

The Politics of Identity and Retributive Genocidal Massacre against Chena Amhara under International Humanitarian Law

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Abstract : Northern-Ethiopian conflict that broke out on 04 November 2020 between the central government and TPLF caused destruction beyond imagination in all aspects; millions of people have been killed, including civilians, mainly women, and children. Civilians have been indiscriminately attacked simply because of their ethnic or religious identity. Warring parties committed serious crimes of international concern opposite to International Humanitarian Law (IHL). A House of People Representatives (HPR) declared that the terrorist Tigrean Defense Force (TDF), encompassing all segments of its people, waged war against North Gondar through human flooding. On Aug 30, 2021, after midnight, TDF launched a surprise attack against Chena People who had been drunk and deep slept due to the annual festivity. Unlike the lowlands, however, ENDF conjoined the local people to fight TDF in these Highland areas. This research examines identity politics and the consequential genocidal massacre of Chena, including its human and physical destructions that occurred as a result of the armed conflict. As such, the study could benefit international entities by helping them develop a better understanding of what happened in Chena and trigger interest in engaging in ensuring the accountability and enforcement of IHL in the future. Preserving fresh evidence will also serve as a starting point on the road to achieving justice either nationally or internationally. To study the Chena case evaluated against IHL rules, a combination of qualitative and doctrinal research methodology has been employed. The study basically follows a unique sampling case study which has used primary data tools such as observation, interview, key-informant interview, FGD, and battle-field notes. To supplement, however, secondary sources, including books, journal articles, domestic laws, international conventions, reports, and media broadcasts, were used to give meaning to what happened on the ground in light of international law. The study proved that the war was taking place to separate Tigray from Ethiopia. While undertaking military operations to achieve this goal, mass killings, genocidal acts, and war crimes were committed over Chena and approximate sites in the Dabat district of North Gondar. Thus, hundreds of people lost their lives to the brutalities of mass killings, hundreds of people were subjected to a forcible disappearance, and tens of thousands of people were forced into displacement. Furthermore, harsh beatings, forced labor, slavery, torture, rape, and gang rape have been reported, and generally, people are subjected to pass cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment and punishment. Also, what is so unique is that animals were indiscriminately killed completely, making the environment unsafe for human survival because of pollution and bad smells and the consequent diseases such as Cholera, Flu, and Diarrhea. In addition to TDF, ENDF's shelling has caused destruction to farmers' houses & claimed lives. According to humanitarian principles, acts that can establish MACs and war crimes were perpetrated. Generally, the war in this direction has shown an absolute disrespect for international law norms.

Keywords : genocide, war crimes, Tigray Defense Force, Chena, IHL

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