

## Editorial

### *“Tigray Health turned into Hell on Earth”*

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The outbreak of the savagery war in November 2020 has brought massive destruction of infrastructures, an inconceivable humanitarian crisis and indescribable barbarities to the people of Tigray [1]. The health facilities of Tigray were among the prime targets of the war related wanton destruction and looting at an incomprehensible scale [2]. The damage and looting to the health facilities; systematic ransacking of industry and other services; hard hit economy and food system; disabled humanitarian aid and ineffective international response; forced displacement and forced immobility; mass atrocities and sexual violence; total siege and blockade from the rest of Ethiopia and the rest of the world along with the closure of labor options has turned Tigray into hell on earth [1, 2].

Consequently, essential health services are seriously disrupted in Tigray [1]. Prior to the start of the savagery war, the Tigray health sector had two specialized hospitals, 14 general hospitals, 24 primary hospitals, 224 health centers as well as 741 health posts [3]. There were also more than 750 private facilities including hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and drug vendors [3]. All these public and private health facilities add up to bring the physical access to basic health care services of Tigray to 95% [3].

However, a recent rapid assessment conducted to document the extent of the war

associated damage to the health facilities in Tigray revealed that 80.6% of the Health Posts, 73.6% of the Health Centers, 80.0% of the Primary Hospitals and 83.3% of the General Hospitals were damaged and/or ransacked either fully or partially as a result of the savagery war on Tigray [2]. The systematic destruction and ransacking of the health facilities together with the total blockade of Tigray has led to a serious disruption of the essential health services for the entire population of Tigray. The health facilities at the various levels of the health tier system which are essential to meeting the health needs of the people of Tigray are nonfunctional. Those in operation are functioning at a much lower capacity due to the displacement, relocation, migration, injury and death of the health workforce and lack of drugs and medical supplies and equipment [2].

In order for the disrupted health system of Tigray bounce back to its prewar status or preferably bounce back better, the international community has compelling humanitarian, political, security, and economic reasons to break the siege; allow access to humanitarian aid and medical supplies and equipment; provide essential health services to meeting the urgent health needs of the people of Tigray and prevent the total collapse of the health system of Tigray before it is too late. Failure to act on time, clearly demonstrate the lack of willingness from the international

community to respond to the urgent basic health needs of Tigray and to sustainably work in the best interest of the long term health needs of Tigray which is tantamount to supporting war as a means of conflict resolution; approving the siege and blockade of humanitarian aid; creating new burdens of disease and assisting the re-emergence of infectious disease outbreaks; disrupting the supply chain for medical and nutrition supplies; ignoring the timely reestablishment of a working health care system and hence denying access to lifesaving health care and eventually expediting the untimely and unwarranted death of people in Tigray.

### References

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2. Damage Assessment Task Force. 2022. Rapid Assessment Report on War Associated Damage and/or Vandalism to the Health System of Tigray 2022. Mekelle University and Tigray Health Bureau, Mekelle, Tigray, Ethiopia.
3. Tigray Health Bureau. Health Sector Annual Bulletin (2021). Tigray Health Bureau, January 2022, Mekelle.