**A Response to the Smear against Eritrean Defence Forces by a member of the Interim Cabinet of Tigray.**

(By Haile Habtegaber –Nederlandse Eirtrese Gemeenschaap)

My indignation and astonishment at the false and defamatory statement against the gallant Eritrean Defence Forces by the so named Abraha Desta, a member of the Interim Cabinet of Tigray was sky high. This is not because such malicious statements from the Tigrean political elites are uncommon but because this comes from a person who is supposed to be a better alternative to the TPLF - now accessible in archival material. One would expect that the removal of the ever roguish TPLF would usher in an era of trustworthy and forward looking leadership in Tigray. But alas how he excelled his fellow TPLF elites in being disposed to lying and disinformation. What can be more reckless, irresponsible and above all a vivid manifestation of dishonesty and lack of integrity. And the problem here is that when liars are put in position of authority, it is an immense risk to bestow confidentiality and trust on them simply because liars can’t be trusted. Clearly this is one area where the prime minister of Ethiopia has to seriously draw his attention to during this transition period. Can these people be trusted? The omens are not encouraging to say the list.

Ayte Abraha asserts that ( [https://youtu.be/gnwl6jNU6-ttps://youtu.be/gnwl6jNU6-Y](https://youtu.be/gnwl6jNU6-ttps%3A//youtu.be/gnwl6jNU6-Y)) there are now 4.5 million people in Tigray in need of emergency food assistance. This means 64% of the total population (Google 2020 puts Tigray population at 7,070,260) is food aid dependent at this point in time. I suspect the purpose of this inconceivable story is to play the role of victim by moaning and indulging in self-pitying. Veracity is another victim here.

 But what is profoundly and disgracefully astounding is the allegation that most of these people have been made food aid dependent because the Eritrean Defence Forces have robbed them of their food supplies. Furthermore according to Ayte Abraha the Eritrean Defence Forces also looted all the properties of the population including household utensils such forks and spoons. To heap more malice, this man also contemptuously alleges that Eritrean Defence Forces have committed atrocities of murder and killings not to mention the deliberate and wanton destruction of properties. What a dishonest person he is.

Let us now pause for a moment and ask why this fellow is lying so much shamelessly and spouts malicious fallacies with "Lies, damned lies, and statistics".

First and foremost this man harbours hidden designs on Eritrea’s sovereignty. As an executive member of Arena - a pathetic party that dreams of acquiring access to the Eritrean Red Sea by possessing the Eritrean Port of Aseb, he is positioning himself to be one of the vanguards in this futile agenda. We are aware that Arena and other inconsequential Ethiopian parties entertain the conception of forming a political coalition and promote this contemptuous and hopeless Aseb agenda in their program manifesto.

Secondly he also is positioning himself and his party as the guarantor and the forefront promoter of the interest of Tigray by dishonestly depicting Eritrea as enemy of the people of Tigray. The purpose is to make Eritrea a scapegoat for self-created misery and become - a Tigrean hero! He thinks by pushing this corrupt immoral act, his party will outmanoeuvre the other parties and win the hearts and minds of the people of Tigray. What an evil mind set!

Thirdly, this sustained campaign of incriminating Eritrea by the Tigrean politicians and activists also indicates a design to compensate for the harm and crime that the Tigray body politic committed against Eritrea during the past 20 plus years. I say to these Tegaru, veracity and falsehood are not equivalents. But one would wonder whether this matters to you, after all.

Fourthly and even more fundamental, the man shows a serious deficit of ‘’trustiness’’. His allegation of the crimes and atrocities committed by the Eritrean Defence Forces is a deliberate disinformation. He knows his allegations are nothing but literally untrue and unsubstantiated. The false and defamatory statements against the Eritrean Defence Forces do not define the traits and character of the Eritrean armed forces. If anything, the Eritrean Defence Forces can be praised for their ironclad discipline, stoicism, bravery, decency and gallantry. The ‘000’s of Ethiopian soldiers taken prisoners by the Eritrean fighters during the liberation struggle can confirm and bear witness how they were treated and cared for years until they were set free on their own free will. .

Here is now the challenge and the logical action that Ayte Abraha Desta MUST undertake to help the victims of his allegation. To reach to the bottom of the issue, the accuser Ayte Abraha Desta, MUST produce the incriminating evidence for his allegations. He must provide concrete evidence which can be subjected to investigation by an independent body:

* Where the alleged acts took place-the exact locations
* When the actions happened – specific dates and details
* Amount of food supplies looted and number of households directly affected
* Details of all properties looted including forks and spoons which the victims used to eat their spaghetti and other delicacies!
* Number of rape victims, murdered people including burial places, documentary material.

