



Official Correspondence GSTS-O.C-2021-050
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)

Open Letter

**Excellency, Prime Minister Boris Johnson
The President of G-7 Leaders' Summit**

Excellencies, The G-7 Leaders

Excellencies, The G-20 Leaders

**Excellency, Ambassador Sven Jürgenson
The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia to the United Nations
President of the Security Council for the Month of June**

**Excellency, Mr. Antonio Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN)**

**Excellency, Ms. Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission**

**Excellency. Mr. Josep Borrell
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign
Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission**

**Excellency, Mr Jens Stoltenberg
NATO Secretary General**

Urgent Call to Avert Famine and New Wave of Atrocities in Tigray

Excellencies,

1. The Global Society of Tigray Scholars and Professionals (GSTS)ⁱ is gravely concerned with the credible reports emerging from various sources regarding an impending military offensive the Ethiopian and Eritrean forces plan to carry out in Tigray. These sources indicate that the new joint scorched-earth military campaign named 'final offensive' has been authorized by the governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia. As part of the government's plan to exterminate Tigrayans, this phase of military operation is to be carried out with the support of newly imported military hardware including drones, advanced multi-role missile-armed attack helicopters, and incendiary weapons on civilians carrying internationally prohibited chemicals. There is already credible evidence that Eritrean and Ethiopian forces have been using prohibited incendiary weapons such as white phosphorus (NEPA: level 4 in terms of health and flammability risks) and other



weapons on civilians in Tigray. Under the international law, white phosphorus is considered as incendiary weapon under Protocol III of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The intent, nature, and scale of the atrocities in Tigray over the past 200 days point to the planned 'final offensive' is the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments' final phase to exterminate Tigrayans.

2. GSTS's concerns are heightened by the category 5 level food insecurity- famine- on the large civilian population of Tigray. According to these reports, 91 per cent of the 7 million Tigray population needs emergency aid, more than 350,000 are deliberately starved by the systematical employment of various obstacles by the invading Eritrean, Ethiopian and Amhara forces. The new phase of the military offensive would further exacerbate the mass starvation and the humanitarian crisis through further displacement and destruction of any remaining assets indispensable to rural populations such as farm animals, implements, seeds, products and harvest. With the agrarian communities dependent on seasonal rains, any delay in preparing land for cultivation and blockage of access to seeds and fertilizers for the next harvest would mean indirect inducement of widespread famine in many parts of Tigray. A military offensive now therefore amounts to a death penalty on hundreds of thousands of Tigrayan civilians, especially children.

3. It is to be recalled that the war in Tigray, which started on the 4th of November 2020, is now entering its eighth month. As confirmed by the United Nations and other international bodies, this war has been characterized by extreme brutality directed at the civilian population as well as deliberate destruction and looting of public and private infrastructure. Numerous reports have detailed mass atrocities, indiscriminate shelling, ethnic cleansing, weaponized sexual and gender-based violence, deliberate infection of women by HIV/AIDs and other STDs, weaponized mass starvation, as well as intentional destruction and looting of civilian infrastructures (including health facilities, schools, heritage sites, and places of worship).

Displacement is also hitting record numbers, with an estimated 2.2 million internally displaced and more than 70,000 people fleeing over the border to Sudan. As has been noted by the UN Human Rights Commissioner, Michelle Bachelet, these human rights violations in Tigray amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. More than 91 % of Tigray's population has become critically food insecure and in need of emergency humanitarian aid, as a direct result of the war. Hundreds of thousands face the threat of starvation, with a recent UN report revealing that people are already dying from starvation on daily basis. Despite this dire situation, the vast majority of Tigray remains at least inaccessible to aid workers, primarily due to the obstruction by the Ethiopian, Amhara and Eritrean forces. Furthermore, the majority of Tigray is facing a government-imposed communications blackout and remains cut off from electricity, health services, internet, banking, and a clean water supply.

4. GSTS calls upon the international community, especially the Security Council, G-7 and G-20 Summits to avert an IPC Phase 5 catastrophic food insecurity and deliberate



starvation and famine, and another wave of atrocities in Tigray, including the use of white phosphorus, and other incendiary weapons on civilians.

We urge, the G-7 and G-20 Summits, the UN Security Council and the NATO to:

- a. Establish a mechanism to ensure the **immediate, unconditional and verifiable removal of all Eritrean forces as well as Amhara troops** from Tigray,
- b. Ensure **rapid, unconditional, unfettered, and sustained delivery of humanitarian aid** and items essential to survival, including establishing a “**lifeline humanitarian corridor**” from Sudan to Tigray under a de-militarised route designated for safe passage of humanitarian supplies;
- c. Ensure the **protection of civilians, refugees and the safety and security of international humanitarian aid workers** under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and deploy monitoring and verification Commission in Tigray, under the United Nations auspices, of international civil and security presences, with appropriate equipment and personnel to protect civilians, deterring renewed hostilities, maintaining and where necessary enforcing a ceasefire, and ensuring the removal of Eritrean and other forces;
- d. **Uphold resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security**, as well as resolution 2417 against “using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare” and take all measures to address violations of humanitarian laws and human rights by the Ethiopian, Eritrean and Amhara forces;
- e. Conduct **independent investigation** into the use of white phosphorus and other chemicals on the civilian population of Tigray;
- f. **Impose economic and financial sanctions and arms embargo** on Eritrea and Ethiopia
- g. **Impose a no-fly zone on Tigray** to prevent use of incendiary weapons on civilians and to disrupt and degrade the military supply lines;
- h. Impose **targeted punitive measures against the violators** of international humanitarian laws and human rights in the form of targeted individual sanctions, travel bans and asset freezes;
- i. Call for **postponement of the elections** in Ethiopia until the peaceful resolution of the civil wars in Ethiopia and support the **establishment of a transitional government** comprising all political forces;



- j. **Refer the situation in Tigray to the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court** to investigate grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and other violations of international humanitarian law, including those committed by Eritrean forces, use of prohibited chemical agents such as white phosphorus, and other incendiary weapons on civilians, and the use of drones.



Sincerely,
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)
9th June 2021

CC:

- Excellencies, All The Members of the Security Council
- Excellency, Antony Blinken
US Secretary of State
- Excellency, Tedros Adhanom
Director-General of the World Health Organization
- Excellency, Fernando Arias
Director-General of Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
- Excellency, Audrey Azoulay
Director General of UNESCO
- Excellency, Mark Lowcock
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator
- Excellency, Izumi Nakamitsu
USG and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
- Excellency, Samantha Power
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator
- Excellency, David Muldrow Beasley
Executive Director of the World Food Programme
- Excellency, Henrietta H. Fore
Executive Director of UNICEF
- Excellency, Michelle Bachelet



United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights

- Excellency, Mr. Filippo Grandi,
High Commissioner for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- Excellency. Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki
President of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
- Excellency, Peter Maurer
President of International Committee of the Red Cross
- Excellency. David Malpass
President of the World Bank Group
- Excellency, Kristalina Georgieva
Managing Director (MD) and Chairwoman of the Executive Board International
Monetary Fund
- All Diplomatic Missions in Geneva
- All Diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa
- Excellency, Félix Tshisekedi
President, the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Chairperson of the African Union for 2021
- Excellency, Moussa Faki
Chairperson of the African Union Commission

ⁱ GSTS is a 501(C), and 33/2011 legally registered non-partisan, not-for-profit, and autonomous Global Knowledge Network of over 3,000 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.