



23rd March 2022

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The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP,
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,
10 Downing Street,
London,
SW1A 2AA

OPEN LETTER

Dear Prime Minister,

Subject – The Imperative of the UK Government’s Responsibility to Stop the Genocidal War on Tigray

1. We, concerned UK citizens and residents of Tigrayan Ethiopian origin organised under Mekete Tigray UK are yet writing to the UK Government to convey our continuing horror and sadness of the abject failure of the UK Government, the EU, the EU and the Western countries in general to stop the Genocidal War on Tigray. Russia and China are aiding and abating the Tigray Genocide. Apart from the usual expressions of diplomatic clichés of “*concerns*”, “*worries*” and “*call for dialogue*”, the UK Government has taken little concrete actions to stop the war in Tigray. In essence and in terms of their effects to date they are tantamount to the appeasement of the perpetrators – the regimes in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Amhara Region. It is a public record that the PM of the UK or the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs has not spoken in public for 500 days now on the genocidal war that has been raging in Tigray. The Patriarch of the second biggest Orthodox Christian Church in the World, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Christian Church, who is under house arrest and is being persecuted by the Ethiopian regime, spoke in despair about the Tigray Genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity to alert and urge the world as follows:

“It is not the fault of the Tigray people. Many barbarisms have been conducted in Ethiopia, but what is happening in Tigray is of the highest brutality and cruelty. This is genocide of an entire people. They want to wipe-out the people of Tigray from the face of the Earth. I have said a lot of things but no one allows the message to be shared. Rather, it is being stifled and censored. The whole world should know it. The World must act now including all religious organisations to make their voice to stop the genocide.”

(The Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Abune Mathias, 8 May 2021)

2. In its 16th month, the war in Tigray continues to inflict unimaginable pain, devastation and horror on the people of Tigray. There is credible, corroborated and widespread evidence by multiple domestic and international agencies and institutions that war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and genocide have been committed by forces of the regimes in Ethiopia, Eritrea and the Amhara Regional Government. Hunger and famine, and sexual violence and rape whose scale has not been seen since the Second World War have occurred, being weaponised as stratagem war in Tigray. Systematic and widespread mass atrocities, the wanton destruction of Tigray's infrastructure and economic sectors including agriculture, industry, civil infrastructure, health facilities, telecommunication and transport have inflicted horrific damage to Tigrayans. Tigray has been deliberately starved off by 360 Degree suffocation and strangulation through a complete economic blockade and military siege. The latest study by the Ghent University based in Belgium as reported by Geoffrey York on the Globe and Mail on 14 March 2022 states that up to 500,000 Tigrayans have perished due to the onslaught of the war, man-made hunger and famine and the deliberate blockade of world humanitarian aid reaching Tigray: *"As many as 500,000 people have died from war and famine in Tigray Region of Northern Ethiopia over the past 16 months. The estimate by experts, who have closely monitored the Tigray conflict since its beginning, is a rare attempt to calculate the war-related death toll in a Region that has been largely cut off from the outside world"*. The unfolding horrors of the genocidal war on Tigray have been spoken about by many global institutions as well as individuals.

"Every now and then, East Africa breaks into world consciousness. It happened in the mid-1980s, when Ethiopia underwent a terrible famine. Teams of pop stars made two hit "Charity Singles": "We are the World" and "Do they Know it is Christmas?" Today, Ethiopia is again in the news, for War in Tigray, a region in the country's north. What is happening there is worse than war, if such a thing is possible. Tigray is a theatre for war crimes and crime against humanity. To make it more interesting – if that is the word – Ethiopia's head of state is the 2019 Nobel Peace Laureate, Prime Minister of Ethiopia."

(Jay Nordlinger, National Review; 22 March 2021)

"A Pogrom is happening in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is killing its own citizens wantonly. That is chilling, but true: by attempting to extirpate Ethiopia of Tigrayan ethnicity and heritage, Ethiopia's military and government stands accused of purposeful ethnic cleansing, a precursor to all-out genocide, as outlawed by the UN Convention against Genocide"

(Professor Robert Rotberg, Former President of the World Peace Foundation; 28 January 2021)

"Modern genocides aren't done Nazis style. Cheap, stealthy, smart way to do it is by starving, pillaging, raping, displacing. World then automatically demands humanitarian aid which will come but always little & late - allowing ethnic cleansers to finish job first #Ethiopia #Tigray"

(Professor Mukesh Kapila; @mukeshkapila; 23rd March 2021)

3. The Mekete Tigray UK has witnessed the emerging horrors of the current war in Ukraine as the result of the blatant aggression unleashed by the Government of the Russian Federation against the sovereign Ukrainian Nation and people. We have seen the unfolding spectre of war crimes and crimes against humanity being committed against the Ukrainian people. The Mekete Tigray UK, the Tigrayan people and the Tigray Regional Government have rightly condemned the aggression against the nation and people of Ukraine as well as supporting the robust and all-rounded response to date by governments and global institutions.
4. The Mekete Tigray UK supports the world response, including our UK Government's, to the aggression against Ukraine by the Government of Russia. The response to the Russian aggression is unprecedented in its scope, scale, intensity and resolution. During the month since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, no day passed without the UK PM, Government or the Secretary of State for FCD denouncing the Russian invasion. The UK has imposed all-round and unprecedented varieties and levels of sanctions against the

Russian Government. The UK PM has travelled far and wide to denounce the invasion and rally support for the Ukrainian nation and people. The UK Parliament has rightly convened many times to denounce the war in Ukraine and to express support and solidarity with Ukrainian people.

