Figure 2: Photographs of three of the men killed by TPLF militias in Kobo town, Raya Kobo Woreda as they were attempting to flee from their homes.

- **The TPLF launched heavy artillery attacks which bombarded a village called Ayub in Kebele 3, Raya Kobo Woreda, which resulted in the deaths of at least 12 people who reside in the area, and destruction of property.** Of the 12 decedents, seven of them were from the same family. An individual named Alemu Abaye was killed along with his six family members. Four members of Ayele Wolle's family were killed including his three children and his wife, Biset (father's name unknown), a guard at Ayub School, were the remaining five people killed in the attacks.
- **TPLF fighters killed at least five civilians in Addi Arkay district of Semien Gondar Zone.** According to our sources from Addi Arkay, most of the victims were killed on July 26th, 2021. At least one of the victims suffered from mental illness while a group of victims was killed during a funeral ceremony. One of the victims, Temesgen Mulatie, was an ambulance driver and TPLF took his ambulance after killing him. While the number of victims reported is higher, the verified list of deceased includes the following:

No.	Name of victim	Sex	Damage	Remarks
1	Temesgen Mulatie	M	Death	Ambulance driver
2	Nigussie (Father's name unknown)	M	Death	Suffers from mental illness
3	Kedir Kelifa	M	Death	Trader
4	Mulat (Father's name unknown)	M	Death	Trader
5	Adane Mulualem	M	Death	Trader
6	Elsa Merhaba	F	Injured	Status not confirmed



Figure 3: Negussie, one of the victims of the TPLF extrajudicial killings in Addi Arkay.

Injury

In addition to those killed, at least three civilians were injured in TPLF attacks targeting civilians in Semien Wollo Zone of the Amhara Region. On July 22, 2021, an individual named Zenebe Getachew was shot on his shoulder and his leg by TPLF militias and was gravely injured as a result. He is currently receiving medical treatment at Kobo hospital.

Further, two other Amharas were wounded in Ambule Kebele; these are Sisay Welde and Jalo Tebeje. Both were shot by TPLF militias in their homes on July 22nd and 23rd, 2021 respectively, according to relatives. AAA's follow up investigation revealed that Sisay Welde, who was blind for over 20 years, has died in a hospital while receiving medical treatment.

- **Rape:** Several IDPs in Woldia University, Mersa Campus recounted stories of how TPLF militias perpetrated sexual violence against residents in the area known as Segno Gebeya (Monday market) of Kobo town. At least four victims (who are IDPs) are identified so far but AAA has not yet gotten their consent to share names publicly and it is very likely that the number of victims is much higher.
- **Destruction of Public Infrastructure and Embezzlement.** According to an official in Angot Woreda by the name of Tesfamikael, the TPLF militias destroyed and burnt down public institutions of the woreda including a public school. According Zekaria Yimer, many residents of Mujja town left to Wuchale and the TPLF have looted public property and wheat stores in warehouses for aid. In addition, network shutdown in the area has made it difficult to contact residents in the area.
- TPLF has taken at least a dozen private vehicles. Many of these vehicles were stolen from residents in Kobo town.
- **TPLF militia are breaking into houses in towns under their control and taking any valuables including household items.** While food items are being kept to TPLF soldiers, several Isuzu cars are transporting valuable household items to central Tigray.
- TPLF also attacked monasteries and churches around Addi Arkay Woreda and attempted to loot properties of the residents. Sources told AAA, TPLF militias tried to take the “Tabot” (a traditional replica of the Ark of the Covenant used in religious processions in the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian faith) of Kidane Mehret Church in Addi Arkay and looted Woldiba monastery. The attack on the church has led to

confrontations between the invading TPLF forces and the local civilian population comprised of farmers.

