

The Determined Wound – Grassroots Voices From the Tigray War – A Diary Account

A Summary on my forthcoming book:

Abraha Weldu

In *The Determined Wound – Grassroots Voices From the Tigray War – A Diary Account*, historian and PAUSE Fellow I provide a rare fusion of lived testimony and scholarly analysis. Trained in History and Cultural Studies at Mekelle University, where I earned my PhD in 2020. I served as Assistant Professor at Bule Hora University from 2011 and later at Adigrat University, Ethiopia.

My academic work—spanning cultural studies, history, and political biography—reflects a long-standing commitment to documenting how ordinary people navigate historical forces. My publications such as “Cultural Policy and Music Production across Ethiopian Regimes” and “Abebe Retta, the Reformist During the Imperial Haile Selassie I’s Government” reflect the same methodological rigor and sensitivity to marginalized voices that shape my forthcoming book. I have also been awarded competitive research scholarships, including the Bergen Summer Research School (2019) and the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l’Homme (2023).

Today, as a researcher at Université Paris Cité, I write from the dual vantage point of survivor and historian—an approach that gives my work both emotional immediacy and analytical depth.

My book is structured both chronologically and thematically, tracing the war through the lenses of resistance, displacement, survival, memory, and hope. Each chapter commences with an analytical introduction and unfolds into carefully curated testimonies—voices of ordinary people whose experiences are often erased from official narratives.

It captures the war not as abstract geopolitics but as daily life: youths and students conscripted into fighting, women sustaining communities in the absence of men, displaced families improvising survival and, diaspora networks mobilizing awareness abroad.

My motivation was a profound sense of historical and moral responsibility. With memories at risk of political erasure, I felt compelled to safeguard the voices of those who endured the conflict.

International audiences, I argue, often misunderstand the war by focusing on high-level political dynamics while overlooking the human cost. Under-reported realities include: mechanisms of mobilization, forced conscription, gendered survival strategies, the resilience of marginalized communities, the devastation of aerial bombardments and sieges, the improvisational survival of families and, the role of diaspora activism.

The book restores these grassroots perspectives to the center of historical memory.

My research draws on personal experience, interviews, media reports, direct observation, and digital correspondence. Ethical consent and emotional safety were prioritized, with anonymity and pseudonyms offered to participants. Testimonies were cross-checked where possible, and I openly acknowledge my positionality as both witness and scholar.

A methodological appendix details the ethical framework, limitations, and deliberate avoidance of retraumatizing detail.

The intended audience spans scholars of memory and conflict, policymakers, human rights advocates, and general readers. More than a personal diary, the book is a living archive of resistance, endurance, and political consciousness, contributing to justice and reconciliation in post-conflict Ethiopia.

Collaboration and Academic Freedom

My collaboration with historian Pierre Guidi began in Paris, where Guidi supported me to apply for the PAUSE program. Our partnership grew from shared academic interests and a mutual commitment to valuing personal testimony as historical evidence. Guidi's openness and rigor—combined with the freedom he granted to me to work independently—were essential in shaping the manuscript.

As a PAUSE Fellow at Université Paris Cité, I found both protection and possibility. The program safeguarded my life and my intellectual work, while CEPED offered a supportive environment for refining the manuscript and pursuing politically sensitive research without censorship. The fellowship rendered the stability and academic freedom necessary to complete the project.

I emphasize that the PAUSE program's impact extends far beyond individual scholars: it strengthens global social science research, protects academic freedom, and ensures that voices from conflict zones enrich international scholarship.

The Central Message

At its core, *The Determined Wound* insists that wars must be remembered through the voices of those who lived them. The book records ordinary lives, preserves grassroots testimonies, and underscores the ethical urgency of safeguarding memory. Supported by PAUSE and Université Paris Cité, I transform personal testimony into a historical document—one that contributes to reconciliation, justice, and the broader struggle for academic freedom.