

# Open Letter to Ann Fitz-Gerald and Hugh Segal

By Oromia Global Forum (OGF)

In this short letter, we argue that the article, written by Ann Fitz-Gerald and Hugh Segal [\[1\]](#), concerning Ethiopia's current security situation, is highly flawed and not based in reality.

The article, "Ethiopia launches a new democratically elected government, the West needs to make some choices: Fitz-Gerald and Segal for inside Policy", begins with an incorrect assessment of the Ethiopian election conducted on June 21, 2021. In this article, they detail the choices they assume the West should adopt.

First of all, the Ethiopian election was conducted after locking behind bars leaders of legally registered political parties, such as the Oromo Liberation Front and Oromo Federalist Congress, overwhelmingly favored to win any election anytime in Oromia. The European Union concluded there was no conducive environment for free and fair election and declined to deploy its election observers [\[2\]](#).

The ruling Prosperity Party (PP) ran uncontested, having locked up the leaders of the major non-Amhara opposition parties, looted and closed their offices, relentlessly harassed and terrorized their supporters and jailed potential contenders everywhere except in the Amhara Regional State. In Oromia, the largest state in the country at around 40% of the country's population, almost all leaders of the Oromo Liberation Front were jailed by the regime and are held behind bars. Similarly, two of the most revered and influential leaders of the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), both known advocates of non-violent struggle for human rights, were and still are jailed for obvious reasons - to exclude them from the election and any potential national dialogue. Both parties boycotted the election due to the regime's actions meant to secure the outcome it wanted. The chairman of the Oromo Liberation Front, Dawud Ibsa, was put under house arrest on May 3, 2021, a month before the election without any court order.

Based on the series of anti-democratic actions of the government leading up to the election, the United States concluded the Ethiopian election was significantly flawed [\[3\]](#). No election was held in over 41 districts of Oromia, Somali, Tigray, and Benishangul Gumuz Regional States. These regions collectively constitute more than 50% of the country's 120 million population. According to NPR news [\[3\]](#), only about 33 million (90% of those registered to vote), which is less than 45% of the country's voting-age population of 72 million, were allowed to vote. Despite the election not being conducted in more than 50% of the country, Abiy's regime declared to have won 94% of the 410 parliamentary seats out of the 436 in the country, strongly suggesting the declared result was not based on reality [\[4\]](#). Accordingly, Abiy Ahmed party's election in Ethiopia was not free, fair, or participatory. The election had not met minimum standards for free and fair elections. Thus, the authors' designation of the newly assembled Ethiopian government as democratically elected is blatantly false and incorrect. It is not based on facts or objective analysis of the antecedent

maneuvers of the regime that guaranteed the ruling party a victory way before the fake election was staged.

The authors appeared to be the judge and jury in their evaluation and perception of Ethiopia's political atmosphere. Contrary to the UN Security Council's assessment and conclusion, these intellectually dishonest authors characterized the civil war causing the loss of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives and subjected millions to starvation as "a quasi-civil war" and labelled the democratically elected Tigray government as insurgents.

In their narrative of the supposedly initial incident that triggered the war in Tigray, the authors used materials sourced from a website originating from Ethiopia [5] and authored by an Amhara fanatic by the name Siyoum Teshome who is a self-declared arch-enemy of the Tigrayans and a strong supporter of Prime Minister Abiy to support their fake eye witness account. The authors were openly biased against the TPLF while lauding Abiy Ahmed, who invited a foreign country to attack the country's citizens, as reconciliatory. What is more evident is that the authors do not understand that in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, citizens from every corner of Ethiopia sacrificed their lives. It was not just a war between the TPLF and Eritrea. By his own account at a press conference, PM Abiy Ahmed's decision to reconcile with Eritrea was not driven by his desire for peace but to deny rebel forces opposing his regime of safe-haven and secure a helping hand from Eritrea to gain the upper hand over his masters of 27 years- the TPLF.

The authors claimed Abiy's government lacked international support while it deserved and suffered from the absence of focused investigative evidence-based analysis on the ground. This conclusion is again shallow, flawed, and reflects a lack of clear understanding of the situation in Ethiopia, if not driven by a hidden political or economic agenda of the authors. Abiy Ahmed never allowed independent and international journalists or impartial international researchers to investigate all the alarming events in the country. Abiy's government has expelled 7 UN workers [6] and a New York Times journalist [7] in violation of international rules. The authors accused TPLF of using child soldiers while ignoring the plight of the hundreds of thousands of children starving to death due to the siege by the Abiy's government in the region. The cited news leads to another article [8], which leads to another link of a columnist on New York Times, without the actual article itself [9]. It is more evident that they have never mentioned a single criticism of the Abiy's government who has tortured and killed several hundreds of thousands of civilians, as reported by CNN [10]. Nor have they reported on the forced conscription of child-soldiers by the Abiy government [11]. The authors are thus anything but impartial. In fact, they are blatantly intellectually dishonest, highly biased in their assessments, perceptions and assertions.

It is unclear why the authors never covered the massacre of the Oromos by Amhara militias, Fanos (armed Amhara extremist group), and Ethiopia's federal armed forces covered by multiple international news media [12,13]. The murder of prisoners of war by the Amhara militia was also ignored in the article. What is more unclear is their use of the phrases such as "prolific and polarized digitized terrorist-inspired narratives." Self-defense is not inspired by terrorism. Requesting autonomy and self-determination does not make a political group a terrorist. The authors should read the main objectives of why the UN was established. The UN was established to develop friendly relations among nations

based on **respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples**, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace and to protect nations from attack by aggressive and powerful nations [\[14\]](#). In 2018 when he was appointed prime minister, Abiy Ahmed admitted that his government was a terrorist organization. Since then, he has erased all the initial positive gestures. He has reversed the flicker of democratic norms he waved at the beginning of his ascent to power and reintroduced state terrorism perpetrated by his predecessor but with a vengeance this time around. Thus, the UN's ongoing effort to stop the violence in Tigray should be encouraged. However, such effort should not be limited only to Tigray but also include other regions where comparable crimes are being committed by the ruling party of Abiy Ahmed, especially in Oromia, where state terrorism has always been rampant and is getting worse by the day.

To their credit, the authors correctly suggest, "Ethiopia's experience, sustained even in the aftermath of the Afghanistan debacle, is fast raising concerns in Africa regarding the West's broader interests in the continent in the future." The West should learn from the failure in Afghanistan. The West should only support nations in their pursuit of self-determination and should not try to impose their interests and puppets on the nations at the cost of the people's interest.

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