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**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

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Addis Ababa

## Press Briefing Transcript of August 20, 2021

### Key Highlights of the week include:

#### 1. Official State Visit to the Republic of Turkey

- This was held on Wednesday August 18th 2021 in a warm reception by the Turkish Government
- The official state visit to Turkey occurred as both countries mark 125 years of diplomatic relations making it a historically significant trip
- The two leaders discussed bilateral and regional issues of mutual concern
- During the bilateral meetings, both leaders expressed the will to further strengthen cooperation between Ethiopia and Turkey
- President Erdogan affirmed support to Ethiopia in the areas of health, culture, agriculture, education, industry development, science and technology, youth, sports and strengthening trade relations
- There was also an expressed commitment to triple the volume of trade between the two countries
- The official state visit to the Republic of Turkey culminated with the signing of four significant agreements:
  - o Firstly, an MOU between both countries on Cooperation in the Field of Water
  - o Second, a Military Framework Agreement
  - o Third, Military Financial Cooperation Agreement; and
  - o Lastly, an implementation protocol regarding the financial assistance
- The area of cooperation in the first agreement includes:
  - o Planning and implementation of integrated water resources management
  - o Hydro power plan and development
  - o Irrigation and drainage plan and development
  - o Water supply and sanitation plan and development
  - o Development and conservation of river basins; and
  - o Experience sharing on global engagements and strategies in integrated water resources management
  - o The implementation of this MOU will be followed up through establishment of a joint committee in the field of water

- Cooperation in the Military Framework Agreement includes capacity building, military cooperation, military medical health and services, etc.
- The official state visit to Turkey can be overall described as fruitful in further strengthening cooperation between the two countries.

## 2. Humanitarian Activity Update in the North of the Country

- As of yesterday August 19, 2021, the number of humanitarian trucks that have arrived in Mekelle has reached 318 trucks
- The more than 300,000 displaced people in the Amhara and Afar regions due to TPLF's aggressions have been receiving humanitarian assistance through the Government of Ethiopia and WFP.
- In addition, a Regional Emergency coordination centre has been established to facilitate movement of trucks along Afar routes to Tigray, and also to coordinate emergency assistance to displaced people.
- The Regional Emergency Coordination centre set up in Semera comprises federal institutions/ regional counterparts and partners WFP and UNOCHA

## 3. Continued aggressions by TPLF in the Amhara Region

- The terrorist group has continued terrorizing civilian communities in the Amhara region; looting properties, destroying hospitals, health centres and other infrastructure on its destructive path
- The terrorist TPLF group is attacking farming communities, threatening them with death if they don't indicate to them access routes; assassinating those that forcibly show them routes after they reached their destinations; abducting male and female youth
- The terrorist group has decimated the small rural farming community of Agamsa in Qobo
- In Debre Tabor, in the terrorist group's failed attempts to enter the town, they undertook indiscriminate shelling on hospitals and civilian homes, killing an entire family in their indiscriminate shelling

## 4. Terrorist threat in the Horn

- What we have witnessed in the past weeks through TPLFs explicit actions, alliances and rhetoric is that the terrorist group's aims are destruction and escalating instability;
- **This ultimate goal** and its ambitions clearly surpass the goal of securing humanitarian assistance.
- It is now sacrificing an entire generation of Tigrayan youth in its destructive and futile terror ambitions and holding our people in the Tigray region hostage for its destructive aims
- Its international propaganda arm continues to fabricate and disseminate distorted facts and undertake targeted defamation of government officials
- According to the Federal Intelligence and Security Task Force, agents of the terrorist group in Addis Ababa and other cities have been caught attempting to undertake widespread economic scams through coordinating illicit financial flows, illegal fund raising and logistical arrangement in support of these groups

- The terrorist group TPLF is not only a threat anymore to Ethiopia but to the stability of the larger Horn region.
- Resultantly, all international partners need to be wary and vigilant of the vicious alliances it is making, including with other global terror cells in the Horn region
- We call upon the international community to denounce the continued terrorism of the TPLF which it embarked upon **covertly** in the past three years and **overtly** as of November 2020 by attacking the Northern Command of the National Defence Forces

## 5. Local Response

- The local response and condemnation of the belligerence of TPLF continues to be strong across the country.
- Many throughout Ethiopia are going out in public rallies and voicing their denunciation of the terrorist group itself; its alliances and its refusal to ceasefire.
- Millions of Ethiopians are also heeding the national call and extending their support in various ways.
- The Federal Government encourages all Ethiopians throughout the country and across the world to continue mobilizing support for the country; harnessing unity; exposing the nature of the terrorist group and its operatives;

## 6. Call to Action for Diaspora

- A specific call to Ethiopians in the Diaspora is to curb illicit financial flows;
- We urge you to use formal financial channels for remittances and not fall into the trap of aiding and abetting terror organizations through informal black-market channels
- Your country needs you and it is a critical juncture to stand guard for Ethiopia

## 7. Human Rights Watch Report

- TPLF has been designated a terrorist organization per the laws of the land hence counter terrorism measures are being taken against its informants, agents and financiers.
- It is mentioned earlier that the Federal Intelligence and Security Task Force has indicated it has caught TPLF operatives undertaking various covert activities by fundraising, serving as informants and facilitating logistical support for the terrorist group.
- These operatives constitute not only Tigrayans but other ethnicities which are being apprehended by the Federal Police with ongoing investigations
- With a belligerent criminal enterprise that has waged war on the State, the responsibility of the Federal Government to thwart grave threats is a priority
- There are federal redress mechanisms in place including an independent judiciary and any excess counter terrorism measures will be given redress through established mechanisms and relevant authorities

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