



Webinar

Voices from Tigray

Brutalities against Religious Leaders,
Holy Places and Heritage in Tigray

Testimony 1

Testimony from Aksum

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EEPA

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Transcript of Video recordings obtained from Aksum (Translation from Tigrigna to English):

First Testimony:

Speaking on 29 November, 2020; the witness said:

- "on the Eve of Hidar Tsion (Aksum Annual Festival celebrated on 30 November, 2020), compound of the Maryam Tsion Church was supposed to be full of people with no space to move."
- "But today an era has been changed and we were on gunfire for the whole week; during this festive day, Maryam Tsion church compound was empty, no people and what a ghost day".
- "It is surprising that since the establishment of this church, even in the Derge regime, it has never been like this".
- "On the 27th November, 2020, Eritrean soldiers came on a Scania type big truck with Eritrean plate number (with red slash). And in the evening, they opened gunfire and there was gunshot the whole night; in response, Tigray militias and some youth of Aksum tried to defend but they could not hold them longer. On the 28 November, 2020, Eritrean soldiers entered the town and they were shooting and killing every youth they found in the street day and night including two brothers who were passing on road to open their shops in the early morning of 29th of November."
- "ENDF soldiers were in the town for more than a week (maybe they entered Aksum on 22nd of November, 2020) but didn't do anything like that; however, Eritrean soldiers were killing Aksum youth the whole day on 29th November and people of Aksum has never experienced this kind of sorrow on the festive of Maryam Tsion (Eve)".

Second Testimony:

- In this video, few people including a priest have been seen carrying a body (most likely found nearby the church of Maryam Tsion but no mention of date) and trying to take it away. The person recording the video was saying Aksum has experienced this terrible thing (expressing the degree of sorrow and sadness).
- Then they lay the body down and one of them asked for ID of the victim; the priest got the ID in the pocket and he was found to be an employee of Commercial Bank of Ethiopia named G/hiwot G/kidan G/tinsae.
- After that the people were surprised; someone from them asked "why did he come and why did he go to this place (he did not mention exactly where the area was) and questioned his true identity."
- Then someone from the group asks to see his face to cross-check his true identity and the person recording the video said "I know him" shortly after they saw his face, all agreed his ID matches.