

Statement by the Government of Tigray on President Biden's Executive Order on the crisis in Ethiopia.

Sept 18, 2021



The Government of Tigray wishes to express its appreciation for the consistent and constructive efforts of the Administration of President Joe Biden, the United States Government, and the United States Congress to bring about a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Tigray in particular and in Ethiopia in general.

The Government of Tigray is particularly grateful for the diverse steps taken by the United States Government to address breaches of International Humanitarian Law, and grave human rights violation by Ethiopian, Eritrean and allied Amhara forces operating in Tigray. We acknowledge its repeated calls for Eritrean and Amhara forces to withdraw from Tigray and for a negotiated ceasefire toward a peaceful resolution of the ongoing war on Tigray. To that end, we invite the United States to play the role of facilitating negotiations for a ceasefire along with other international partners. The Executive Order, albeit long overdue, will go a long way in helping resolve the crisis in the region.

The Government of Tigray acknowledges the rationale for President Biden's decision to declare a national security emergency in response to the political and humanitarian crises in Ethiopia. President Biden is correct in identifying this crisis as "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States." The humanitarian crisis in Tigray has been generated by the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea, and allied Amhara forces operating with impunity in Tigray. The looming danger of devastating famine and starvation visited upon the people of Tigray is a threat to millions of people.

Furthermore, the current crisis has been exacerbated by government-sponsored political polarization and ethnic fragmentation driven by a persistent and vitriolic campaign of vilification directed against the people of Tigray. The deteriorating crisis threatens to turn the country into a failed state, with far-reaching and disastrous ramifications for the entire Horn of Africa. Furthermore, the increasing

involvement of foreign powers in the conflict in providing arms to the Government of Ethiopia, threatens to turn the country into an arena in which regional and global geopolitical rivalries play out irrespective of what is good for the people of Ethiopia.

For these reasons, the Government of Tigray strongly believes that the Executive Order on Imposing Sanctions on Certain Persons with Respect to the Humanitarian and Human Rights Crisis in Ethiopia signed by President Biden on September 17, 2021, is a step in the right direction. The Government of Tigray is ready to support and abide by the core tenets of the Executive Order and contribute its share towards the fulfilment of the three goals outlined in the Executive Order, such as by identifying individuals, groups or entities who might have committed any crimes against the people of Tigray or other people in the course of ongoing hostilities. We reiterate our commitment to supporting all necessary investigations, including UN-mandated independent investigation, to address potential breaches on the part of individuals and/or entities affiliated with Tigrayan forces and bring perpetrators to justice.

The Government of Tigray agrees with the Biden Administration that a different path is possible; that a military solution is not the first nor the most ideal course. We believe that escalating or protracting this conflict with all its attendant humanitarian costs is a grave threat to Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Indeed, we are ready to play our role in bringing about a negotiated ceasefire and ultimately a negotiated peace settlement that affirms and protects the rights and interests of the people of Tigray and other Ethiopians.

As has been made clear in our previous statements, the most urgent priority of the Government of Tigray is a peaceful resolution that reestablishes the status quo ante, in which all invading forces must withdraw from all constitutionally established territories of Tigray. In practice, this entails the withdrawal of Amhara forces to their prewar territories, the departure of all Eritrean forces from Ethiopia, as well as the end of the inhumane siege on Tigray deliberately implemented so as to achieve that which has eluded the Ethiopian government on the battlefield: bringing the people of Tigray to their knees. This vicious blockade has denied the people of Tigray access to basic services, such as banking, electricity, telecommunications, trade, commercial transport (both ground and air), and humanitarian aid.

We also would like to underscore that our military engagement in areas outside Tigray is not an act of aggression but a last-ditch attempt at breaking the aforementioned siege, which has caused catastrophic famine, as well as to stave off another round of brutal invasions once our adversaries have regrouped and rearmed themselves.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our full support and appreciation for all international efforts at removing the brutal siege, facilitating unfettered humanitarian aid delivery, ensuring the withdrawal of all invading forces, bringing

about a negotiated ceasefire, and initiating an independent investigation into all atrocities committed in the course of the war on Tigray, and holding perpetrators accountable for their crimes.