

Tragedy Struck Ethiopia, Again: Collective Intelligence versus Collective Stupidity

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Background

Ethiopia is in a dangerous crossroad. Slow moving atrocities massacre and pogrom have become all too common. The overall situation is critical. The country has newly been engulfed by tragic bloodshed. The Washington Post just reported (July 8 at 5:51 AM) that at least 239 people have been killed and 3,500 arrested in more than a week of unrest in Ethiopia that poses the biggest challenge yet to its Nobel Peace Prize-winning prime minister. The 3,500 arrests have included that of a well-known Oromo activist, Jawar Mohammed, and more than 30 supporters. It is not clear what charges they might face. Local reports have said that in some places ethnic Oromo have attacked ethnic Amhara, and in Shashamane town some people were going home to home checking identity cards and targeting Amhara residents. The death toll from demonstrations and targeted attacks on non-Oromo persons living in Oromia region following the murder of a popular singer from the Oromo ethnic group is estimated in several hundreds.

A disheartened friend of mine just wrote to me:

"I'm puzzled and perplexed by what is happening at home in Ethiopia. The Oromo youth is simply pilling down the onion of Oromo civility. Pumped with empty bravado and false pretext history for decades since the days of the Derg regime, the youth has turned out to be wild, partial, ethnocentric, and without any humane empathy in them. To this youth Ethiopia is synonymous to Amhara. Even some close friends have cut connections with me because of my stand on united Ethiopia. I'm not sure how to cure and rekindle sense of unity in the minds of this furious and fiery Oromo youth."

I am dismayed! "Simmering ethnic tensions in the country of more than 100 million people have posed a major challenge to Abiy Ahmed, whose efforts to loosen the straps of iron-fisted rule and opening-up the democratic space have led to increased jockeying for power and influence"¹.

"A genocide begins with the killing of one man – not for what he has done, but because of who he is. A campaign of 'ethnic cleansing' begins with one neighbor turning on another. Poverty begins when even one child is denied his or her fundamental right to education. What begins with the failure to uphold the dignity of one life, all too often ends with a calamity for entire nations..."~ Kofi Annan.

If we understand that genocide begins with the killing of one man, we are in a position not only to understand the true nature of genocide but also to act against it. This is the difference between "information" and "knowledge" or "understanding" which Holocaust survivors talked about. You and I both know that the Holocaust involved the murder of six million individuals, or that the Rwandan genocide claimed some eight hundred thousand

¹ Death toll in Ethiopia violence over singer's killing hits 239. At least 239 killed in protests since last week over murder of popular ethnic Oromo singer Haacaaluu Hundeessaa. (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/07/death-toll-ethiopia-violence-singer-killing-hits-239-200708075014258.html>)

lives.

But to fully understand genocidal drives, we must recognize that each of the perished lives had a story, each had a soul, and each loved and was loved by others. Genocide involves the destruction of all of this. Annan's speech went on. "Scientists tell us that the world of nature is so small and interdependent that a butterfly flapping its wings in the Amazon rainforest can generate a violent storm on the other side of the earth. This principle is known as the 'Butterfly Effect.' Today, we realize, perhaps more than ever, that the world of human activity also has its own 'Butterfly Effect' – for better or for worse."²

In a previous article (Berhanu, 2019)³, I attempted to unravel the possible reasons, factors and motives of ethno-nationalists' — in particular Oromo nationalists'—agendas in Ethiopia. My argument was then focusing on few tribalism elements (wrapped up with anti-Ethiopia discourses as well as anti-Amhara propaganda) typically characterized by malicious false allegations.

Concerted effort is needed to combat this false and distorted information. My analysis shows that ignorance, sinister motives, low moral intelligence, self-aggrandizement (inferiority complex) and conscientious stupidity are the common denominators to or attributes of all these ardent ethno nationalists.

