



March 20, 2021

## **ED-REAP Calls for an Immediate Restoration of Peace and Stopping of Atrocities to the People of Tigray in Ethiopia**

We in ED-REAP have been closely following the war on Tigray and the unfolding humanitarian crisis with deep concern and agony. Since the start of the war in early Nov 2020, the Tigray Region of Ethiopia has been severely affected due to the disruption of life in general and complete halt of education and research due to the destruction of institutions, displacement of students (including as refugees to Sudan), researchers & faculty in addition to the catastrophic humanitarian crisis that is affecting ordinary citizens in the region.

The Tigray region has been completely blockaded since the start of the war with no access to communication, independent journalists and humanitarian corridor for aid organizations. In recent weeks, there has been partial limited opening to journalists and humanitarian agencies which were able to witness and report war crimes and crimes against humanity. Based on credible reports from these organizations, the devastation from the 137 days of war involves atrocious human rights & international law violations against innocent civilians; including massacres, violent & gang rape, mass killings, ethnic cleansing, bombing in towns and villages, disappearances and incarcerations. This is leading to starvation of the people of Tigray and the pillaging of their civil infrastructure and private properties. Today, the world is talking about Tigray genocide and mass atrocities that occurred during the war with undisputable evidence and the evidence is mounting consistently by the day. The European Union and several UN agencies have confirmed the massacres, pillaging and rapes being committed on a day-to-day basis by the three forces- ENDF, Eritrean and Amara. As we write this press statement, the war is ongoing with mass killings and destructions despite the repetitive calls by the US, UN and EU for immediate cessation of hostilities. Moreover, Mr. Abiy and his government are still defying international calls to allow full and unfettered access to international agencies to provide humanitarian support to civilians. The war unleashed on the people of Tigray is simply unjust, uncalled for, and cruel by any international standards and needs to be stopped now. The proud and kind people of Tigray do not deserve this.

As the recent US State Department report by Secretary Anthony Blinken to the Foreign Relations Committee in congress clearly indicates, there is an ongoing ethnic cleansing in this part of Tigray. Most, if not all, of the refugees in Sudan today came from western Tigray. So, it is particularly important to emphasize that the first precondition for the peaceful resolution of the conflict is for all the invading forces, including those from the neighboring Amhara region currently uprooting civilians and committing atrocities in Western Tigray, to immediately withdraw from Tigray as called by the US Department of State.

We also firmly believe that if peace is going to prevail in Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa region, it is imperative that (1) the duly elected Tigray administration is restored to its place and (2) all occupied land be returned to the proper administration and (3) the displaced residents are returned to their homes. These steps are as crucial to peace in Tigray and Ethiopia as the withdrawal of the Eritrean and Amhara forces from Tigray. The US State Department saw this correctly and has called for the immediate withdrawal of Amhara forces along with the Eritrean forces.

We are calling on the Ethiopian government to heed international calls to stop the war, remove the Eritrean and Amhara forces from Tigray and take steps to resolve the problem with a comprehensive national dialogue.



Due to the unprecedented level of devastation of infrastructure and the prolonged blockage of basic services, the needs for humanitarian assistance and the eventual rehabilitation will be of monumental proportions. To help with alleviating these needs, we are currently raising funds to contribute to the rehabilitation of those affected by the humanitarian crisis in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia. If you would like to contribute to these funds, please open this url: <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/humanitarian-relief-fund-for-tigrayan-war-victims/mulugetagebregziabhe>

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank every organization, government and media that have taken important and crucial steps to alleviate the suffering of the people of Tigray. We stand ready to be of assistance with additional information, explanations, or clarifications.

For reference, we have cited few recently published articles that describe the current situation.

1. Amnesty International report- The massacre at the holiest city of Axum by Eritrean forces; (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/02/ethiopia-eritrean-troops-massacre-of-hundreds-of-axum-civilians-may-amount-to-crime-against-humanity/#:~:text=Eritrean%20troops%20fighting%20in%20Ethiopia's.International%20said%20today%20in%20a>);
2. UNHRW report that details the horrific killings uncovered by CNN at Dengelat St. Mary's church annual gathering; the maiming of women and children in Bora, Adigrat, Irob and other places too many to list have been characterized as genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. As you know, religious sites have been desecrated, cultural icons have been looted, and over 80% of the industrial and other economic infrastructures in Tigray have been deliberately destroyed. It will take decades to rebuild the region to its pre-invasion level (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/05/ethiopia-eritrean-forces-massacre-tigray-civilians>).
3. Joint NGO Letter to H.E. Ms. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Permanent Representative of the US to the UN in New York, on the crisis in Ethiopia - Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/joint-ngo-letter-ambassador-thomas-greenfield-ethiopia/>
4. To End Ethiopia's Tigray War, the U.N. and AU Must Act <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/03/08/the-u-n-must-end-the-horrors-of-ethiopias-tigray-war/>
5. Blinken condemns 'ethnic cleansing' in Ethiopia's Tigray <https://news.yahoo.com/blinken-condemns-ethnic-cleansing-ethiopias-220414116.html>
6. EU floats Ethiopia sanctions over humanitarian aid <https://euobserver.com/foreign/151189>

Thank you!