



21 August 2022

Mekete Tigray UK

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The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP,
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,
10 Downing Street,
London, SW1A 2AA

OPEN LETTER

Dear Prime Minister,

Subject - A Call to Stop Ethiopian and Eritrean Armies Provocation of A Second Round Genocidal War on Tigray, Ethiopia

1. We, members of the Tigrayan Diaspora of Tigrayan Ethiopian origin organised independently under the Mekete Tigray UK, Tigray Youth Network and Tigray Women UK, are yet again writing to the UK Government calling to stop Ethiopian and Eritrean Armies provocations to escalate a second round of genocidal war on the people of Tigray. As reported widely by local and global media, the Ethiopian, Eritrean and Amhara Regional occupying forces in Western Tigray have begun bombarding the Tigrayan Defense Forces on several fronts in Western Tigray including the Dedebeit area on 15th August 2022 with the intention to expand their war of aggression to the rest of liberated Tigray. This is happening during the farming season with the intention to prevent Tigrayans farmers from engaging in activities that are essential to their livelihood. This is but the de facto violation of the Humanitarian Truce that allowed a trickle-down of international humanitarian assistance to reach Tigray. The UK and the world must not allow a second round of genocidal war on Tigray.
2. In spite of the Humanitarian Truce that began in March 2022, the occupying forces have escalated their ***“Anaconda”*** strategy of strangulating Tigray through prolonged economic blockade and military siege with the intent to starve Tigrayans into submission. This is following the killings of 500,000 Tigrayans civilians, the over 120,000 sexual violence against Tigrayan women and girls and the near total destruction of Tigray’s economy and civilian infrastructure including health and educational facilities. This was confirmed by the former EU Special Envoy to Ethiopia, the Finnish Foreign Minister, Pekka Haavisto, who reported back to the EU that the Ethiopian Leadership had told him that they were determined to ***“wipe out and exterminate Tigrayans, degrading them to socio-economic conditions that existed 100 years ago”***, as reported by Cara Anna for the ABC News on 18 June 2021. Both the UK Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford, and the Chief Administrator of USAid, Samantha Power, have described the humanitarian assistance reaching Tigray as ***“A***

Trickle” but utterly failed to condemn it or to suggest other policy measures or come up to the conclusion on its genocidal implications. This is in fact the horror of the history of Tigray for the last 21 months, only and mainly platitudes of concern and worries by governments and institutions but not decisive, bold or concrete actions to materially alter the fact on the ground, which is genocide in slow-motion. Professor Mukesh Kapila, an international health humanitarian who worked at a senior level for the UN and witnessed many genocides including, in Rwanda, Darfur and Bosnia, aptly described the use of hunger and starvation in Tigray as a weapon of modern genocide more than a year earlier:

“Modern genocides aren’t done Nazis style. Cheap, stealthy, smart way to do it is by starving, pillaging, raping, displacing. World then automatically demands humanitarian aid which will come but always little & late - allowing ethnic cleansers to finish job first #Ethiopia #Tigray”

(Professor Mukesh Kapila; @mukeshkapila; 23rd March 2021)

“The world’s worst humanitarian crisis is in Tigray. In the Ethiopian Region of #Tigray, the drought is compounding a man-made catastrophe for 6 million people who have been under siege from Ethiopian and Eritrean forces for 21 months. Can the world come back to its senses and uphold humanity, or the 6 million lives do not matter? Or is it the issue of ‘colour line’?”

(Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director of WHO, Twitter, 19 August 2022)

“It is not the fault of the Tigray people. Many barbarisms have been conducted in Ethiopia, but what is happening in Tigray is of the highest brutality and cruelty. This is genocide of an entire people. They want to wipe-out the people of Tigray from the face of the Earth. I have said a lot of things but no one allows the message to be shared. Rather, it is being stifled and censored. The whole world should know it. The World must act now including all religious organisations to make their voice to stop the genocide.”