The catalysts are not genuinely concerned for their respective ethnic groups. They are primarily motivated by 'psychological and personal factors'. What is most saddening is the continuous defamation of the character and reputation of Emperor Menelik as well as belittling the globally renowned Adwa victory, which *is* the pride of black people. As the only African nation to successfully resist European conquest during the scramble for Africa, Ethiopia became a pre-eminent symbol of the pan-African movement and international opposition to colonization. The battle of Adwa not only saved Ethiopia from colonization by Rome, but also raised the status of an African country to an equal partner in the world community. The victory was achieved by the combined efforts of the gallant Oromo, Tigrean, Amhara, Gurague, Wollayita and several other ethnic groups inhabiting Ethiopia. It is a pride of everybody. Why do then, the proponents of tribalism want to delete that glorious national history unless they resorted to an utter lack of moral intelligence and human responsiveness! Yes, "Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored." — Aldous Huxley, Complete Essays 2, 1926-29.

In a recent article (Ezra (2020) wrote that Ethiopia is now run by ODP-EPRDF; and not TPLF-EPRDF. Yet, day in and day out the self-appointed Oromo elites, activists and politicians keep crying foul every time they show up on TV or any public gathering. What really is up with them?⁴ This is one reason why so many innocent lives are lost, properties are destroyed by mob destructive actions. To me this is nothing but, '*Collective Stupidity*'.

It is important to note that the current population of Ethiopia has surpassed 112,000,000. However, the political discourses appear to solely revolve around the three Ethnic groups

² <https://everything2.com/title/A+genocide+begins+with+the+killing+of+one+man>

³ <https://ecadforum.com/2019/08/08/the-root-causes-of-the-incessant-obsession-by-ethno-nationalists-and-tribalists-to-dissolve-ethiopia/amp/>

⁴ <https://www.satenaw.com/self-appointed-oromo-elites-activists-politicians-lost-mind-sure-seems/>

(Oromo, Amhara and Tigre) disregarding 50,000,000 plus Ethiopians belonging to 80 plus ethnic groups including descendants of interethnic marriages whom the Oromo extremists call as DICALLA.

Ethiopia is a *cosmopolitan* society where many different people lived in almost total harmony until now. Along the course of history, many cities like Harar and Addis Ababa have been a melting pot and today's Ethiopians resemble their ancestors in their immense tolerance of ethnical differences in spite of some derailed politicians and ethnic nationalist activists' (Jawar Mohammed, Bekele Gerba, Ezekiel Gebissa, Tsegaye Ararssa, TPLF political elites, and etc.) barrages of fake narratives and treacherous and sinister motives. Wicked and dishonorable actions and rhetoric by tribal extremist politicians and activists, with sinister motives to foment conflict among the multitudes of Ethiopian ethnic groups, are the standard of the day in Ethiopia. It started with Tigrean cadres since the mid-1960s and has been going on for several decades; and now it is intensified well-orchestrated and organized in clandestine by Oromo (ethno) tribalism demagogues.

Amidst all these trials, what gives the cohesion of the country is an esprit des corps based on a traditional culture, which in turn derives its solidity from the roots of a rich history as well as a common fate for all committed to live here. Jeff Pearce⁵, shocked by the latest tragedy wrote compellingly insightful messages to Ethiopians, with the title "Ethiopia, Save Yourselves as One People":

You came together as one people long ago — twice — to kick out the true enemy. First at Adwa, then years later in 1941.... You came together as one people when the Kagnev Battalion fought bravely in the Korean War.... You died as one people when Marxist psychopaths under the Derg went on their rampages of slaughter, rape and torture. Would you like to hear from the witnesses? Because there are those still alive who recall those dark days, who can tell you Amhara were murdered. Tigrayans were murdered. Oromo were murdered. Stop by the Red Terror Museum and look at the trays of skulls and bones and see what crop is sown from intolerance.....This atheist, your pale, white cousin, is saying to you, people of faiths — Christian, Muslim, Jewish, etc. — people of different backgrounds — Amharic, Oromo, Tigrayan, Afar, etc. — that calling for the extermination of one people just leads to another museum with trays full of bones. Or worse, a landscape of waste, with no marker at all. And I promise you the cameras will come with their hungry, unblinking eyes, and the correspondents saying, "Oh, the shame of it. What a beautiful country Ethiopia once was..."Your nation is one of the leaders of Africa. Lead Africa again now. As one people. Please.