Internal Displacement

- TPLF incursion into Amhara region has led to close to 330,000 IDPs, making the total number of IDPs in the region over 1.2 million. Close to a million people were estimated to be displaced due to insecurities as a result of an incursion TPLF attempted incursion into Amhara Region on the Raya, Telemt and Wag Hemra fronts. The majority of new IDPs hailed from Raya Kobo Woreda where government sources estimated the total number of IDPs to be in themore than 250,000. hundreds of thousands. Woldia, Mersa and Dessie town are hosting IDPs from Kobo town, Raya Kobo Woreda and Alamata town, Alamata Woreda while Deberark is the frequented destination for IDPs from Telemet front.
- According to data announced by the government, there are an estimated 150,000 IDPs in Woldia town alone. Of which, 13,647 IDPs are currently sheltered in temporary IDP sites in the town (Etege Taytu Betul and Melka Kole Primary Schools, Woldia High School and Woldia Teacher's College), while the remaining significant majority of IDPs are seeking shelter within unfinished buildings and on the street without adequate shelter.
- Rough estimates indicate at least 15,000 IDPs arrived in Dessie town from Raya Kobo Woreda while Mersa town is hosting thousands of IDPs from Alamata town and the surrounding areas According to a zonal official in Semien Wollo zone, around 1,300 IDPs are currently sheltered in Woldia University Mersa Campus, while a significant number of IDPs took shelter in the surrounding host community. The lack of proper shelter, adequate food and medicine has put these IDPs at great risk of imminent starvation and illness.

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- Around 18,000 people have also been displaced in the Abergele Woreda of Wag Hemra Zone in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia, according to information released by government officials.
 - According to an AAA source, most of the residents of Zarima town, estimated to be between 10,000 - 12,000, have left the town in fear of imminent attacks from TPLF fighters. AAA further confirmed from government officials that there are about 5,000 newly registered IDPs in Debark town, most of them from Addi Arkay and Zarima towns. The registered IDPs in Debark are predominantly women and children. Though fewer in number, there are many youth IDPs as well. Sheltering centers are not established in the town and the IDPs are in critical demand of all types of assistance. No assistance has been provided to them yet after their arrival in Debark town located in the Semien Gondar Zone of Amhara Region. There are also IDPs who are living in the streets. Since Debark town is rather cold, IDPs are suffering a lot without shelter, food and clothes.
 - Even before the new wave of internal displaced people, there were 145,520 registered IDPs in North and Central Gondar Zones since the beginning of the war (November 2020). Most of the IDPs who arrived to the Wolkait and Tegede area are Amharas originally from the Telemt district.

No	Woreda/IDP sites	No. of IDPs	Remark
1	May Temri	24,920	
2	Dima	17,985	
3	Adi Harkay	4,692	
4	Telemt	3,250	
5	Beyeda	3,315	
6	Jan Amora	2,150	
7	Debark Woreda	4,320	

8	Debark Town	3,500
9	Dabat	4,500
10	Dansha	8,221
11	Wolkait, Addi Remets	3,420
12	Beaker	4,000
13	Humera	31,473
14	Mai-Kadra	16,925
15	Abdirafi/Midre Genet	792
16	Gondar	4,073
17	Ketema Nigus	7,634
18	Woleba	350
	Grand Total	145,520

- While the Amhara region has said it has been providing humanitarian assistance to 800,000 IDPs displaced from various places during pre-Tigray conflict, no humanitarian assistance has been provided to new IDPs thus far and they are at a risk of starvation. Most IDPs escaped without adequate food and clothing supplies fearing attacks from TPLF. One IDP who fled to Woldia from Raya Kobo Woreda with his wife, aunt and cousin stated that they *"fled with only the clothes on their backs after witnessing indiscriminate attacks by the TPLF militias."* An official from Habru Woreda administration, expressed his concern that the IDPs may face difficulty during this rainy season if immediate measures are not taken in time, stating further that *"shelter options in the town are very limited and the majority of IDPs are under substandard shelter conditions including unfinished buildings."* When asked about availability of humanitarian assistance and resources for IDPs, he said *"so far, many IDPs and the host community have endured the situation with almost no assistance from government and philanthropic organizations."* The official added *"As the number of IDPs increase so do*

their humanitarian needs, as do the needs of the host community, relevant government organs and philanthropic organizations should take steps to address the unfolding humanitarian crisis, with the priorities being shelter, clean water, food and healthcare”.

About Amhara Association of America (AAA)

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) is a non-profit civic organization located in Charlotte, North Carolina that investigates and documents human rights atrocities and repression against Amharas in Ethiopia. AAA seeks to inform U.S. policymakers, international human rights organizations, media, and all Ethiopian stakeholders to pressure Ethiopian leaders to change laws, policies, and practices in Ethiopia so perpetrators are held accountable and victims receive justice. AAA also collaborates with Amhara organizations in the U.S., supports independent Amhara organizations in Ethiopia, and provides humanitarian aid for Amharas impacted due to targeted ethnic attacks. AAA's funding comes directly from members and supporters; the organization is not affiliated with any Ethiopian or American political or governmental entities.

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