



Official Correspondence GSTS-O.C-2021-095
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)¹

For Immediate Release

Re: Denouncing Decision by Ethiopian Regime to Expel High-Level United Nations Officials

The Global Society of Tigray Scholars and Professionals (GSTS) strongly condemns the decision by the Ethiopian government to expel high-level UN officials involved in the ongoing humanitarian operation in Tigray and elsewhere in Ethiopia. We recall that the Ethiopian government also suspended the activities of three international humanitarian organizations - Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the AI Maktoum Foundation – a few months ago, under the pretext of blanket accusations against humanitarian aid workers, in a move that portends its current steps against United Nations bodies. The regime and its propaganda outlets have also sustained an intense media campaign, for months, proffering unfounded allegations against humanitarian organizations endangering aid workers and hindering humanitarian activities.

The unprecedented action taken today is a particularly significant milestone providing irrefutable evidence that the Ethiopian government has no intention to abide by International Humanitarian Laws or to loosen its blockade on food, medical supplies, fuel, and other essential supplies into Tigray and nearby regions. As recently noted by United Nations Relief, Chief Martin Griffiths, this blockade has resulted in the worst hunger crisis in the world in a decade, which is exacerbated by shortages in food, fuel, medicine, and other objects and necessities indispensable to survival. The timing of such reckless decision is particularly worrisome. This is happening at a critical time when heart-breaking famine is already taking the lives of civilians in Tigray and when most humanitarian organizations in Tigray are declaring acute shortage of essential and life-saving food, medicine and other services.

Millions of Tigrayans are now under conditions of an entirely man-made active famine and are at immediate risk for starvation or death attributable to the combined factors of unprecedented malnutrition and disease, with alarming scale among children, pregnant and lactating women. These numbers are expected to rise dramatically. Over 5.3 million people – more than 90% of Tigray's population - are currently in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. It is to be noted, that the current situation is a direct result of the systematic destruction of Tigray's economy and livelihood, specifically the agricultural system by the allied Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Amhara regional forces. The allied forces left a trail of scorched earth, in which Ethiopian and Eritrean Forces deliberately burned crops ready for harvest, grain, and homes.

As the war on Tigray, and the complete siege and blockade continue, the Tigrayan people are being collectively punished through the inhumane weaponization of starvation. It is no longer possible for the international community to deny that the Ethiopian regime is intentionally and deliberately violating all humanitarian and human

rights precepts in a bid to destroy an ethnic minority. Due to the brutal siege, millions of civilians are susceptible to man-made famine, with devastating reports revealing hundreds, if not thousands, of civilians including children, women, and elders are starving to death. The expulsion of key UN staffs while the famine is spiraling out of control clearly reinforces the regime's intention to decimate the people of Tigray once for all. All these deliberate activities meet the criminal threshold of a war crime, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide, and therefore warrants immediate intervention and resolution.

GSTS strongly believes that the recent expulsion of critically needed humanitarian officers is a continuation of the grand agenda of starving Tigray to subdue the people to the regime's autocratic ruling.

GSTS, therefore, urges the UN Security Council to invoke the necessary measures, in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2417, to stop Ethiopia's violation of international law and to swiftly address the humanitarian crisis in Tigray before hundreds of thousands perish. Aid agencies must be granted unhindered access without any precondition to the Tigray region to allow for comprehensive humanitarian relief.

GSTS also strongly asks the UNSC, US, EU and others to urgently enforce regular and direct humanitarian air bridge services to Tigray.

We also urge members of the international community to recognize the gravity of what is occurring before the eyes of the world and to swiftly enact all appropriate measures to ensure that the Ethiopian government is forced to respect international war and humanitarian laws. As UN Relief Chief Martin Griffiths, rightly pointed out, the crisis in Tigray is a "stain on the conscience of the entire world" and one that will not be expunged should the international community fail to address it before it gets catastrophically worse.



Sincerely,
Global Society of Tigrai Scholars
and Professionals
30th September 2021

ⁱGSTS is 501(C) and 33/2011 legally registered non-partisan, not-for-profit, and autonomous Global Knowledge Network of over 3,200 Tigrai Scholars and Professionals aimed at creating Knowledge-based economy and society in Tigray, and beyond. It stands for academia, multidisciplinary and cross sectoral research and applied policy development, human capital development, fostering and advancing science, technology, and innovation, technology and knowledge transfer, youth and gender development, migration and displacement, and other educational and development related endeavors. It also works in educational advocacy and collaborates with various stakeholders towards promoting peace, good governance, human rights, and humanitarian activities.