(The Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Abune Mathias, 8 May 2021)

“The world’s response to the #TigrayGenocide has been shameful. A total of 5.2 million people in Ethiopia’s Tigray region (91% of its population) need emergency food aid. Up to 500k Tigrayans have been killed over the past 578 days. @bbc,@theguardian,@cnn, @trtworld, @skynews”

(@RestlessBeings; Tweet, 5 June 2022)

3. The UK Government, the US Administration and the European Union are unintentionally aiding and abetting genocide by starvation by their continuing position and policy for nearly two years that is essentially appeasement by any definition and by their narration that **“substantial”** humanitarian assistance is reaching Tigray (implying that hunger and starvation is being averted), which is contrary to the facts on the ground in Tigray. The most optimistic estimate is that close to 20% of the required amount is reaching Tigray. Moreover, the aid reaching Tigray could not be distributed to rural areas, where 85% of Tigrayans live, due to the deliberate government policy of not allowing the required fuel delivery. They fail to see the 80% shortfall and that hunger and starvation is cumulative, debilitating and cataclysmic. It appears that the world would not act boldly unless and until they see on global screen the faces of tens of thousands of emaciated children, or the death of masses of people, or a Michael Buerk type catastrophic or calamitous report, or a Bob Geldof to stir humanity’s conciseness as in 1984/85. The World Food Programme latest assessment, as reported by Giulia Paravicini of Reuters on 19 August 2022, states that: *“the nearly two-year conflict in Ethiopia has left almost half the population of Tigray Region without adequate food, as aid groups struggle to reach rural areas because of insufficient food supplies, the World Food Programme (WFP) said on Friday (19/08/2022). Even though the delivery of aid resumed after the federal government declared a unilateral ceasefire in March, malnutrition rates have ‘skyrocketed’ and are expected to worsen, the UN agency said. Services such as banking and telecommunication were cut in Tigray, home to around 5.5 million people, days after the army and allied forces pulled out a year ago. They are yet to be restored, hampering the ability of people to*

buy food, the WFP said. Hunger has deepened, rate of malnutrition have skyrocketed, and the situation is set to worsen as people enter peak hunger season until this year's harvest in October."

4. We continue to urge the UK Government and its partners to end their appeasement of the regimes of Ethiopia and Eritrea and begin to resolutely pressurise the Ethiopian regime to stop its genocidal war and opt out for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Ethiopian Government must not be allowed to use the flow of unfettered international humanitarian assistance and the opening up of basic and essential services in Tigray, such as electricity, telecommunication, transport and banking, as leverage to force and subjugate Tigrayans. Such preconditions are blatant violation of international humanitarian and human rights laws constituting war crimes and crime against humanity notwithstanding their genocidal implications.
5. The Eritrean regime led by President Isaias Afewerki, in collusion with the Ethiopian regime and Amhara regional forces, have committed systematic and widespread mass atrocities in Tigray, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and genocide since the start of the war on Tigray on 4 November 2020. According to the US Government Press Statement of 23 August, 2021:

"The Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) are responsible for massacres, looting, and sexual assaults. EDF troops have raped, tortured, and executed civilians; they have also destroyed property and ransacked businesses. The EDF have purposely shot civilians in the street and carried out systematic house-to-house searches, executing men and boys, and have forcibly evicted Tigrayan families from their residences and taken over their houses and property. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Tigray have described a systematic effort by the EDF to inflict as much harm on the ethnic Tigrayan population as possible in the areas the EDF controls. IDPs reported that in some cases, the EDF used knives or bayonets to slash open the torsos of pregnant women and then left them for dead. The EDF have forced survivors to leave the bodies of the dead where they lie or face execution themselves. Countless IDPs recounted instances of witnessing the rape, murder, and torture of friends and family members by the EDF. Sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war and a means to terrorize and traumatize the entire population; the majority of rapes are committed by men in uniform, such as the EDF. IDPs also spoke of a "scorched earth" policy intended to prevent IDPs from returning home."

(U.S. Department of the Treasury, 13 August 2021)

