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 The Government of National Regional State of Tigray  
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 Office of President

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 Date 27/11/2021

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To: HE António Guterres  
 Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN)  
 New York, NY

**Subject:** Concern on the recent Tigrean mass arrest, atrocity crimes including genocide in Ethiopia

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

The grave situation of Ethiopian citizens of Tigrayan identity in Addis Ababa and other Ethiopian towns and cities demands your urgent attention. Recent developments clearly signal a very high risk of atrocity crimes including genocide.

On 8 November this year, the Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, said that she is “gravely concerned at the deterioration of the situation of Ethiopia, where escalation of violence, increased incidence of ethnically and religiously motivated hate speech, displacement of populations and destruction of property display serious indicators of risk of commission of atrocity crimes.”

Since Ms. Nderitu issued this warning the situation has become even more alarming.

At the time of the outbreak of the war one year ago, between 15,000-17,000 members of the Ethiopian National Defense Force of Tigrayan origin were detained by the Federal authorities. These men and women served their country honorably in the armed forces including on United Nations peacekeeping missions. They remain in detention. Very few have been able to receive visits including from the ICRC. We have recently learned that there are plans to transfer 18 detained air force officers to Eritrea.

In recent weeks, more than 32,900 civilians of Tigrayan origin have been interned in Addis Ababa in addition to an unknown number in other towns and cities. The internment of persons of Tigrayan identity continues by the day and there is every sign that these numbers will continue to rise. These internments are taking place under the active encouragement of the Federal Government by uniformed police and security officers and members of neighborhood committees. The internees do not have access to lawyers or visits from anyone. They are kept in police stations, industrial sites, warehouses and similar places under conditions of severe dehumanization, without basic needs such as sufficient

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☎ 251-04-409192

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ኩነት/ Fax 251-04-407723/402437

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food, water, medical care or sanitation. The internees' greatest fear is that these are concentration camps that could in an instant become death camps.

Across almost the entire spectrum of official and private media, including social media, with just a very few honorable exceptions, Ethiopians are subjected to a barrage of incitement to ethnic hostility, hate speech, ethnically derogatory terms, echoing and amplifying a governmental message that they should take all and every measure against Tigrayans. Government spokespeople try to explain it away as being targeted solely on the TPLF leadership but they do absolutely nothing to correct the universal impression that they are inciting a pogrom (or worse) against all Tigrayans and the practice belies their protestation.

Furthermore, the Federal Government is mobilizing and arming vigilante groups and militia in Addis Ababa.

Every genocide warning sign is flashing. The Federal Government has signaled its intention. It has communicated its intent to perpetrators and indicated that they will have impunity. It has the means to commit atrocity crimes. It has tens of thousands of people at its mercy.

Excellency,

The United Nations was founded in the aftermath of World War Two and the Genocide of European Jews, Roma people and other minorities. One of the first instruments adopted by the United Nations was the Genocide Convention, which solemnly committed the Organization and its Member States to the principle that "never again" should the crime of genocide be perpetrated anywhere in the world. Ethiopia was among the first nations to sign and ratify the Convention.

In the wake of atrocity crimes in Former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and elsewhere, the United Nations adopted a host of additional commitments on the early warning of such violations and urgent action to prevent their perpetration and punish those responsible. In the case of Rwanda, the OAU mandated the International Panel of Eminent Personalities to investigate the failure to prevent that genocide and to recommend appropriate actions. In its letter of transmission to the OAU Secretary General, the Panel wrote:

"Indisputably, the most important truth that emerges from our investigation is that the Rwandan genocide could have been prevented by those in the international community who had the position and means to do so. But though they had the means, they lacked the will. The world failed Rwanda."

Every indication is that mass atrocity crimes are imminent, and the international community has yet to step up to the plate.



Excellency,

The United Nations organization, all Member States of the United Nations and the African Union, all States Parties to the Genocide Convention, all states that have accepted that atrocity crimes should be prevented and punished and that civilians should be protected, have clear, unambiguous and overriding obligations when confronted with the grave and immediate threat of genocide.

Do not fail Ethiopians of Tigrayan origin. Do not fail Africa.

Please accept, Mr. Secretary General, assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Debretsion G/Michael /PHD/  
President