5. Yet, the Mekete Tigray UK's British citizens and residents are deeply saddened and wounded when the UK Government's little and double standard responses to the genocidal war on Tigray is compared and contrasted with the robust and all-rounded response to the war in Ukraine. Similarly, the general lack of concern and response to the Tigray Genocide by Her Majesty's Official Opposition has been extremely disappointing to say the least. This is despite notable exceptions of a few MPs and Peers, such as Helen Hayes MP, Lord Alton, Lord William Hague and the Bishop of Coventry, who have been vocal and outstanding in their humanitarian stand on the war in Tigray. Notwithstanding geopolitical considerations and global great power politics, humanity, morality, justice or rule-of-law is one and indivisible. War crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing and genocide are all against international humanitarian law wherever they occur or whoever they are against - whether they are against Europeans or Africans, Ukrainian or Tigrayan Ethiopians, white people or blacks. All lives matter. We believe aggressors must be confronted wherever they happen to be located. We believe world governments and institutions must show the same level of concern and solidarity, and employ similar types of concrete actions to stop the horrors of wars wherever they occur. Similarly, the huge disparity in news coverage of the War in Ukraine and the Genocidal War in Tigray, Ethiopia by the BBC and the UK national media in general, again with a few exceptions, depicts sadly not one standard morality and humanity but a divided, biased and unjust world.

"I vividly recall the shocking images back in 1984 of a million emaciated Ethiopian men, women and children, many of them from Tigray, who had fled the country in the midst of a massive famine caused by prolonged drought, widespread food shortages, and discriminatory government policies. Today, the people of Tigray are being subjected to human rights atrocities on an appalling scale, and they are being denied urgently needed humanitarian aid – aid that is being blocked by the Ethiopian and Eritrean militaries as well as other armed groups. The terrible reality today is that famine, crimes against humanity and genocide are occurring in Tigray, and they are occurring for one reason: the complicity of government officials in Addis and in Asmara. In fact, there are reports that the situation in Tigray could be worse than in Darfur."

(US Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Press Statement on Tigray; 6 June 2021)

"We must stop barbaric crimes against women. Gang rapes and mutilation are being carried out in the Tigray conflict but the world prefers to look the other way. Innumerable witness accounts leave no doubt that war crimes are being committed on a huge scale in Tigray, the region of Ethiopia where a military offensive against rebels was launched last November. Often committed by the armed forces of neighbouring Eritrea, working alongside Ethiopia's own army, these actions include mass sexual violence against women and girls. Such reports are terrible enough but it is only when you go into the details that you can fully appreciate that these crimes are against the very core of humanity. The accounts from Tigray include women being repeatedly raped next to the bodies of husbands or brothers who had tried to protect them; being told the men in uniform raping them are deliberately selected for being HIV-positive; assaulted with...."

(Lord William Hague, The Times, 31 May 2021)

6. We urge the UK Government to show far more concern, resolution and responsibility to stop the ongoing genocidal war on Tigray. The UK Government engagement and actions to date are too little and overdue to make any difference to the horrors of the genocidal war being experienced by the Tigrayan people. Tigray is still subjected to a complete economic blockage and military siege where hunger and famine is being used to crush and subjugate Tigrayans.

"As a Director General of WHO, I have a duty to protect and promote health wherever it is under threat. And there is nowhere on earth where the health of millions of people is more under threat than in Tigray. Just as we continue to call on Russia to make peace in Ukraine so we continue to call on Ethiopia and Eritrea to end the blockade, the siege and allow safe access for humanitarian supplies and workers to save lives".

(Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of, WHO, - The Guardian, 19 March 2022)

7. Finally, we thank you for your time and attention, and trust that our Government will do much more of what is morally, politically and legally right to address our concerns as British citizens and residents of Ethiopian origin. We look forward to getting an audience with your ministers and civil servants, and to hearing your response to our concerns. The Petitioners of this Letter - Ethiopian Tigrayans in the UK - can be contacted at the above-referred Email and Address. Thank you very much.

Most respectfully,

Ethiopian Tigrayans in the UK
Mekete Tigray UK Members and Steering Committee
Tigrayan Women in the UK
Tigrayan Youth Network
Global Tigrayan Diaspora

Copy:

The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP; Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs;
The Rt Hon Vicky Ford MP; Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Africa);
Sir Simon McDonald KCMG; Permanent Under-Secretary and Head of Diplomatic Service;
Dr Alastair McPhail CMG OBE; KCVO British Ambassador to Ethiopia;
The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP; Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition;
The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition;
The Rt Hon David Lammy MP; Shadow Secretary of State for FCD Affairs;
The Rt Hon Tom Tugendhat MP; Chair of Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee;
The Rt Hon Chris Bryant MP; Member of Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee;
The Rt Hon Stewart Malcolm McDonald MP; Member of Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee;
The Rt Hon Sarah Champion MP; Chair of International Development Sub-Committee;
The Rt Hon Kate Osamor MP; Member of International Development Sub-Committee;
The Rt Hon Helen Hayes MP; UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Lord Alton of Liverpool; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Hon Lord Hague of Richmond; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Hon Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Reverend Dr Christopher Cocksworth; The Bishop of Coventry; UK House of Lords;
The Rt Hon Ian Blackford MP; Leader of SNP in the UK House of Commons;
The Rt Hon Sir Ed Davey MP; Leader of the Liberal Democrats;
The Rt Hon Liz Saville Roberts; Leader of Plaid Cymru in the House of Commons;
H.E. Antonio Guterres, Secretary -General of the UN;
H.E Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission;
H.E. Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs;
H.E. Annette Weber, EU Representative for the Horn of Africa;
H.E. Michelle Bachelet; UN High Commissioner for Human Rights;
H.E. Antony Blinken; Secretary State of the United States;
Richard Sharp; Chairman of the BBC Board;
Tim Davie; Director General of the BBC;
The African Union;
Human Rights Watch;
Amnesty International;
British Media;
Africa Media;
Global Media