Collective Intelligence versus Collective Stupidity

My aim with this short article is however to problematize the latest tragedy with the help of two concepts: Collective intelligence⁶ and collective stupidity. Collective intelligence is

⁵ <https://medium.com/@jeffpearce/ethiopia-save-yourselves-as-one-people-1d9956b1ca65>

⁶ Woolley, A. W.; Aggarwal, I.; Malone, T. W. (1 December 2015). "Collective Intelligence and Group Performance".

a shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration and competition of many individuals. One may inquire, how can this collective intelligence be measured? Does 'group learning' translate to 'group intelligence'? Can we use existing psychometric tests (e.g. IQ tests) to measure and predict cognitive differences in groups? What makes one group more intelligent than another? Do groups made up of highly intelligent members demonstrate higher 'collective intelligence' and outperform groups made up of low or moderate intelligence members?

I am not going to delve into those disputes. I am *loosely* interested in the concept of collective intelligence as opposed to collective stupidity in certain group motivated actions. Evidence for a Collective Intelligence Factor in the Performance of Human Groups is being accumulated⁷. We still need to systematically examine how it works and how it is measured for groups of people. I personally believe in a collective consciousness that is available to us all and can be accessed no matter what our level of "intelligence".

Our collective intelligence can be limited to our family/tribe/social group or can be expanded to include this greater wisdom that we are all connected. That some groups lack in this wisdom is, I believe collective stupidity. My observation is that the massacres or *pogroms* committed against non-Oromo persons in the Oromia region is a manifestation of collective absurdity. From where I see things, it seems that our collective stupidity is driving us to the brink of catastrophe in Ethiopia. This makes me think that we should develop our collective intelligence with urgency -- and as soon as possible.

We need ways to better reflect together, to develop positive responses to our shared circumstances, and to co-create our common future as Ethiopians. The bad news is that our adversarial, fragmentary political culture actually impedes us in these destructive efforts. The good news is that effective tools exist, which, if we use them well, could move us beyond the stupefying dynamics of our ethnic based political culture.

Under normal circumstances, collective intelligence use diversity and some conflict to generate greater understanding and mutual coexistence as opposed to violence and murder. Handled properly, diversity alerts us to new perspectives and possibilities, and conflict stimulates rapid collective learning. These are treasures to be utilized, not merely obstacles to be avoided or problems to be solved. Why did some segments of the Oromo youth miss that wisdom?

According to my observation, collective stupidity demonstrated by the abusers and their political elites— radical ethno nationalists—is a result of widespread inattention to facts, meaning slanted perception of reality. Since the mass media are often guilty of sloppy treatment of facts, mostly by not asking the right questions, collective stupidity is very much possible. It is even probable, given the reliance of many on media reporting for their "facts". A good example is the self-appointed Oromo activist, Jawaar Mohammed who via his OMN (Oromia Media Network), played a pivotal role in radicalizing not only the

Current Directions in Psychological Science. **24** (6): 420–424.

⁷ Mulgan, Geoff. "True Collective Intelligence? A Sketch of a Possible New Field." *Philosophy & Technology* 27.1 (2014): 133-142.

innocent Oromo youth but also other youth groups. The ethnic cleansing and genocide situation unfolding in Ethiopia. against the Amhara, the Gurage, Gamu, Dorze and other ethnic groups are being perpetrated by Jawar Mohammed— From his base in Minnesota, home of Oromo extremists— and his associates. He is now detained in an Ethiopian prison following the killing of prominent singer, Hachalu Hundessa.

The collective stupidity aspect was shamefully demonstrated by brutal mob killings of innocent residents in some towns and cities in Ethiopia like: Shashamane, Jimma, Zeway, Arsi Negele, Assela, etc. Likewise it was demonstrated by some mostly young Oromo residents abroad, e.g. in London, Toronto and some USA cities, following the murder of the singer. The chants and slogans by these protesters in diaspora are the most embarrassing to say the least because they demanded Death to other ethnic groups and individuals. Very primitive characterized by hate speech calling for death to groups and individuals. This is not the first time that some of these Oromo political groups and self-appointed activists have been accused of fanning or condoning hate between Ethiopian nations and nationalities⁸. In a recent political campaign, anti-ethnic Amhara speech broadcast by the Oromo Media Network (OMN) sparked anger among many Ethiopians, especially with the ethnic Amhara people.

