Twitter Thread by Mulu Beyene

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PEOPLE ARE DYING IN #TIGRAY: #HumanitarianReliefNow
A Thread

It’s almost 2 months since #WarOnTigray was waged. Since then, much of #Tigray has been under a complete blockade of all life supporting services, including medicine, food, & access to cash. 1/17

It’s also almost a month into an agreement for ‘unimpeded’ humanitarian access to #Tigray the #AbiyAhmed regime signed with the @UN. Yet, even a needs assessment is not conducted to date. 2/17

https://t.co/9w4JswOieV

In the meantime, people are actually dying of hunger in #Tigray. These past 2 days, I had calls with some people that made it to #Mekelle from Wukro, Edagahamus, Abi-Adi & Hagereselam and environs. The stories are similar and harrowing. Words cannot express the desperation. 3/17

On top of existing poverty in #Tigray, production was particularly hit this season owing to an invasive locust & #COVID-19. Worse yet, the war came at a time when whatever is left could be collected. More than a million are internally displaced. 4/17

Even more tragic is that in many of the towns and villages I heard about, vengeful #Eritrean troops have looted private possessions, including food. Some of the stories I heard shocked me to the core. Innocent people are dying, from bullets, starvation and curable diseases. 5/17

Hunger is rife even in #Mekelle, supposedly the least affected town in #Tigray.

Sadly, a deliberately imposed media and Internet blackout meant that the int’l community could not get to see the magnitude of the plight, effectively hindering potential lifesaving actions. 6/17

True, partners are pushing for rapid assessment & action. However, acc. to reliable sources, regime forces denied z assessment mission access to #Tigray & returned it from Gonder and Weldia twice already. A third attempt is also currently

hamstrung. 7/17
https://t.co/RB9FMgg2VA

One wonders why all the resistance against relief on the face of a catastrophe. An apparent, immediate concern of the regime seems that of hiding crime spots and the extensive presence of #Eritrean soldiers in #Tigray, which extends all the way from Shire to Wukro. 8/17

It is, therefore, sadly less likely that the mission will be able to visit the environs of Shire, Axum, Adwa, Rama, Adigrat, Tembien, Enticho, Bizet, Zelambesa, and Irob, where #Eritreans are in control, terrorizing people.

That said, the issue seems even deeper. 9/17

In light of the over all conducts of the regime, I believe a more sinister plan is at play than meets the eye. The widespread murdering of civilians, pillage, burning of crops, looting of towns and villages, freezing of bank accounts, destruction, dismantling …10/17

& confiscation of factories that hire 10s of thousands, denial of humanitarian relief, hunting of #Tigrian personalities, extensive campaign of dehumanization and the authority given to #Eritrean soldiers & #Amharamilitia to do whatever they feel doing with impunity ... 11/17

and all happening behind media and communications blackout are the hallmarks of an intention to exterminate #Tigrians. After all, extermination “includes the intentional infliction of conditions of life, inter alia the deprivation of access to food and medicine, … 12/17

calculated to bring about the destruction of part of a population.’ (Rome Statute, Art. 7(2(b)) Given the widespread effect of these measures and the resource and propaganda devoted to their implementation arguably qualifies the acts as #CrimesAgainstHumanity. 13/17

#TigrayGenocide is not also a far cry. Legally, a ‘deliberate infliction on a group of conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part through such methods as ‘notably deprivation of food, medical care, … 14/17

shelter or clothing, as well as lack of hygiene, systematic expulsion from homes, …’ is genocide’ (ICJ). I truly fear that the denial of access to humanitarian relief goes beyond mere safety concerns or bureaucratic issue, and forms part of a plan to exterminate #Tigrians 15/17

The inter’l community needs to #ActNow and stop the madness. The blockage and deliberate access denial is indefensible. After all, #Ethiopia has an obligation to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need’ (CIHL, Rule 55) 16/17

@WHO @UNICEF @WFP : You need to come out and denounce this dangerous act and demand the lifting of the blockage as you did on #Yemen. We are facing a similar, if not more, severe tragedy. Every hour matters. #NeverAgain is not a mere utterance. 17/17

https://t.co/yeoFHQlOVn