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 The Government of National Regional State of Tigray
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 Office of President

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 Date 19/12/2021

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 Ref No 0/33/225/84

His Excellency
 Mr. Antonio Guterres
 Secretary-General
 United Nations
 New York

Your Excellency,

I am writing on behalf of the people of Tigray and the National Regional Government of Tigray to reiterate our call for peace. Over the last thirteen and a half months our people have suffered unspeakable horrors on account of the Ethio-Eritrean war waged against them. We continue to undergo starvation, atrocity and violation of basic rights. Tigrayans in Addis Ababa and all over the country are being taken to concentration camps and they live under a reign of fear. Today, Tigrayans also face the daily terrors of indiscriminate drone strikes from the skies. Peace cannot come too soon for our people.

I have ordered those units of the Tigray Army that are outside the borders of Tigray to withdraw to the borders of Tigray with immediate effect.

Our forces are intact and undefeated on the ground. We are confident in their capability, spirit and steadfastness. We have overcome extreme odds and adapted to radical changes in circumstances and prevailed. The people of Tigray have proved that we cannot be ruled against our will.

We have heard the unanimous international call for us to withdraw from neighboring regions. The Government of Ethiopia has made the same call.

We trust that our bold act of withdrawal will be a decisive opening for peace.

Over the last year, our people of Tigray have resisted the armies of Ethiopia and Eritrea, the militia and special forces of Amhara Region, and the drones provided by foreign powers, relying solely on ourselves. We have received not a single bullet, not a single vehicle, not one uniform, from anyone other than arming ourselves from the enemy. We have pursued no agenda other than our own. We have no political debts to anyone.

The Ethio-Eritrean war against the people of Tigray has also brought enormous suffering to the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea. We also mourn for those young Ethiopians and Eritreans who perish on the battlefield and for the victims of the widening war in other parts of Ethiopia. We are saddened

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 Tigray

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 Ethiopia



by the families who go to bed hungry, for the sick who cannot obtain medicine, and for the students whose hopes of an education and a bright future are dashed.

The Government of Ethiopia has used its meager resources to buy arms to use against Ethiopians, and to mobilize vast numbers of conscripts and militia. It has begged foreign powers for weapons and specialists to run those weapons systems and will in due course pay the political price for this dependence, forfeiting Ethiopia's long and proud history of charting its own course in world affairs. We no longer see a capable state that can deliver on its development goals but a state facing fragmentation and collapse. No amount of patriotic rhetoric can mask that tragic reality.

The war has become internationalized, bringing regional and global players into the vortex. The repercussions of the war are likely to go much further than the borders of Ethiopia.

Our political objectives are as follows.

First, we seek to free ourselves from genocidal assault. This assault has taken the form of occupation of our land and gross abuses perpetrated against our people. From November 2020 until June 2021, most of Tigray was occupied and civilians were subjected to massacre, rape, torture, pillage, starvation and a host of other crimes. The Ethiopian and Eritrean governments entirely spurned their obligations under the human rights law, international humanitarian law, and other solemn commitments including the Genocide Convention.

The international community utterly failed to fulfil its obligations under the Responsibility to Protect, failing to protect civilians from the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in an effective and timely manner. The only protection for our people has been provided by our own Tigray Army. At the current juncture, with the Ethio-Eritrean coalition and its internationally-provided weaponry including drones threatening to intensify another round of genocidal assault, we call for immediate action to fulfil the responsibility to protect including:

1. Establishing a no-fly zone for hostile flights of aircraft and drones over Tigray except for humanitarian and civil purposes.
2. Imposing arms embargoes on Ethiopia and Eritrea.

We trust that you and the Security Council will consider those obligations and act on them.

Most of our lands are now free of the occupier. However, Western Tigray and parts of northern Tigray close to Eritrea remain under violent and abusive occupation. There is ongoing ethnic cleansing in Western Tigray.

