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**FOR THE URGENT ATTENTION OF THE UK MEDIA**

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 an open, democratic and inclusive platform of 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 US and Western countries in general to stop the Genocidal War on Tigray. Russia and China are aiding and abating the Tigray Genocide so long as their appeasement of the Ethiopian and Eritrean dictators advances their hegemonic designs on Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Apart from the usual expressions of diplomatic clichés of **“concerns”, “worries” and “call for dialogue”**, the UK Government has not taken concrete or bold actions to stop the war in Tigray. In essence and in terms of their practical effects on the ground to date the UN’s and Western governments’ lack of decisive actions are tantamount to 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. Similarly and sadly, President Biden has yet to speak in public about the war in Tigray, Ethiopia. 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 to act 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. A Joint Report by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch published on 6 April 2022, and entitled **“We will Erase You From This Land”: Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia’s Western Tigray**” chronicles how newly-appointed officials in Western Tigray and security forces from the neighbouring Amhara region, with the acquiescence and possible participation of Ethiopian federal forces, systematically expelled several hundred thousand Tigrayan civilians from their homes using threats, unlawful killings, sexual violence, mass arbitrary detention, pillage, forcible transfer, and the denial of humanitarian assistance. It alleges that: *“These widespread and systematic attacks against the Tigrayan civilian population amount to crimes against humanity as well as war crimes. Since November 2020, Amhara officials and security forces have engaged in a relentless campaign of ethnic cleansing to force Tigrayans in Western Tigray from their homes,”* said Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, adding that *“Ethiopian authorities have steadfastly denied the shocking breadth of the crimes that have unfolded and have egregiously failed to address them.”*
  
3. In its 16<sup>th</sup> 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 the armed forces of the regimes in Ethiopia, Eritrea and the Amhara Regional Government. Hunger, starvation and famine; and sexual violence and rape whose scale has not been seen since the Second World War have occurred and are being weaponised as the preferred stratagem war in Tigray. Systematic and widespread mass atrocities, the wanton destruction of Tigray’s infrastructure and economic sectors including agriculture, industry, banking, civil infrastructure, health facilities, telecommunication, the Internet and transport have inflicted horrific damage to Tigrayans. The damage done to Tigray’s cultural and religious artefacts and institutions is deliberate, strategic and extensive. Tigray has been purposefully starved off by 360 Degree suffocation and strangulation - **“An Anaconda Strategy and Plan of Total War Against Tigray”** - through a complete economic and transport 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 has been told about by many global institutions as well as reporters, such as Jay Nordlinger of the National Review:

*“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)**

4. 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 begun to see 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. This is in parallel and is consistent with Tigray's and Tigrayans' experience of the horrors of war and where a smaller nation's existence is challenged by much larger alignment of forces. In contrast, the Eritrean and Ethiopian regimes have supported, in the UN General Assembly vote, the Russian aggression against Ukraine directly or through abstention. This is due to the authoritarian and dictatorial nature of the regimes and as a return for Russian and Chinese governments' support for their Genocidal War on Tigray.

5. 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 for and solidarity with Ukrainian people.
6. Yet, the Mekete Tigray UK's British citizens and residents are perplexed, 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. Overall and in effect, the UK Parliament and MPs, the governing and opposition parties and their leaders, and the British Ambassador to Ethiopia, H.E. Dr Alastair McPhail OBE, silence on the Genocidal War on Tigray during the past 500 days is deafening. This is a clear and shameful failure of UK foreign policy on the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia and Tigray. However, this is despite the notable and noble exceptions of a few MPs and Peers, such as Helen Hayes MP, Lord David Alton, Lord William Hague and the Rt Reverend Dr Christopher J. Cocksworth the Bishop of Coventry, and former MPs and ministers, such as Sally Keeble amongst others, who have been vocal and outstanding in their humanitarian stand on the war in Tigray. Tigrayans and Ethiopians in general will always be grateful and remember this in the annals of their history. As for the silent friends of Tigray and Ethiopia, we say, as in the immortal words of Dr Martin Luther King: *"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends"*.
7. Notwithstanding geopolitical considerations and the exigencies of global great power politics, humanity, morality, justice or the 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, Ukrainians or Tigrayan Ethiopians, white people or blacks. All lives, peoples, races, religions and nations matter equally. We believe aggressors must be confronted wherever they happen to be located. We believe world governments and institutions must show commensurate levels of concern and solidarity, and employ similar types of concrete actions to stop the horrors of wars wherever they occur. Similarly, the extremely 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 or principle or humanity, but a divided, biased and unjust world. Regarding the war in Tigray the world prefers to look the other way as alluded below by Lord William Hague. This in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Yet, some have stood up and have spoken about the Tigray Genocide.

***"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)**

8. The war in Tigray and its attendant war crimes and crimes against humanity are largely forgotten by the world media, more so in the aftermath of the Ukrainian War. Writing for the Observer on 11 April 2022, Trevor Lwere, after an extensive analysis of the differential and reporting with racial connotations of the wars in Ukraine and Tigray and other conflicts in Africa by the mainstream global media, opined:

*“The war has gone on too long. It has caused a lot of suffering, death and destruction. No, I am not talking about the war in Ukraine. I am talking about the civil war in Ethiopia that has raged since November 2020. More than 500,000 people have died and many more have been displaced and left helpless because of this brutal conflict. While Tigrayans starve away under siege with only scanty help from the international community in a conflict that has lasted more than two years, last week the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen hosted a fundraiser for Ukraine at which over 9 billion Euros were raised for Ukrainian refugees... It is not difficult to understand why the international community has been scarcely bothered by the protracted conflicts in Africa. For certain it is not for a lack of resources but for a lack of sufficient interest as these areas are of no significant strategic value. Unlike the Ukrainian conflict that spells danger for Europe, the conflicts in Africa are of no serious direct consequence. So, the commitment is not to peace and protection of life but to the protection of white lives. And there we have it, the racism that underlies the little interest in these other conflicts. It is not that the suffering of non-white peoples has been ignored. To add salt to the wound, statements have been made to the effect that non-white peoples are more accustomed, even more deserving of living in conditions of war and conflict. ...Thus, when one compares the attention that has been given to the Ukrainian conflict to the scanty attention given to the Ethiopian conflict, one cannot help but recall the incisive assessment of W.E.B DuBois who wrote at the dawn of the 20th century that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the color line. More than a century later, DuBois’s assessment rings truer in our day. I am certainly no DuBois but dare I say that the problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of the color line. Steve Biko knew better when he said, “Black man, you are on your own.”*

**(Trevor Lwere, The Observer; 11 April 2022)**

9. 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 transport and 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)**

10. 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;*

*H.E. 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 Reverend Justin Welby; the Archbishop of Canterbury;*

*The Rt Reverend Stephen Cottrell; the Archbishop of York;*

*His Eminence Vincent Cardinal Nichols; Archbishop of Westminster;*

*His Holiness Pope Francis;*

*Abune Matias, The Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church;*

*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*