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THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE OF TIGRAY  
ፕሬዝዳንት ዕድሜት ቤት  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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Statement on the Unfolding Famine in Tigray

A dark cloud of starvation and death is hovering over Tigray. Tigray is on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe the likes of which have not been seen since the infamous 1984-85 famine that claimed the lives of millions of people across Ethiopia. Currently, the legacies of the destructive war in Tigray and drought-induced famine have created a deadly combination. The looming danger of large-scale starvation and death is not geographically isolated; over 91 percent of the population has been exposed to the risk of starvation and death.

Under the best of circumstances, the legacies of the destructive war in Tigray would have complicated the war-to-peace transition. The decimation of Tigray's economic base, the destruction of health facilities, the plundering of private and public wealth, and the forcible displacement of over a million people have impoverished millions of Tigrayans, rendering them unable to fend for themselves. But to make matters even worse, the shortage of seasonal rainfall in three zones, and untimely and damaging rainfall mixed with hail in two zones along with desert locust infestation have combined to create a nightmarish humanitarian tragedy. Furthermore, the temporary suspension of humanitarian aid has also played a significant role in this deteriorating crisis. Although aid has since been restored on a limited basis, the amount of aid reaching the needy is a fraction of what is necessary to meet current requirements.

The predictable and predicted consequences have been widespread starvation and death. Indeed, since the signing of the Pretoria Agreement, thousands of Tigrayans have perished due to lack of food. While this looming catastrophe has only commanded a fraction of the attention it deserves, harrowing evidence of the most vulnerable segments of society—children, the elderly, and pregnant and nursing women—succumbing to hunger and death abound. Indeed, at the moment, millions of Tigrayans are simply awaiting their gut-wrenching fate: death.

Absent a concerted effort to address this tragedy, the consequences will be deadly, with far-reaching ramifications for national and regional peace and stability. For its part, the Tigray Interim Administration (IRA) has undertaken a number of steps to address the humanitarian situation. It has declared a disaster emergency in parts of Tigray under its control. However, the unfolding danger is beyond the IRA's capacity to handle. Since the IRA operates with extremely limited resources, it cannot address this crisis through the expenditure of large sums of money. So far, it has redirected over 50 million birr—a meager amount given the gravity of the unfolding crisis—that had already been allocated for some other purpose to address the current crisis. The IRA has also established a taskforce consisting of various stakeholders to mobilize resources from concerned citizens. While there have been hopeful signs in this regard, the amount raised thus far is too small to make a dent in Tigray's looming catastrophe.



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The IRA, therefore, calls upon the Ethiopian federal government and the international community to fulfil their legal and moral responsibilities by intervening promptly to address the looming danger of starvation and death. Hunger is a silent but deadly killer. The Ethiopian government and the international community have done their part to silence the guns. Now, they should do their part to address the looming humanitarian catastrophe. We further call upon the federal government and the international community to move with speed and a sense of urgency to arrest this unfolding humanitarian emergency, which is killing Tigrayans without discrimination.



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