We are withdrawing to the boundaries of Tigray even while foreign forces remain in occupation of our lands committing abuses against our people.

We trust that you and the Security Council will ensure that every measure is utilized to end the illegal occupation and annexation of parts of Tigray and the violations against the people who are under that regime of occupation.

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We propose that the Security Council establishes a mechanism to ensure the immediate and verifiable cessation of all forms of hostilities, the total withdrawal of all external forces, including Eritrean armed forces and Amhara Special Forces and militia from all Tigray parts to their deployment lines before 4 November, 2020. We further propose that the Council guarantees the restoration of Tigrayan administration and the rights of IDPs and refugees to return to their places of origin and access to and restitution of their homes, land, business, properties and other entitlements.

This assault has also taken the form of imposed starvation including the deprivation of essential services. This continues until today. When we liberated most of Tigray in June, the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea tightened that siege and gave no indication that they would lift it. Consequently, our forces determined that in order to break the siege we would expand our operations outside Tigray.

We have been deeply disappointed that the international community including the United Nations has not found a way to fulfil its responsibility to provide essential humanitarian assistance to the starving. We were particularly dismayed that even when we had military control over the city of Kombolcha with its substantial humanitarian supply depots that the UN was still unable to release that food to the needy people of Tigray even though the road was open and safe under our control.

We trust that you and the Security Council will now redouble your efforts to ensure that the war crime of starvation is stopped and aid is provided.

We propose an airbridge and/or humanitarian corridor to Tigray under a de-militarised route designated for safe passage of humanitarian supplies to ensure rapid, unconditional, unfettered, and sustained delivery of humanitarian aid and items essential to survival.

Second, we have no ambition to install ourselves at the head of a government of Ethiopia, but to ensure that our rights are respected based on the Federal Constitution of Ethiopia. Achieving that goal requires an all-inclusive dialogue in which all political parties and constituencies within Ethiopia are fully and fairly represented, leading to an agreed framework on the way forward. It requires that all political prisoners be released, that censorship be lifted, that hate speech and incitement to violence be renounced forever. It requires that foreign intelligence and security operatives be removed from Ethiopian soil.

A democratic Ethiopia requires that the wrongs of the past be fully confronted and accountability for crimes committed be pursued. There can be no impunity, especially for the most serious crimes. We recognize that we must be part of that process of reflection and accountability along with others.

In this regard we welcome the International Commission of Human Rights Experts established by the UN Human Rights Council last week. The work of the Commission is essential. The members of the Commission must be independent, impartial experts and they must be given access to all parts of Ethiopia without preconditions. There can be no lasting peace without justice. We shall extend all cooperation to the Commission.

We trust that you and the Security Council will use your authority to ensure that the International Commission of Human Rights Experts is fully able to fulfil its mandate.



Your Excellency,

As you have repeatedly stated, the political crises and armed conflicts with Ethiopia, including the Ethio-Eritrean war against the people of Tigray, have no military solutions. No party can impose their will on others through military domination. This is a reality that will not change. The best time to have recognized this and acted upon it was before this needless war. There have been opportunities during the course of the war. Each time the chance for a cessation of hostilities and negotiation has been passed over, the human cost of the war has escalated and Ethiopia has been dragged deeper into the vortex of state failure.

The National Regional Government of Tigray has engaged with the African Union High Representative, President Olusegun Obasanjo, and other international representatives including from Kenya, the United States, and the United Nations, in good faith and we have communicated our concerns and proposals clearly and consistently. We have done so regardless of the strength of our military position.

Do not let another opportunity for peace pass without decisive action.

We propose an immediate cessation of hostilities followed by negotiations. We are communicating this proposal to you, to the Member States of the UN Security Council, to Pres. Obasanjo and to the President of Kenya, H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta.

We trust that you and the Security Council will give full backing to a cessation of hostilities followed by peace negotiations.


Debretsion G/Michael /PHD/
President