The video that became viral in various social media platforms displayed a young lady speaking in Afan Oromo language sending messages that all ethnic Oromo people must not live with other ethnic people and engaged in any form of social contracts, especially with the Neftegnas (nickname of inhabitants of Amhara origin). “Our struggle starts with an Oromo husband who is married to Habesha (non-ethnic-Oromo) lady. An Oromo husband who is married with Habesha wife or vice versa must divorce even if they have children,” she said during a special event organized by the station itself. The young lady told the participants: “ethnic Oromo persons must not be married with non-Oromo persons. Those who already married with a man or woman belonging to other ethnic groups should come to their senses and divorce,” She went on to say, “Don’t intermingle with others and bring the dirt to the Oromo communities. The Qeerroo struggle will be on those Oromo persons who engage themselves with the Nefteгна.” “Come on, get marry us (ethnic Oromo girls). Those of you who are our beautiful girls who married Nefetegna persons get a divorce today,” she added. The lady, clearly ignorant of the weight and substance of the matter she was talking about, was cheered by the participants including by prominent political figures from Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), an organization many believed stood for a genuine change in Ethiopia until a couple of years ago.

Tribalism was an urge our forefathers assumed we could overcome. And so it has become our greatest vulnerability as we see it currently in Ethiopian politics and elsewhere.

⁸ <https://www.ezega.com/News/NewsDetails/7805/Hate-Speech-Sparks-Anger-Among-Many-Ethiopians>. March 9, 2020 (Ezega.com)

“A seed grows with no sound, but a tree falls with a huge noise. Destruction has noise but creation is quiet” — Elin Peer, Yellow.

What is going on in my dear Ethiopia? Can't someone enlighten / educate this young woman and the like of her on the pros of interethnic marriages?

Research shows that interethnic marriages teach the society of tolerance and ability to treat each woman and man who date with each other of different nations with understanding, contribute to the improvement of relations between countries and ethnic groups. Why do we hate? Hatred has to be learned, according to the experts. “We are all born with the capacity for aggression as well as compassion. Which tendencies we embrace requires mindful choice by individuals, families, communities and our culture in general. The key to overcoming hate is education: at home, in schools, and in the community.”

This wisdom appears to be disintegrated in some parts of the Oromo region among some groups of this otherwise proud and culturally rich ethnic group. The collective stupidity that we observe among some groups of this ethnic group, is very much a function of uncritical acceptance of slanted reporting that twists or omits relevant facts about Ethiopian history, making it impossible to arrive at intelligent conclusions, as we witness in the above example.

Political life too often involves little more than a struggle for power among competing interests. In this article I want to share a radically different way of looking at politics, one that considers the level of collective intelligence people can generate when they're together. People can be stupider or more intelligent together than they are individually. We see this in relationships, groups, organizations, communities and even whole societies. It shows up clearly in our public life -- from grassroots organizations and radio talk shows, to election campaigns and the activities of government.

There is a possibility to revert the collective stupidity engulfing the region into collective intelligence via empowering the good will of elder and wise members of the group. When identifying people that will drive long-term success and significance in particular in leading a nation like Ethiopia and its multitude of nationalities, the elements needed to achieve this are: A strong mind (high IQ); A strong ability to influence people on an emotional level (high EQ) A strong positive character (high CQ).

For now there seems to be an *absence* of these qualities among many of the Oromo political elites as well as TPLF leaders⁹. This is one main factor for all those atrocities, massacre and pogrom mentioned earlier. Ethno nationalists in Ethiopia lack these skills and values, and their moral scores are shockingly low. Lies and devilish thought pervades people with deficit moral intelligence. Almost all our ethno nationalists are infected with this endemic.

The phenomenon of collective responsibility and collective guilt

⁹ TPLF was the main and most powerful party within the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, the so-called ruling political coalition which consists of four political parties

The noted political scientist, Hannah Arendt, whose book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, caused heated controversy throughout the intellectual world, wrote on "*Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship*." That specific book and a number of her articles in *The New Yorker* dwell on the topic from a philosophical perspective.

Hannah Arendt referred to the post-war climate in Germany--where those personally innocent during the Nazi period all admitted to their "collective guilt" while the real criminals showed no remorse as "the quintessence of moral confusion" (Arendt, 1987). The concept of collective guilt, as opposed to individual guilt, is "senseless," Mrs. Arendt said, and only serves as an effective "whitewash" for guilty individuals to hide behind.

