

Joint statement on the brutal murder of Zewdu Haftu

On the evening of August 19, Zewdu Haftu was walking down a busy street with her friend Semhal Gebrezgher when she was brutally murdered. The fact that she was killed in public in a gruesome manner is beyond contestation. However, the lack of information from relevant authorities surrounding the circumstances of her death has created space for unhelpful public speculation.

Close to two weeks after Zewdu's tragic death, her killers remain unidentified and at large. Semhal Gebrezgher, one amongst many witnesses to the murder, had been receiving treatment at Ayder Referral Hospital for trauma related to the incident while under the custody of the police. On August 30th, she was forcibly removed from hospital without being discharged by her doctors. She was finally brought before the court without the knowledge and presence of her legal representation on September 1st.

We, the undersigned organisations, demand a transparent investigation into Zewdu Haftu's killing and that Semhal Gebrezgher's right to due process of law, including but not limited to the right to representation, visitation and the right to appear before court be fully and unconditionally respected.

We demand that justice be served for Zewdu Haftu and due process for Semhal Gebrezgher. This heinous act not only highlights the issue of gender-based violence but also exposes the abuse of authority in Tigray. The failure to address this grave injustice tarnishes the reputation of the Tigray Interim Regional Authorities and perpetuates a culture of impunity. We call for an end to the rampant lawlessness threatening lives and property, particularly of women and girls, in Tigray.

Signatories

1. Solidarity of Tigrayans for Independence and Liberty (STIL)
2. Irob Anina Civil Society (IACS)
3. Tigray Youth Network (TYN)
4. Omna Tigray
5. Legacy Tigray
6. Tigray Action Committee (TAC)
7. Health Professionals Network For Tigray (HPN4Tigray)
8. Tigray Human Rights Network
9. Union of Tigrayans in Europe (UTE)
10. Human Rights First
11. Tigrayan Advocacy and Development Association (TADA)
12. Tigray Global Advocacy Group (TGAG)
13. Tigray Disaster Relief Fund (TDRF)
14. United Tegararu of Canada (UTC)
15. Make Injera Not War

