

Washington Update - by Mesfin Mekonen
February 25, 2022

1. Ethiopians demonstrated last week at the U.S. State Department
Ethiopian-Americans demonstrated last week to denounce the Abiy government's failure to maintain the rule of law and protect the lives of Ethiopians. The Abiy government has not made any attempts to hold the perpetrators of massacres of Amhara people accountable for their actions, nor has it acted against the OLF/Shenne group which has committed atrocities and destroyed property in Wollega province. In Afar region, the TPLF has committed atrocities with impunity, including killing innocent civilians and destroying hospitals, schools, mosques and churches.

The demonstrators called on Congress to enact H.R. 6600, the Ethiopia Stabilization, Peace, and Democracy Act. H.R. 6600 seeks to hold all parties that have committed crimes against humanity, including the TPFL, accountable for their actions, and to promote civil society and the rule of law. The act specifically notes that the TPLF sparked the war that is devastating Ethiopia when "in the early hours of November 4, 2020 [it] carried out an attack on the Northern Command of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces." It also describes how hundreds of "ethnic Amhara people were stabbed or hacked to death in the town of Mai-Kadra in the Tigray region" in a criminal act that witnesses attributed to the TPLF.

2. The Great Ethiopians Renaissance Dam has started producing electricity
The GERD has started to produce electricity, an event that will bring power, prosperity and hope to millions of Ethiopians. The improvement that will be made in the lives of ordinary people is difficult to imagine. Today 83% of Ethiopians lack access to electricity, 94% rely on wood for daily cooking and heating. The struggle to survive has left them mired in poverty and forced them to destroy the environment and their health. Electricity, something people all over the world take for granted, will be their path toward decent lives.

3. Amnesty International accuses Tigrayans of rape and murder.
Voice of America reported: "Amnesty International is accusing Tigrayan forces of deliberately killing dozens of unarmed civilians and gang-raping dozens of women and girls in the northern Amhara region of Ethiopia. This comes as the Ethiopian government and Tigrayan rebel forces remain at war, and just last year Amnesty similarly accused the Ethiopian government of subjecting Tigrayan women and girls to rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, sexual mutilation and other forms of torture. "These are deliberate attacks which constitute war crimes and possibly may also constitute crimes against humanity," says Amnesty's Donatella Rovera. Details

at <https://www.voanews.com/a/amnesty-accuses-tigray-forces-of-atrocities-in-ethiopia-s-amhara/6444061.html>

On February 22, the U.S. State Department issued a statement about the Amnesty report. “The United States is gravely concerned by the reports of atrocities, including sexual violence, committed by fighters affiliated with the Tigray People’s Liberation Front in the Amhara region of Ethiopia in late August and early September 2021, as described in a recent Amnesty International report. We call on all armed actors to renounce and end all human rights abuses and violence against civilians. It remains our firm position that there must be credible investigations into and accountability for atrocities as part of any lasting solution to the crisis.

“Continued reports of atrocities underscore the urgency of ending the ongoing military conflict. We continue to engage parties to the conflict to urge a halt to the violence, an end to atrocities, the unhindered provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance, and a peaceful resolution to the conflict.”