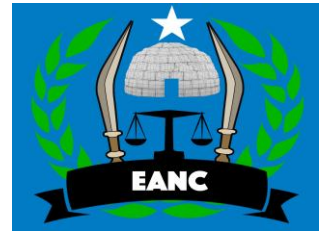


ERITREAN AFAR NATIONAL CONGRESS ERITRIYAH QAFARIH AGATHI KOBOKU

المؤتمر الوطني لعفر ارتريا

*Restoring the Self Determination of the Eritrean Afar Nation
Eretriyah Qafar Isim Isih Madqittaamih Cakki Daabisenno*



PRESS RELEASE | August 25, 2021

ERITREAN TROOPS ENTER ETHIOPIA FOR A SECOND ROUND OF CONFLICT WITH THE TIGRAY DEFENCE FORCES (TDF), THIS TIME ON THE AFAR REGIONAL FRONT IN ETHIOPIA

Assab-Eritrea: Our organization has obtained credible information about the new incursion of the Eritrean military to wage a new offensive in Afar Regional State, in Ethiopia against Tigray Defence Forces (TDF). Eritrea's contingent consists exclusively of Afar soldiers - three brigades crossed into Ethiopia on August 21 from Bada-Adamrug border into Barahle northern district of Afar regional state bordering Tigray state and additional four brigades are said to be on standby.

Eritrea has been urged in the past to withdraw its forces from Ethiopia by the United States, the European Union, and the UN. This new incursion is consistent with Eritrea's bellicose behaviour, its policy of ignoring international efforts to stabilize the region and bring an end to the conflict in Ethiopia.

Eritrea has recently exploited the volatile situation and rising tensions between the Afar and Tigrayans in order to move forward with its conflict strategy in the region. The deployment of all Afar soldiers in Ethiopia is an attempt to conceal its criminal activities from the international community and to take advantage of cultural similarities between Afar groups to avoid being exposed. In its previous engagement in Tigray Eritrean soldiers reportedly have used Ethiopian army fatigues to disguise themselves as Ethiopian soldiers.

In March, 2021 various human rights groups accused Eritrean troops of committing war crimes including ethnic killings, sexual violence, widespread looting of private properties and destruction of cultural sites, monasteries and mosques.

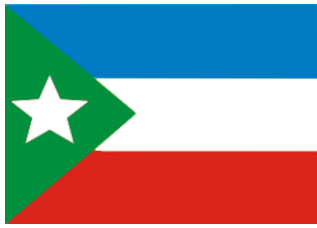
The Threat against Eritrean Afar in Ethiopia's Aysaita and Barahle Refugee Camps

Several UN agencies and aid groups have reported that since the fighting began, Eritrean refugees inside Tigray have been killed, abducted, or forcibly returned home to Eritrea from Shimelba, Hitsats, Mai-Ayni, and Adi Harush.

The Afar regional state in Ethiopia is home to over 100,000 Eritrean Afar who have fled Eritrea as a result of ethnic persecution in the country. Eritrean soldiers entering the Afar region poses a grave threat to the lives of Tens of thousands of Afar Eritreans, including over 55,000 UN registered Eritrean Afar refugees who are currently hosted in the middle of a war zone in the Afar region. As Eritrean security agents were reported to be present in the vicinity of the refugee camps in Aysaita and Barahle, there is heightened fear among the Eritrean refugee population.

It should be abundantly clear to the world, that Eritrean government is a foremost enemy of the Afar people. It is not there to protect the Afar people, and its arrival in Ethiopia's Afar region will lead to more atrocities against refugees and vulnerable populations.

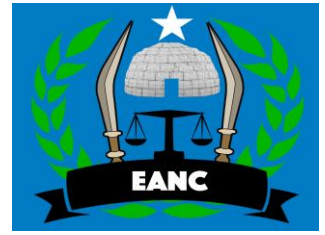
Eritrean Afar National Congress (EANC) is an exiled Afar political organization dedicated to self-determination and self-rule of Eritrean Afar people in their coastal homeland of Dankalia, Eritrea, where the indigenous Afar are subjected to marginalization, persecution and ethnic cleansing at the hands of the current Eritrean government. EANC is the voice of the Eritrean Afar people. EANC draws its mandate from the political and traditional Afar leaders, the leadership of Afar women and youth groups, the Eritrean Afar Diaspora and Eritrean-Afar refugees.



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The atrocities of ethnic persecution and crimes against humanity against Afar in Eritrea

Since Eritrea's independence, the Afar population has been specifically targeted by the Eritrean government through systematic policies and violence. These atrocities include, mass murder, mass graves, torture, sexual violence, disappearances and destruction of the Afar identity and economy, and other forms of violence in line with the atrocities for which Eritrea has been accused of in Tigray. The UN's Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea (COI) confirmed in June of 2016 that Eritrean officials have committed ethnic persecution, a crime against humanity, since 1991 against Eritrean Afar and the persecution remains ongoing.

Our organization have reported last month, there has been significant increase of crackdown on the Afar civilians inside Eritrea in relation to war in Ethiopia. The Eritrean regime has been detaining young Afar Eritreans over the age of fifteen from all over the Dankalia region for its military conscription, conducting house to house searches and roundups which are known as Giffa in the areas of Afar territories in Eritrea near Bori, Galalu, Engal, Alluli, Bara-Asoli, Assab, Harsile, Rahayto regions. In recent months, there has been evidence that Eritrea's regime has used these young conscripts for its war operations in Tigray.

In conclusion, Eritrean state and its officials are unquestionably a threat to the security of its own citizens and its actions in the region are posing a grave threat to the regional peace and stability, provoking conflict between the region's 120 million people of varied ethnicities.

Our organization (EANC), therefore call on all the stakeholders for regional peace and democratic governance as well as socioeconomic collaboration, to work together to remove the cancerous tyrannical Eritrean regime from further undermining the Horn of Africa's peace.

- WE condemn Eritrea's persecution of Afar and the deployments of its troops into Ethiopia's Afar regional state
- We call on the UNHCR to resettle the Eritrean Afar refugees out of Ethiopia into a third country
- Call for all Eritrean forces to join hands with the Eritrean Afar and mobilise its resources, including military collaborations to remove the Eritrean regime in Asmara
- Taking note of the newly imposed sanction (August 23, 2021) on Filipos Woldeyohannes, the chief of staff of the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) by the United States, we further call on the International community to extend targeted new sanctions on the Eritrean government and its remaining officials for their role in destabilizing the region.

***For further information please contact:
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