



Official Correspondence GSTS-O.C-2021-059
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)

H.E. Ambassador Nicolas de Rivière

Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations
President of the Security Council for the Month of July
New York

H.E. Michelle Bachelet

United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights
Geneva

H.E. Antonio Guterres

Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN)
New York, NY

H.E. Antony Blinken

Secretary of State of the United States
Washington DC

H.E. Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission
Brussels

OPEN LETTER

**Opportunity to Rectify Errors and Establish a New Independent and impartial
Only UN- Mandated Investigation of Mass Atrocities, War Crimes, Crimes
Against Humanity, Ethnic Cleansing, and Genocide in Tigray and in other parts
of Ethiopia**

1. The Global Society of Tigrayan Scholars and Professionals (GSTS)¹ would like to draw Your Excellencies' attention to the fast-changing realities in Tigray State, following the military defeat of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces in the past few weeks. Since 28 June 2021, the Tigray Defense Forces controlled the majority of Tigray, including Mekelle, the capital of the Tigray State. The Tigray government, duly elected by the people of Tigray in September 2020, has returned to its prior governing position.
2. GSTS, therefore, would like to repeat its call to Your Excellencies, the Security Council, and the United States to take in account this new reality and use it as an opportunity to rectify its erroneous decision to conduct investigation into the heinous crimes committed in Tigray jointly with the highly partisan and widely discredited Ethiopian government run Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC).
3. GSTS also brings to your attention a statement issued by the Tigray Government on 5 July 2021 that sets the conditions for a negotiated ceasefire to hold in Tigray and beyond. More specifically, the establishment of an independent UN led investigation as the second condition for ceasefire and peaceful resolution of the war on Tigray.
4. It is to be recalled that GSTS has repeatedly made public calls and officially corresponded with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations various bodies including the Security Council to respect the interest of victims and place it at the centre of the investigation. This would require a UN only investigation as the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is considered partisan by victims, the Tigrayan population in general and because the government of Tigray has noted the problems with such a joint investigation.



5. We reiterate that the Ethiopian government is the principal party and chief architect of the war and atrocities committed in Tigray and that the EHRC has been providing cover up to atrocities committed by the Ethiopian federal and Amhara regional state governments, as clearly demonstrated in several instances, including through its early deliberately misleading report on the attribution of the Mai Kadra massacres to Tigrayans, who were actually victims of a deliberate - and ongoing - campaign of terror and ethnic cleansing. Had there not been no refugees who escaped the initial burst of this campaign by fleeing to Sudan and who were thus accessible to international media and subsequent Amnesty International investigation, the world would have remained fully misinformed by the EHRC's deceitful report about the nature of the massacres in Mai Kadra and the identity of the perpetrators. Moreover, this false report has been used (and still continues to be used) by the Ethiopian and Amhara governments to incite hate, galvanize support for violent invasion, further commit atrocities, and forceful depopulation of close to 2 million Tigrayans from their settlements. The Ethiopian Ambassador to the United Nations also made use of this false and deceiving report siding with purported victims Amhara ethnicity in his presentation to the UNSC open session held on Tigray on July 2, 2021. He publicly and formally endorsed the continuing occupation of parts of Tigray by Amhara forces in violation of the Ethiopian constitution.

6. GSTS further notes that even since our last statement to the OHCHR and the international community, His Excellency Pekka Haavisto, the European Union (EU)'s Special Envoy to Ethiopia, has attested the genocidal policy intention of the Ethiopian, Amhara and Eritrean forces when Ethiopian leaders said to him - "we are going to wipe out the Tigrayans for a 100 years." Several mass atrocities and grave crimes have been reported that corroborate this genocidal policy intention. These reports include the use of prohibited incendiary chemicals and cluster bombs, extrajudicial killing of civilians, the bombing of civilians in a busy marketplace aiming at inflicting maximum civilian casualties, and preventing those injured from receiving medical emergency assistance, weaponized rape and sexual violence, deliberate infection of women and girls with HIV/AIDs and other STDs. It is also to be recalled that 12 humanitarian workers, including the latest three MSF aid workers have been deliberately murdered, and their assailants remain at large.

7. GSTS further notes with emphasis that, while claiming the Ethiopian armed forces withdrawal from many parts of Tigray as a unilateral ceasefire to allow farmers to farm and better humanitarian access, Tigray people are still facing genocidal war in a different form. We recall that when withdrawing Mekelle, the Ethiopian government forces destroyed UNICEF and other UN offices in Tigray. There are Tigrayans in several border villages and towns in Tigray still occupied by Amhara regional state and Eritrea forces that continue to suffer cruel and widespread atrocities. Continuing with their policy of use of starvation as weapon, Tigray still remains in siege by Amhara, Ethiopian and Eritrean forces. They have completely shut down telecommunication, transportation, electricity, and banking systems. The allied Amhara regional state forces destroyed a bridge in the Tekeze River, a crucial gateway to supplying food aid to many parts of Tigray region, and are actively preventing the transport of life-saving aid and agricultural inputs. The Ethiopian government is now extensively and arbitrarily detaining, arresting and torturing tens of thousands of Tigrayans residing outside of Tigray. There are also reports that part of the tens of thousands of detained Tigrayans are sent to Eritrea.

8. GSTS regrets that the OHCHR has thus far ignored the calls of the Tigray people, the government of Tigray, the GSTS, and the international organizations such as Human Rights Watch's repeated calls for the UN only independent investigation and instead preceded joining the EHRC against the wishes of victims of unimaginable atrocities that have been committed since 4th November 2020.

9. GSTS warns of the significant damage the joint investigation brings to the reputation of the OHCHR and lack of global legitimacy and acceptability of any report and finding of such



joint investigation. In the eyes of the Tigrayan victims of the egregious violations of human rights and humanitarian laws, the joint investigation is null and void.

10. GSTS once again urges the OHCHR to use the new reality in Tigray as an opportunity to reconsider its position and establish a new independent UN body that conducts victims-centred and objective investigations.

GSTS stands ready to cooperate fully with such UN body of inquiry.



Sincerely,
The Global Society of Tigray Scholars
and Professionals (GSTS)
13th July 2021

CC:

H.E. Josep Borrell

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign
Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission
Brussels

H.E. Annette Weber

EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa
Berlin

H.E. Kenneth Roth

Executive Director of Human Rights Watch
New York, NY

H.E. Agnes Callamard

Secretary General, Amnesty International
London

All diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa

All Media Outlets

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.