

Joint Press Statement from Amhara Fano Leaders

International financial institutions are making a mistake of historic proportions by endorsing Amhara Genocide in Ethiopia

August 2, 2024 (Hamle 26, 2016 EC)

For the attention of International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and World Bank President Ajay Banga

We, the Amhara Fano express our great dismay and disappointment by the decision of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to approve over \$10 billion in financing to the Abiy Ahmed led Prosperity Party regime in Ethiopia. This substantial financial support comes at a time when the Abiy regime is actively committing gross violations of internationally recognized human rights having mobilized all national resources to a deadly war campaign against its own citizens. We, as Amhara Fano freedom fighters, believe in the need for economic development in cooperation with international partners for the prosperity of the Ethiopian people, however we starkly believe this vision is impossible to achieve so long as the Abiy regime remains in power. Therefore, this ill-advised and premature decision by the IMF and World Bank will not serve to support any homegrown reform agenda but will rather serve to finance the dying regime's genocidal war against the Amhara people.

Over the past 15 months, various international organizations have documented a pattern of war crimes committed by armed forces of the Abiy regime against innocent men, women, children and elderly persons in Amhara Region and surrounding areas. Over this period tens of thousands of civilians have suffered under indiscriminate artillery shelling, deadly drone attacks, deliberate attacks on regional health infrastructure, sexual and gender-based violence, ethnic profiling and arbitrary arrest, detainment in concentration camps, and torture. The financial support provided by the IMF and the World Bank to the authoritarian regime engaged in such heinous acts is not only deeply troubling but also morally indefensible.

As we stand, the billions of dollars in loans and grants provided by the IMF and the World Bank to the Abiy regime will not provide any economic benefit or relief to the Ethiopian people, as the Amhara Region has been under communications and humanitarian blockade for over a year and a half amidst a genocidal war against our people. Furthermore, Abiy and his cabinet members including Oromia Region President Shimelis Abdisa are engaged in extravagant and grandiose projects including the construction of a \$10 billion palace and a \$1 billion palace. This is an egregious and shameful misuse of national resources at a time when over 20 million Ethiopians are in dire need of food aid. The lavish spending on not one but two palaces by the regime stands in stark contrast to the widespread poverty and hunger facing the Ethiopian population, highlighting a profound disconnect between the regime's priorities and the urgent needs of everyday people. By providing financial support to a regime that is actively perpetrating atrocities and neglecting its own citizens, the IMF and World Bank would be complicit in the gross crimes and corruption of the regime.

We would like to draw attention to the historical precedent set by the IMF and the World Bank in the context of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In the years leading up to the Rwandan genocide, these international financial institutions provided significant financial support to the Rwandan government. Unfortunately, much of this funding was misappropriated by the regime to finance the military and other state apparatuses that facilitated and executed the genocide. This case serves as a stark reminder of the potential consequences of unchecked financial support to governments that engage in gross human rights violations. With this decision, the IMF and the World Bank appear to be repeating historic mistakes without regard for universal human rights, justice and accountability – this time at the expense of the Amhara people and the greater Ethiopian people.

In conclusion, the billions of dollars in loans provided by the IMF and the World Bank may prolong the life of the dying regime but it will not keep the regime in power for long nor will it help the Ethiopian economy which has been ailing from consecutive wars. We firmly believe that international financial institutions are making a mistake of historic proportions by endorsing Amhara Genocide in Ethiopia and call upon leaders of these institutions to make all possible efforts to reverse the course of their misguided decisions. And despite this, we the Amhara Fano remain committed to our fight for justice, to remove the genocidal Abiy regime from power as we remain committed to defending the rights, dignity, and freedom of our people. We will continue to stand against any and all forms of oppression and call for justice for victims of genocide and injustice.

Signatories:

Zemene Kassie Bawke, Amhara Fano in Gojjam

Baye Kenaw, Amhara Fano in Gonder

Desalegn Siyasibshewa, Amhara Fano in Shewa Command

Mihret Wedajo, Amhara Fano in Wollo

