

Ethiopian government accused of threatening to kill Tigrayans that refuse to join ruling party

ETHIOPIAN government forces have allegedly threatened to kill supporters of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) who refuse to join the country's ruling Prosperity Party (PP).

A letter leaked to the Morning Star that was purportedly signed by the PP representative in the restive northern state, Suhul Michael, warns that if veteran TPLF members or supporters fail to comply with the demand, they face death.

The authenticity of the letter cannot be confirmed, but a source insisted that the same threats were made to journalist Dawit Kebede before he was shot dead last week. "He refused and he was put in prison and he was shot to death just for refusing to join a party that he does not like. This is the reform in Ethiopia," the source claimed.

Mr Kebede was a journalist with regional broadcaster Tigray TV, which was taken over by the federal government following a military offensive that drove out the TPLF government last December.

He was detained on January 17 and released soon afterwards, but ordered to report to the police station. The reason for his detention is unknown.

Just three days later, Mr Kebede and a friend were shot dead in their car by unknown assailants in the regional capital Mekelle.

Officials have remained tight-lipped over the killings. Mekelle Mayor Ataklti Haileselassie and Mulu Nega, the new head of Tigray's regional government, did not reply to requests for comment.

United Nations high commissioner for human rights Michelle Bachelet said last month that Tigrayans are being ethnically profiled, including in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. The government offensive against Tigray, including air strikes, began after the region held elections that were deemed illegal by Addis Ababa.

Thousands of people were killed as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sought to crush the TPLF, which ruled Ethiopia for decades. On January 13, Ethiopian government forces claimed to have killed at least three prominent members of the TPLF: Seyoum Mesfin, who served as Ethiopia's foreign minister for nearly two decades, former federal affairs minister Abay Tsehaye and ex-parliamentary chief whip Asmelash Woldeselassie.

<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/w/ethiopian-government-accused-threatening-kill-tigrayans-refuse-join-ruling-party>

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Tigray Prosperity Party Office

ዕለት:-12/04/2013

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