6. In spite of US sanctions against three Eritrean military and political leaders, excluding the President, and four Eritrean economic entities, the Eritrean regime continues to show no behavioural change. To the contrary, it has consolidated its occupation of large areas of Western, North Western and North Eastern Tigray and continues to inflict mass atrocities as well as using economic blockade and military siege in order to starve millions of Tigrayans. Moreover, adamantly opposed to any peaceful resolution of the War on Tigray and other conflicts in Ethiopia, the regime in Eritrea has continued with its war-mongering preparation and provocation for second round invasion of Tigray.
7. We urge the UK Government to take bold and concrete actions:
 - I. To stop the waging of a second round of genocidal war on the Tigrayan people by the Ethiopian, Eritrean and Amhara Regional armies that have occupied parts of Tigray and are now amassing on its boundary;
 - II. To urge the Ethiopian Government to pursue a peaceful resolution of the conflict first by allowing unfettered humanitarian assistance to reach Tigray and allowing the provision of basic and essential services in line with international humanitarian and human rights laws;
 - III. To stop Ethiopian and Eritrean governments policy and actions of economic blockade and military siege that uses hunger, starvation and famine as a weapon of war.
 - IV. To urge the Eritrean and Amhara Regional armies to leave Tigray and to stop the Eritrean Government being an obstacle to the peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Tigray and the rest of Ethiopia as well as desist from destabilising the Horn of Africa region; and
 - V. To press for an independent, transparent and internationally led investigation of the mass atrocities committed in the war on Tigray and Ethiopia at large, and ensures that all perpetrators of mass atrocities are held accountable and are brought to face justice.

8. Finally, we thank you again for your time and attention, and trust that the UK Government will do much more of what is morally, politically and legally right to address our concerns as British citizens and residents of Ethiopian origin. We look forward to getting an audience with your ministers and civil servants, and to hearing your response to our concerns. The Petitioners of this Letter - Ethiopian Tigrayans in the UK - can be contacted at the above-referred Email. Thank you very much.

Most respectfully,

Ethiopian Tigrayans in the UK
Mekete Tigray UK Members and Steering Committee
Tigrayan Women in the UK
Tigrayan Youth Network
Global Tigrayan Diaspora

Copy:

The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP; Deputy Prime Minister of the UK;
The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP; Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs;
The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP; Secretary of State for Defence;
The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP; Secretary of State for International Trade;
The Rt Hon Vicky Ford MP; Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Africa);
The Rt Hon Baroness Evans of Bows Park; Leaders of the House of Lords;
Sir Simon McDonald KCMG; Permanent Under-Secretary and Head of Diplomatic Service;
H.E. Dr Alastair McPhail CMG OBE; KCVO British Ambassador to Ethiopia;
The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP; Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition;
The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition;
The Rt Hon David Lammy MP; Shadow Secretary of State for FCD Affairs;
The Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Basildon; The Shadow Leader of the House of Lords;
The Rt Hon Tom Tugendhat MP; Chair of Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee;
The Rt Hon Chris Bryant MP; Member of Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee;
The Rt Hon Stewart Malcolm McDonald MP; Member of Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee;
The Rt Hon Sarah Champion MP; Chair of International Development Sub-Committee;
The Rt Hon Kate Osamor MP; Member of International Development Sub-Committee;
The Rt Hon Helen Hayes MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Sarah Champion MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Fleur Anderson MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon, Daisy Cooper MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Claire Hanna MP, UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Paula Barker MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Virendra Sharman MP; UK House of Commons;
The RT Hon Harriet Harman MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Edward Miliband MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Lord David Alton of Liverpool; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Hon Lord William Hague of Richmond; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Hon Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Hon Lord Triesman; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Hon Viscount Waverley; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Hon Baroness Kennedy; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Reverend Dr Christopher Cocksworth; The Lord Bishop of Coventry; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Reverend Justin Welby; The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; UK House of Lords;

The Rt Reverend Stephen Cottrell; The Lord Archbishop of York; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Reverend Christopher Chessun; The Lord Bishop of Southwark; UK House of Lords;
His Eminence Vincent Cardinal Nichols; Archbishop of Westminster;
Sir Graham Wrigley; Chairman of the CDC Group PLC;
Nick O'Donohoe; CEO of the CDC Group Plc;
His Holiness Pope Francis; Sovereign of the Vatican State;
His Holiness Abune Matias, The Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church;
The Rt Hon Ian Blackford MP; Leader of SNP in the UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Sir Ed Davey MP; Leader of the Liberal Democrats;
The Rt Hon Liz Saville Roberts; Leader of Plaid Cymru in the House of Commons;
H.E. Antonio Guterres, Secretary -General of the UN;
H.E Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission;
H.E. Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs;
H.E. Annette Weber, EU Representative for the Horn of Africa;
H.E. Michelle Bachelet; UN High Commissioner for Human Rights;
H.E. Antony Blinken; Secretary State of the United States;
Richard Sharp; Chairman of the BBC Board;
Tim Davie; Director General of the BBC;
The African Union;
Human Rights Watch;
Amnesty International;
British Media;
Africa Media;
Global Media