 The nature of the crimes he asserts should merit verification by an independent investigator to produce credible material evidence permissible in court of law if he has the spine to pursue the matter legally. He cannot get away with having made such baseless, slanderous and malicious accusations. **As Head** of the Tigray Regional State Interim Administration Bureau of Social Affairs, it is incumbent upon him that the truth and actual truth in respect of what he alleged should come to light. Short of that, I say put up or shut up!

Furthermore, I want to make some general observation as to why people the likes Ayte Abraha an academician as that, are disposed to deliberately lie? Why do people who call themselves Drs, (Phd) professors or lecturers wilfully buy into fake news and disinformation? What has happed to the feeling of shame and embarrassment of these people? After all such people are highly educated and literate. But how come that approval of falsehood permeates their characters? Unhappily this has become a big problem of our digital age.

 Sadly also a number of Eritreans in the diaspora most of whom who could be categorized as in the above, seem to be afflicted with this disease. Take for instance the names of the individuals in the link below who signed an open letter to international<https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=469739720858524&id=100034675000364&sfnsn=scwspwa> organs in respect of the allegations of Eritrean Defence Forces involvement in the conflict in Tigray. They include individuals with diverse and high level professional background. What is also very remarkable here is the fact that some of them were liberation fighters. Evidently they know more than anybody else about the personality and behaviour as well as the training regimen and discipline members of the Eritrean Defence Forces have to undergo.

 Decency and civility are the words that would resonate with the Eritrean Defence Forces never mind their bravery and military exploits. However driven and blinded as they are by their agenda of regime change, this group of Eritrean elites are prepared to undermine the national interest of Eritrea by incriminating and demonizing our armed forces with no evidence what so ever. This is an unforgivable act of betrayal of national interest and cause. It is telling that those who should have been more sceptical are even more tenacious of the deliberate malicious allegations. I reason that these people are not duped. They are doing this calculatingly for political end and much less for their concern of human rights violations. Clearly people who determinedly lie are not bothered by such kind of repugnant behaviour.

In conclusion, let me share with the reader the following remarks:

* Telling lies desensitizes ones brain and enhances immunity to lies and self-contradictory information. Eventually it becomes normal and acceptable
* Telling lies makes one immune to the feeling of guilt or shame
* Succumbing to lies also promotes dysrationalia – loss of rational thinking
* For a significant part of the elite Tegaru, lying seems to be an element of their core national value. This is not only unfortunate but extremely detrimental malpractice. It will seriously undermine the standing and reputation of the Tigrean population vis-à-vis the wider Ethiopian society. As long as the spreading of the baseless allegations continue, the negative impression the rest of Ethiopians develop will be cemented. Perceptions are not easy to dust off.

I want to close by stating that the slanderous allegation of Abraha Desta and other Tegaru politicians resonates neither with the general and collective Eritrean population’s nature nor with the highly disciplined and civilized Eritrean Defence Forces values and operational manners. But unfortunately our revered forces have become victims of the cruel and reprehensible narration of crime by digital Tigray and its hypocritical western journalists to cover the humiliating defeat and crisis. We have witnessed war is not a traditional game of Tigray as we were told. War is destructive, human driven, hellish enterprise and at the end of it delivering a humbling humiliation to the losing party. The interest and wellbeing of Tigray is best served when Tegaru do deep and honest self - appraisal and cease the fruitless false narration against Eritrea. Tegaru should foster their language and culture, history and align their unique identity with rest of Ethiopia sharing a common destiny. Blaming innocent and peace loving Eritrea will neither promote Tigray’s cause nor will be this be consequential to Eritrea. Confident Eritrea looks forward without forgetting the harm and crime committed against here. Working for mutually beneficial cooperative relationship between the two countries will foster development and peaceful co-existence in the Horn region.

 I reckon that with time, the truth will come out and exonerate our armed forces. As the writer Jonathan Swift in his essays on the rapid spread of political lies observes ’’ Falsehood flies and the truth comes after limping’’. What a fitting observation!

Long Live Eritrea Libre and Eternal Glory to Our Martyrs.

<https://youtu.be/gnwl6jNU6-Y> https://youtu.be/gnwl6jNU6