I raise this point because I would like to reflect on the consciousness of the ethno nationalists and some segments of the Oromo youth. I am sure all of them do not support the extreme groups and the derailed politicians. I want to believe that they also live under fear and control. Of course there is a great deal of brainwashing. I am sure all do not benefit from the new opportunities. That is what I want to believe, although some of my respondents tell me different discourses. However, my position is that it is not right to collectively blame an entire group because members of the group commit genocide or massacre or show indifference to the plight of others. Legal analysts and philosophers still argue about the phenomenon of collective guilt. The English dictionary defines collective guilt as defining guilt that is shared by a group of people over an act or actions that are seen as shameful. It is not talked about, but does manifest. For instance, Afrikaners of South Africa have a collective guilt over Apartheid. So do the Germans on the Holocaust. In this regard it is probably high time to hear voices such as "*Not in My Name*", from the ethnic Oromo.

The phenomenon of collective responsibility also known as collective guilt is highly a contentious matter in the Ethiopian context. Are the Oromo persons including mainstream Oromo political groups responsible for the actions of OLF and similar terrorist groups; by tolerating, ignoring, or harboring them, or actively collaborating in these actions? The practice of blaming the Jews for Jesus' death is the longest example of collective responsibility. In this case, the blame was cast not only on the Jews of the time but upon successive generations. This comes from Matthew 27:25-66 New International Version (NIV) 25: "All the people answered, 'His blood is on us and on our children!'" This collectivist idea that groups of humans can bear guilt above and beyond the guilt of individual members, and hence individuals hold responsibility for what other members of their group have done, even if they themselves didn't do this, is problematic in my view.

However, at least a symbolic resistance or some form of manifestation is morally expected from the Oromo people and their civil societies because the crime is being committed in their names. If they do not ally with oppressed segments of the Ethiopian population, history will judge them. One expects some form of dissent or disagreement with the methods, goals, and policies of the extreme political groups.

Finally, this is a wakeup call for the Oromo extremists as these are matters of very real and growing concern to people living in Ethiopia and beyond. Nonetheless, all Oromo should not be held collectively responsible for the crimes of their elites; however, they have a moral responsibility. The key components of the basic notion of moral responsibility, as David Risser¹⁰ accurately captured, are deeply rooted in the fabric of every society and are constitutive of social life. Without some conception of moral responsibility, no amount of imaginative insight will render a society recognizable as a human society. While there is broad, often tacit, agreement regarding the basic model of moral responsibility as it applies to individuals, there is considerable debate about how this notion might be applied to groups and their members.

Atrocities, Pogrom and Genocide: *The Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes*

We should learn from history! The colonial changes to ethnic identity have been explored from the political, sociological, and psychological perspectives¹¹. Ethnic manipulation manifested itself beyond the personal and internal spheres.

Scott Straus from the University of Wisconsin describes the ethnic identities that partially contributed to the Rwandan genocide. In April 1994, following the assassination of Rwanda's President Juvénal Habyarimana, Hutus of Rwanda turned on their Tutsi neighbors and slaughtered between 500,000 and 800,000 people in just 100 days. While this situation was incredibly complex politically, the influence ethnicity had on the violence cannot be ignored. Before the German colonization of Rwanda, the identities of Hutu and Tutsi were not fixed. Germany ruled Rwanda through the Tutsi dominated monarchy and the Belgians continued this following their takeover. Belgian rule reinforced the difference between Tutsi and Hutu. Tutsis were deemed superior and were propped up as a ruling minority supported by the Belgians, while the Hutu were systematically repressed. The country's power later dramatically shifted following the so-called Hutu Revolution, during which Rwanda gained independence from their colonizers and formed a new Hutu-dominated government. Deep-seated ethnic tensions did not leave with the Belgians. Instead, the new government reinforced the cleavage¹².

In his fascinating analysis of the root causes of ethnic based-genocide Straus (2006) wrote, "Ethnic antipathy might drive one perpetrator, while fear may drive another, even if both participate in the same genocide. Obedience Olay have led a person to kill the first

¹⁰ Risser, David T., "Power and Collective Responsibility." *Kinesis*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1978) pp. 23-33. Risser, David T., "The Social Dimension of Moral Responsibility: Taking Organizations Seriously." *Journal of Social Philosophy*, vol. 27, no. 1 (1996) pp. 189-207. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/collecti/>. *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (IEP). Collective Moral Responsibility.

