



Statement from Voice for Democracy and Social Justice: Condemning the “Position Statement” by the name of “Senior commander of the Tigray Army”

Voice for Democracy and Social Justice is a legally recognized civil society organization dedicated to promoting democracy, social justice, and the rule of law. We are committed to transparency and accountability, the protection of human rights, the advancement of democratic governance, and the creation of a just and prosperous society.

Voice for Democracy and Social Justice strongly condemns the statement position issued by the “senior commanders of the Tigray Army” on 23 January 2025. This statement has triggered political developments that directly undermine democracy, human rights, and the rule of law—fundamental pillars of a just and democratic society.

The “senior commanders of the Tigray Army”, in its statement, positions itself as the ultimate evaluator and decision-maker on government performance. Such an approach threatens democratic governance by placing military authority above civilian oversight, thereby violating the principle of the separation of powers.

Furthermore, the statement’s characterization of media organizations as “instruments of other forces” is a direct assault on freedom of expression. These actions reflect authoritarian tendencies that suppress dissenting voices, stifle public discourse, and prevent citizens from freely engaging in discussions about their country.

The decision to consolidate all security forces under a single “military command” jeopardizes the independence of civilian institutions, particularly law enforcement. This centralization of power carries the risk of undermining democratic processes and eroding the legal framework necessary for just governance. Accountability must be upheld through due legal process, not through unilateral “military decrees” that circumvent judicial authority. Such actions violate the rule of law and weaken the legal structures that are essential for justice, fairness, and social stability.

Additionally, the use of inflammatory language such as “messengers of the enemy,” “traitor,” and “banda” fosters division, fear, and hostility among citizens. Such rhetoric sows’ discord and undermines the social cohesion necessary for peace, security, and unity.

The statement’s assertion that it will “take legal action” against individuals accused of various crimes further threatens judicial independence. The protection of citizens’ rights and the principles of fairness demand that courts remain free from interference, especially from security forces.

Finally, Voice for Democracy and Social Justice strongly calls for the immediate separation of powers to ensure that civilian authorities remain at the forefront of governance in Tigray. The





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militarization of the political environment must cease, and security commanders must refrain from interfering in political processes. Such interference not only undermines the democratic foundations of governance but also increases the instability and fear that worsen residents' day-to-day lives.

Voice for Democracy and Social Justice calls for an immediate cessation of any actions that threaten democracy, human rights, or the rule of law. All stakeholders must commit to legal due process, respect for human dignity, and the protection of fundamental freedoms. We also urge the Tigray Regional State security forces to prioritize the safety and security of the people, ensuring that their actions align with the principles of justice and accountability.

A democratic Tigray can only be achieved through strong institutions, open dialogue, and an unwavering commitment to the rule of law.

Voice for Democracy and Social Justice

25 January 2025

Mekelle, Tigray

