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Ethiopian Border Affairs Committee

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The Ethiopian Borders Affairs Committee (EBAC)

Press Statement

January 30, 2018

Massacre in Woldiya, Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Borders Affairs Committee (EBAC) condemns the heinous crimes against humanity committed by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and its mercenaries on innocent civilians, including children as young as 9 years old in the town of Woldiya in the Amhara region. Such crimes against humanity have no parallel in Ethiopia's long and distinguished history. Those murdered under the direction of the TPLF were celebrating Epiphany, one of the holiest events in the country. The nine-year-old child atop of a car was simply celebrating and watching the ceremony and had done nothing to provoke anyone.

These types of atrocities and crimes against innocent civilians were committed by Italian fascists and by Apartheid South Africa.

This latest massacre of peaceful persons, most of them young and some demonstrators who were expressing their anger and frustration with local and federal authorities in Woldiya by Ethiopian regime security forces is a tragic reminder of the need for all Ethiopians within and outside to find lasting solutions by changing the repressive and oppressive regime. Selective and targeted murders of innocent Ethiopians will continue unless and until all Ethiopians rise up and stop the murderous state and government dominated by the TPLF. It is no longer tolerable for the rest of Ethiopians not to rise up simultaneously and together whenever and wherever murders and atrocities take place.

EBAC commends the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for denouncing and condemning the latest atrocities; and calls on Western governments, especially the United States to stop enabling and supporting the TPLF dominated police state and government that has been rejected by the vast majority of the Ethiopian people. Simply put, the regime is terrorizing its own citizens with impunity.

As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights noted in its press statement, Ethiopians, especially youth, have no other recourse to express their grievances except through peaceful protest. "We are extremely concerned by the use of force by security officials against worshippers celebrating the Ethiopian Orthodox festival of Epiphany this weekend that left at least seven

people dead and a number injured. The incident, in Woldiya City in Amhara Regional State on 20 January, reportedly took place when the security forces tried to stop people from chanting anti-government songs and allegedly opened fire on them. Protesters reportedly later blocked roads and destroyed a number of properties.” Sadly, murders have continued.

There isn’t a plethora of evidence that the regime will stop murdering innocent civilians unless and until fundamental changes take place in Ethiopia. The call on the Ethiopian government “to undertake the necessary legal and policy reforms, along with guidance and training, to create the conditions for law enforcement officials to operate in line with international standards” has been articulated before. The latest massacres took place within a few days after the ruling party had publicly stated that it will initiate dramatic and fundamental changes in governance; and after releasing Professor Merera Gudina; while leaving thousands of other political prisoners in jail.

EBAC is disappointed that Ethiopia’s so-called opposition parties continue to fail airing their rejection of the TPLF murderous state and government machinery. Their lack of courage and resolve makes them a proxy to the governing party rather than strong and unified forces in defense of freedom, the rule of law, respect for human rights and a transition towards genuine democracy in Ethiopia.

EBAC is proud and commends the ordinary people, especially youth, who are sacrificing their lives in pursuit of human dignity and the establishment of genuine democracy in Ethiopia; and calls on all Ethiopians in the Diaspora to support the struggle against the police state and government dominated by the TPLF.

Finally, EBAC expresses its condolences to the families of those murdered not only in Woldiya but other locations as well.