¹¹ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_European_colonialism_and_colonization

¹² Straus, Scott. 2006. *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Also; Gerner Hariri, Jacob (2012). "The Autocratic Legacy of Early Statehood" (PDF). *American Political Science Review*. **106** (3): 471–494; Wolfe, Patrick (December 2006). "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native". *Journal of Genocide Research*. **8** (4): 387–409. doi:10.1080/14623520601056240.

time, but thereafter he might have wanted to steal goods or he might have become acculturated to killing. In short, motivation—the mechanism driving individuals—can be both heterogeneous within individuals as well as among them, even during a single event (p. 39)". The main point, however, is that we do not know which variables and mechanisms drove the Rwandan genocide. Many of the above hypotheses are plausible, wrote Straus.

What we learn from this experience is that demonizing other ethnic groups or creating a discourse of inferior or superior is a recipe for genocide. One well-documented ethnic manipulation was the (previous) ruling elites' vicious acts of fomenting conflict between the two large ethnic groups, the Oromo and the Amhara ethnic people. It is to be noted that in this state-orchestrated act, the Amhara were and still *are* the primary-victims. This all created a sense of ontological insecurity for the Amhara poor. The conflicts caused not only casualties and migration/movement within national borders but also contributed vastly to the spread of disease, malnutrition, starvation, social and economic decline and moral deterioration¹³. Clearly the responsibility lies with the elites.

Historians have written of a number of reasons or mechanisms that lead from ethnicity to violence. According to Straus (2006: 36) one is dehumanization. Whether because of prejudice or ideological indoctrination, individuals may degrade people in a different ethnic category; such degradation in turn facilitates violence. Another mechanism is antipathy: individuals commit crime because they distrust or abhor members of another ethnic category. A third mechanism is ideological commitment: individuals commit violence because of their strong political beliefs and desires. A fourth mechanism concerns media effects, in particular how propaganda indirectly or directly conditions people to kill. Some claim that propaganda "instills" dehumanizing stereotypes of ethnic others; still others claim that the propaganda "brainwashes" the perpetrators.

My evidence shows that there are already some patterns and discourses that might precipitate or crystallize the above mechanisms in Ethiopia. The indicators in *The Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes* confirm this. "The fight is never about grapes or lettuce. It is always about people." It is about Ethiopian people. It is unacceptable to seek self-aggrandizement for ourselves or for our specific ethnic group and increase power and influence to draw attention to own importance — and forget about progress and prosperity for the multitudes of ethnic groups in Ethiopia.

Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own. The rising ethnic nationalism and hate speech and propaganda needs an intervention of the government before it is too late. The ethno-political situation in Ethiopia has evolved more and more tense and bloody.

The government should look for ***a new model of governance that can create a strong and universal civil identity*** while maintaining cultural diversity of Ethiopians. I strongly believe that *Citizen based politics* is the best approach for multi diverse cultures like in Ethiopia. One modus operandi is to effectively hold the government to account, by sorting

¹³ For comparison see Mart Bax . 1997. Mass Graves, Stagnating Identification, and Violence: A Case Study in the Local Sources of "the War" in Bosnia Hercegovina. *Anthropological Quarterly* 70 (1): 11–19.

out through the clashing dynamics of various accountability mechanisms such as Bureaucratic accountability; Political accountability; Legal accountability; Citizen accountability; Professional accountability. This includes accountability within the army, security and police apparatus as well as government or civil services.

Finally, I want to present ***The Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes: A tool for prevention*** (United Nations, 2014):Enabling circumstances or preparatory action. The Framework provides a comprehensive list of risk indicators to better help the international community act early- to prevent atrocities as we witness now in Ethiopia.

Events or measures, whether gradual or sudden, which provide an environment conducive to the commission of atrocity crimes, or which suggest a trajectory towards their perpetration. Atrocity crimes, and in particular genocide and crimes against humanity, are processes that take time to plan, coordinate and implement. They cannot be explained as isolated or spontaneous events that perpetrators decided to commit without some level of preparation. Also, perpetrators need to possess sufficient resources to be able to commit massive or widespread acts of violence. Such resources are not always readily available and can take time to assemble. Consequently, throughout the development of these processes, it should be possible to identify events, actions or changes that point to the likelihood that certain actors are taking steps towards a scenario of mass violence and possibly atrocity crimes. Alternatively, such events, actions or changes can also serve to create an environment that favors or even encourages the commission of such crimes.

