

Afar forum condemns the well-coordinated and planned attack against civilian Afars by Issa-Somalis in the Afar region of Ethiopia.

The Issa-Somalis tribe waging a coordinated and well-planned attack since December 25, 2018 in and around Qunxafaoqo, Gadamaytu, and Qadaytu, the illegal settlements killing several civilians and police forces. Reports that reaches us now also indicates that the Issa-Somalis are also attacking the federal army who come to stop the senseless bloodshed. It is report that several people lost their lives from both sides. The conflict started when the Issa-Somalis removed the Afar regional flag from school flag pole, set on fire and replaced it with the Somali regional flag in an act of defiance to instigate conflict. A week before the killing started, the Issa-Somalis conducted demonstration demanding the illegal settlement they have occupied by force to be incorporated with the Somali region. Several of the people who demonstrated came outside of the area and were inciting violence.

The Issa-Somalis aggression is not new; it has been going on for over so long one can remember. It has been cause for the loss of thousands of Afar lives and properties. Successive Ethiopian governments failed to resolve the problem that has been the cause for loss of lives. The Issa-Somalis armed by the Djibouti government and Somalia has been waging on-going war against civilian Afars who have no protection form the central, government of Ethiopia. During the last 27 years, the federal army stationed in many parts of Afar region along the Djibouti -Addis road has been bystander while massive aggression is committed against innocent civilians that had resulted in loss of many lives.

The current escalation of the Issa-Somali invasion is a continuation of the past nine-decades long terror attacks, which is planned to evict Afars from their indigenous land. The Afars have been evicted by force from places such as Mulu, Erer, Afdem, and part of the Halaydagi plain, Qunxafaoqo, Gadamaytu, and Qadaytu, where countless lives have been lost in various aggressive and coordinated military attacks.

The forcibly and unjustified occupied towns of Qunxafaoqo, Gadamaytu, and Qadaytu are solely used as distribution points of illegally imported goods. Moreover, the ambition of Issa Somalis to cultivate the Awash Valley has been articulated in different conflict resolution meeting that were hosted by Ethiopian government. The cattle raiding is also part of economic interest where the raided Afar livestock are sold both in domestic market and exported to different gulf-states through Djibouti.

There is credible sources and reports that the Somalis from as far as Somaliland, Djibouti and Somali regional state of Ethiopia are heading to join the fight. This flagrant act of aggression against Afars who did not sought to fight in any of Somali land could escalate to dangerous situation whereby it will create instability and could leader to conflict that has not been seen before

in the region. If the federal government of Ethiopia fails to intervene effectively and find a lasting solution to this Afar and Issa-Somali conflict, the region will be disabilities and could be a cause for further escalation of the conflict beyond the Afar region.

It is evident that the nature of the conflict between Afar and Issa-Somalis has changed its character. Previously, there was a presumed conception among pundit that the prolonged conflict emanates from shrinking pastoral resource. However, the current assessment clearly indicates that there is a conscious and refined politico-economic dimension to this conflict, mixed with fabricated and unsubstantiated territorial claim.

Afar Forum believes and encourages a peaceful co-existence between neighbors but strongly denounce aggression, forced displacement and killings. Hence, Afar Forum appeals to:

1. The federal government of Ethiopia to help stop this coordinated blatant aggression of Issa-Somalis immediately and protect the innocent peace loving Afars from being attacked on on-going basis with no end in sight;
2. To Djibouti Government to stop both military and financial support to the war of terror and expansion;
3. The Ethiopian government and Afar regional state officials to find viable solution to the conflict, which is a clear border demarcation between Afar and Issa;
4. The Governments of Djibouti and Ethiopia, the Sultan of Afar and Ugaas of IssaSomali to facilitate reconciliation and peace-building process. This however should be initiated directly after the completion and implementation of the border demarcation between Afar Regional State and Somali Regional States;
5. The international community to help and facilitate meaningful solution that can stop the bloodshed and further escalation of this conflict; and
6. All Somali brothers to work towards pressuring these armed groups stop the war of aggression and the territorial claim of Afar land so that to stop the senseless bloodshed and many loss of lives on both sides.



Afar Forum Executive Committee