

Official Correspondence GSTS-O.C-2022-162
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)¹

Classification: OPEN

- **H.E. Ursula von der Leyen**
President of the European Commission
- **H.E. Roberta Metsola**
President of the European Parliament
- **H.E. Charles Michel**
President of the European Council
- **H.E. Josep Borrell**
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission
- **H.E. Moussa Faki**
Chairperson of the African Union Commission
- **H.E. Macky Sall**
President of the Republic of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union for the year 2022

Re: Urgent Appeal to End the Brutal Siege and Catastrophic Humanitarian Crisis and Atrocities Against Tigrayans

Excellencies,

Tigray is still under a 360° brutal siege and facing an entirely man-made catastrophic famine and atrocity crimes that have lasted for more than 15 months since the war waged on Tigray by the Ethiopian regime and its Eritrean and Amhara allies.

The war on Tigray has involved scores of documented mass massacres, widespread weaponized rape and Conflict Related Sexual violence (CRSV) on an industrial scale. More than 1 million Tigrayans have been ethnically cleansed from Western Tigray as part of the illegal and violent occupation of Tigrayan lands by Amhara forces. In addition to these terrible atrocities, the Ethiopian government has also systematically and deliberately weaponized starvation by destroying livelihoods, public infrastructure, and other objects indispensable to the survival of the Tigrayan civilian population including the devastation of the agricultural system in the initial phase of the war through the deliberate burning of foodstuffs, livestock, crops; and the destruction of vital agricultural supplies, including seeds, farm tools, and irrigation works. These are in violation of [Article 54](#) of the protocols of the Geneva Convention of 1949 and 1977 on the Protection of victims of International armed Conflicts. Prime Minister Abiy's regime has also imposed a medieval-like siege on Tigray cutting the Region off from the world. For the last 15 months, Tigray has been cut off from electricity, health services, banking, clean water supply, fuel, and land and air transportation. Bank accounts opened inside and outside of Tigray have been frozen, while the Ethiopian regime has cancelled tens of thousands of business licenses previously operated by Tigrayans. This has essentially put a stop to all economic activity within the Tigray Region, endangering the lives of over seven million people.

In addition to this deliberate destruction of livelihoods, the Ethiopian government has imposed a complete humanitarian blockade in total disregard of international humanitarian laws. According to a recent [report](#) from the World Food Programme (WFP), 83 percent of people in Tigray are



experiencing food insecurity. In addition to this, hospitals have run out of medical supplies, and civilian Tigrayans, including children, elders, pregnant women, etc., are dying due to a lack of basic medicines. ICRC [reported](#), "single-use items such as gloves, surgical materials even chest drains are being washed and reused increasing infections."

The progression of this deeply distressing humanitarian situation has been made worse by indiscriminate shelling and aerial attacks, including using lethal Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (drones) from China, Iran, UAE, and Turkey. The deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure continues unabated, today with nearly daily drone bombardment targeting the civilian population, private and public infrastructure, and other spaces, including residential homes, hospitals, camps of internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugee camps, hydroelectric power grids, and distribution units, places of worship, electric substations, and public transportation.

It is with this context and in the spirit of the 6th European Union (EU) – African Union (AU) Summit, we are writing to you today to respectfully request to address the dire crisis on Tigray. Among others, the EU-AU summit needs to address the following:

1. **Ending to brutal siege and de-facto humanitarian blockade imposed on Tigray**
 - collectively voice and enforce all practical mechanisms to immediately end the callous siege and humanitarian blockade imposed on Tigray and allow urgent and unfettered access to the millions of people in need of immediate relief;
 - pressure the Ethiopian government to swiftly restore all services in Tigray including banking, communication, transportation, trade, and other objects that are indispensable for the survival and day-to-day needs of the civilian population.
2. **Impose a No-Fly Zone and arms embargo on Ethiopia and Eritrea**
 - establish and institutionalize a no-fly zone that would allow only humanitarian flights while halting indiscriminate, deliberate, and daily aerial and drone bombardment;
 - take unified and pragmatic action to end drone bombardments and flow of weapons, including UAVs, into Ethiopia from countries like Turkey, Iran, China, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
3. **Immediate and verifiable withdrawal of Eritrean forces**
 - take concrete measures to ensure the immediate, complete, unconditional, and verifiable withdrawal of Eritrean forces from all occupied territories of Tigray and other parts of Ethiopia to their deployment lines before November 4, 2020;
 - act swiftly and robustly to hold Eritrea accountable for brutal crimes and violations of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law committed on Tigray.
4. **Hold perpetrators of war crimes, crime against humanity, and genocide accountable**
 - pressure the warring parties to provide access to all atrocity areas to the UN International Commission of Human Rights Experts and other independent and impartial investigations into all alleged atrocities committed in the war on Tigray and ensure justice and redress to victims;
 - acknowledge and make public determination of the heinous crimes committed on Tigray by the proper designation, 'Genocide'.



5. **Immediate negotiation to end hostilities and begin the process for dialogue**

- facilitate credible, comprehensive, and permanent ceasefire agreement and de-escalation of hostilities by all parties to the conflict, and instigate all-inclusive national dialogue involving all stakeholders;
- support efforts toward a genuinely sustainable path to durable peace that also addresses the underlying causes of the unprecedented and grave crises ravaging Ethiopia.

6. **Immediate release of arrested and detained Tigrayans and other Ethiopians**

- condemn in the strongest terms the mass incarceration, summary execution of Tigrayan civilians, and escalating genocidal rhetoric in Ethiopia;
- press upon the Ethiopian government on its obligation for unconditional observance of international laws and norms on protection of civilians at times of conflict and demand the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians imprisoned because of their Tigrayan identity.

GSTS expresses its readiness and commitment to work with the EU, AU, governments, and institutions of the EU and AU member states and other stakeholders to support any initiative that fosters long-lasting peace, stability, reconciliation, and a better future for all the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia and the Africa region at large.



Sincerely,
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals
16th February 2022

CC:

- **HE Janez Lenarčič**
European Commissioner for Crisis Management, in charge of European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid. European Emergency Response Coordinator
- **H.E Jutta Urpilaine**
EU Commissioner for International Partnerships
- **HE Amb. Bankole Adeoye**
African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security
- **HE Annette Weber**
EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa | Red Sea and the Horn of Africa|
- **HE Jean Kamau**
Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council, PSC, for the Month of February
- **All Members States of EU and AU**
- **All Participants of the EU-AU Summit**

¹ GSTS is a 501(C) and 33/2011 legally registered non-partisan and autonomous Global Knowledge Network of over 5,000 Tigray 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.