Recognizing such indicators and establishing a causal link to the probability of atrocity crimes is not always easy, but it is of great relevance. As with all risk factors, analysis of this risk factor should take into consideration a context in which other risk factors might also be present. In my analysis, the indicators (Risk factors 7, see below) are *positive* and still fully present and were present before the atrocities were committed in Ethiopia during the first week of July 2020¹⁴ and last week of October 2019¹⁵.

The evidence of intent, particularly the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group points to a higher risk of genocide. There was a great deal of early indicators that could have served as a warning sign and that can serve as a warning sign for future atrocities.

If we are serious about preventing or stopping genocide in the future, we must not be held back by legalistic arguments about whether a particular atrocity meets the definition of genocide or not. By the time we are certain, it may often be too late to act. We must recognize the signs of approaching or possible genocide, so that we can act in time to avert it. We badly need clear guidelines on how to identify such extreme cases and how to react to them. Such

¹⁴ At least 239 killed in protests since last week over murder of popular ethnic Oromo singer Haacaaluu Hundeessaa. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/07/death-toll-ethiopia-violence-singer-killing-hits-239-200708075014258.html>

¹⁵ A nationwide series of violent protests, concentrated in the Oromia Region, broke out in Ethiopia starting on 23 October 2019, sparked by activist and media owner Jawar Mohammed's report that security forces had attempted to vacate his security guards. According to official reports, 86 people were killed, mostly by mobs targeting ethnic and religious minorities within the region and surrounding areas, including Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, and the Harari Region

guidelines would ensure that we have no excuse to ignore a real danger of genocide when it does arise. (Kofi Annan, 2014)¹⁶

RISK FACTOR 7¹⁷

Enabling circumstances or preparatory action

Events or measures, whether gradual or sudden, which provide an environment conducive to the commission of atrocity crimes, or which suggest a trajectory towards their perpetration.

Indicators	
7.1	Imposition of emergency laws or extraordinary security measures that erode fundamental rights.
7.2	Suspension of or interference with vital State institutions, or measures that result in changes in their composition or balance of power, particularly if this results in the exclusion or lack of representation of protected groups.
7.3	Strengthening of the security apparatus, its reorganization or mobilization against protected groups, populations or individuals.
7.4	Acquisition of large quantities of arms and ammunition or of other objects that could be used to inflict harm.
7.5	Creation of, or increased support to, militia or paramilitary groups.
7.6	Imposition of strict control on the use of communication channels, or banning access to them.
7.7	Expulsion or refusal to allow the presence of NGOs, international organizations, media or other relevant actors, or imposition of severe restrictions on their services and movements.
7.8	Increased violations of the right to life, physical integrity, liberty or security of members of protected groups, populations or individuals, or recent adoption of measures or legislation that affect or deliberately discriminate against them.
7.9	Increased serious acts of violence against women and children, or creation of conditions that facilitate acts of sexual violence against those groups, including as a tool of terror.
7.10	Imposition of life-threatening living conditions or the deportation, seizure, collection, segregation, evacuation, or forced displacement or transfer of protected groups, populations or individuals to camps, rural areas, ghettos or other assigned locations.
7.11	Destruction or plundering of essential goods or installations for protected groups, populations or individuals, or of property related to cultural and religious identity.
7.12	Marking of people or their property based on affiliation to a group.
7.13	Increased politicization of identity, past events or motives to engage in violence.
7.14	Increased inflammatory rhetoric, propaganda campaigns or hate speech targeting protected groups, populations or individuals.

¹⁶ <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1392&context=gsp>

¹⁷ Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes: A tool for prevention 30 October 2014. Official Document. During October 2014 the UN Office of the Special Advisers on the Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect released the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes. The Framework provides a comprehensive list of risk indicators to better help the international community act early- to prevent atrocities. The Framework is broken down into two sets of risk factors: common risk factors that address concerns more broadly and specific risk factors which detail indicators specific to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

There will always be
consequences for your
actions !!

