**A Shadow Report to the Committee on Civil and Political Rights on Ethiopia's Tigray war**

**December 2020**

**Preamble**

**Maat for Peace, Development & Human Rights follows with concern** **the escalating conflicts in Eastern Africa, especially the ongoing, armed conflict in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia that broke out on Nov. 4 between the federal government, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (****TPLF), which led to the killing of hundreds and the displacement of thousands.**

Maat submits this shadow report to supplement the reports it submitted months ago about the state party. In this report, Maat would like to refer to a number of cases related to civil and political violations committed following the civil war in Ethiopia, as well as to shed some light on Articles 9, 12 & 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

**Article 9: The Right to Liberty and Security of the Person**

The military clashes that erupted in Ethiopia from Nov. 4 to Dec. 7, 2020, have threatened the security and stability of thousands of civilians, whether in the capital city of Addis Ababa or in the northern Tigray region, as well as neighboring regions inhabited by other ethnicities. The Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) has launched large-scale military operations, captured entire cities in Tigray Region and displaced their people. The most prominent military operations that targeted civilians are the following:

On Nov. 9, at least 600 civilians were brutally killed and slaughtered in an ethnically-driven massacre in the town of **Mai Kadra** in Ethiopia's Tigray region, a home to two ethnic groups; Amharas and Wolkaits. Notably, the victims were innocent workers who did not participate in the conflict.

On Nov. 10, the one-week fight that took place in **Hamra town** against the **TPLF** leaders claimed the lives of dozens of civilians.

Even the Eritrean capital was not spared from the bombing; the TPLF has fired at least three rockets near the airport in Eritrea's capital city of Asmara, causing catastrophic damages and several deaths.

After a whole week of shelling the city with tanks and artillery fire, the Ethiopian National Defense Force has managed to capture the city of Mekelle, the capital of the Tigray region, which is a home for more than 5 million people.

**As to arbitrary arrests**, which threatens the security and safety of individuals, the following incidents were documented.

On November 4, the radio journalist "**Bikalo Alamro**", a reporter for the Ulu Media Center, was arbitrarily arrested and detained for two weeks, and no grounds or explanation for his suspension was given in the official note.

The Ethiopian government has also deported Crisis Group’s Ethiopia Senior Analyst, a Brussels-based political organization, for spreading misleading information about the government’s abusive practices against the Tigrayans.

In addition, a mattress company owner in Addis Ababa was arrested on Nov. 19 and has not been heard from since. The authorities said that his company accounts are being investigated to see whether he is aiding the Tigray People’s Liberation Front.

On November 23, 700 people were arrested for allegedly inciting demonstrations in Addis Ababa, fueling and perpetuating disorders. During the military operations in November, Addis Ababa police arrested 162 people in possession of firearms and ammunition, on suspicion of supporting the Tigrayan forces.

**With regard to coercive and racist measures adopted to undermine the powers of the Tigrayi leaders,** Abiy’s government has persecuted Tigrayans and purged them from positions. After the Tigray regional elections has been declared unconstitutional and under the pretext of preserving state sovereignty and protecting it against rebels, **Debretsion Gebremichael**, Tigray Regional President, was deposed and the immunity of 17 prominent officials was revoked. Abiy Ahmed continued his racist policies in the capital, Addis Ababa, where he dismissed the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the commander of the federal army, and the head of intelligence, replacing them with members of his loyalists. In addition, Ethiopia’s parliament has stripped 39 members of immunity from prosecution. Abiy’s racist policies did not stop at this point; it has crossed the borders, as the African Union (AU) had dismissed its security head, an Ethiopian national, after Abiy’s government accused him of disloyalty, which highlights and perpetuates the policy of racial marginalization against the Tigranian leaders.

**Article 12: Liberty of Movement**

The recent Ethiopian crisis has undermined the individual’s right to liberty of movement inside and outside the country. At the domestic level, the pro-government defense forces have besieged the city of Mekelle, the capital of the Tigray region, and its neighboring cities such as Adigrat, and prevented the entry of journalists and aid workers.

However, at the foreign level, since November 5, the Ethiopian airspace over Tigray has been closed. Moreover, the civil aviation authorities have started asking Ethiopian passengers leaving the country to show not just their passports, but also their identity cards, which state their ethnic affiliation, leading to a rising number of complaints from people who have been stopped from traveling over groundless charges. Even the C.E.O. of the national carrier, Ethiopian Airlines, **Tewolde GebreMariam**, was prevented from boarding a flight to Paris on Nov. 8 because of his strong links to senior members of the T.P.L.F.

**Article 19: The right to Freedom & Expression**

On Nov. 3, Ethiopia has again cut off the entire country's internet to prevent people from spreading news about the fighting operations in the north and the number of victims. Earlier this year, Ethiopia has shut off Internet access amid an outbreak of violence, following the assassination of the popular musician and activist Hachalu Hundessa.

In this regard, the government has adopted coercive measures against all Tigray-owned companies such as the major telecom company, **ETHO TELECOM**. The company's branch in the capital was stormed and the Internet was shut down to prevent the publication of any media reports on the situation in Tigray, and two Tigrayan officials were arrested.

**Recommendations**

**Maat for Peace, Development & Human Rights is deeply concerned about the escalation of the crisis in Ethiopia, and would like to make the following recommendations to stakeholders:**

1. Maat recommends that the concerned parties in Ethiopia to contain the crisis and use all means possible to promote dialogue and mutual understanding between the federal government and the Tigray Liberation Front.
2. Maat calls for conducting prompt and fair investigations, redressing victims and compensating families.
3. Maat calls on all parties of the international community and humanitarian NAGOs to deliver humanitarian aid and assistance to refugees in Sudan, through the rehabilitation of refugee camps so that they would accommodate more deserters, whether Ethiopians or Eritreans.
4. Maat calls on the Ethiopian authorities to respect international humanitarian law and not obstruct the arrival of relief aid to those affected by war.
5. Finally, Maat urges the United Nations and regional human rights bodies to take all necessary measures to support peace-building process in Ethiopia, to prevent future humanitarian disasters and crimes of genocide.