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የጠቅላይ ሚኒስትር ጽሕፈት ቤት  
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

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Addis Ababa

## Press Briefing Transcript of August 12, 2021

Key Issues of the week include:

### 1. Afar Civilian Attacks

- Reports have come in that a few days ago TPLF have attacked civilians in Galikoma at a health clinic and school being used to shelter internally displaced persons.
- Stockpile of food reserved for humanitarian assistance has also been destroyed
- Relatedly, the Afar region have declared three days of mourning that began yesterday in memory of the victims of the attack
- It is to be recalled that following the enactment of the unilateral ceasefire, the terrorist group have been sending in human waves into the Afar and Amhara regions, attacking, killing, raping civilians, looting and pillaging communities and displacing more than 300,000 people.

### 2. Latest on Humanitarian Activities in Northern part of the country

- As of yesterday August 11, 2021 - 277 trucks of humanitarian assistance have entered the Tigray Region. There are more than ten different international humanitarian organizations and UN agencies that are active in assistance efforts covering 79 woredas while the Federal Government continues to provide aid in 14 woredas in the western part through the Disaster Risk Management Commission.
- Displaced communities due to the TPLF's aggressions and belligerence in the Afar and Amhara regions also need humanitarian assistance, although they are not getting enough attention by the broader international community.
- Nevertheless, the Government is providing support of food and non-food items already with an agreement in the pipeline for WFP to support existing and additions IDPs.

### 3. Context to the Statement Issued

- As the terrorist TPLF's aggressions continue unabated, the Federal Government and the people of Ethiopia are being forced to employ all means to defend their communities.
- The August 10th statement that was issued in a national call to all Ethiopians in the country and abroad, pertains to saving a nation from the overt declaration by TPLF to disintegrate the country.
- The National Defence Forces, the Special Forces and Regional Militias have been instructed to halt the destruction by TPLF.
- A call has been made to eligible Ethiopians to join the defence forces, while others are being called upon to organize at every level and protect their cities, towns, communities, villages,

neighbourhoods. This call is also to members of the large Diaspora community that Ethiopia has globally, to do their part in continuing the expose the terrorist organization for what it is and to mobilize all forms of support in maintaining the sovereignty and continuity of Ethiopia.

- Despite the continued international media mischaracterization of the statement alluding that this call is against the Tigray region, I would like to reiterate that such divisive narrative formations in such a sensitive period point more to irresponsibility of other actors than it does of the intention and spirit of the call that was made.
- I wish to end by pointing to the last line in the statement that was issued and emphasize again: *“The battle is not with Tigray, but with the terrorist forces that have found hiding in Tigray. Hence, we are battling to liberate the people of Tigray, that are being used as an instrument by TPLF, and the whole of Ethiopia from the terrorist group; to maintain the peace and unity of our country. Our struggle is against the forces near and far, which are behind the terrorist TPLF to dismantle our country and destroy Ethiopia's existence. Therefore, all patriots should stand with all their hearts to protect their sovereignty today, as in the past, with determination to defend the dignity and glory of their country.”*

#### 4. SHENE (OLA) + TPLF ALLIANCE

- This alliance is not new nor surprising to the Government
- While the timing of the public declaration needs examining, the Government has been indicating for well over two years now that the TPLF have been using Shene as errand runners for their destructive mission
- If you recall three months ago, in accordance with Articles 18 and 19 of Proclamation No. 1176/2020 on the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism Crimes, both organizations were designated terrorist organizations.
- In yesterday’s public declaration of this unusual marriage both organizations publicly acknowledged they are leading destructive activities against the stability of the nation and that terrorism is a general feature of both.
- The government has been saying it for a while now but international media seems to only believe it rather when terrorist organizations tell them. So now they have told the entire world.
- Important to point out in this regard is no entity can claim to be for the people of Oromia while it kills the people of the region for its political gains and no entity can claim to be for the people of Tigray while it kills its own people and holds them hostage for its political gains.
- Let us not forget that TPLF tortured, killed, displaced and disappeared many Oromo youth accusing them of being part of the Oromo Liberation Front before Shene splintered.
- Particularly with Shene’s (OLA) declaration, we have no doubt that mature voices and early founders of the Oromo Liberation Front will denounce this destructive alliance.

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