



መንግስቲ ትግራይ  
GOVERNMENT OF TIGRAY

ቤት ፅሕፈት  
ዝምድናታት

EXTERNAL  
AFFAIRS OFFICE

Ref: TEAO/PR65/2022

Date: 22 September 2022

## **Statement on the Report of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia**

---

The Government of Tigray welcomes the report (A/HRC/51/46) of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (henceforth, the ‘Commission’) submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council. The report sheds light on the multifaceted genocidal war that has been waged, and continues to be waged, against the people of Tigray. This ongoing campaign of national extermination has picked up pace following our enemies’ declaration of a third round of brutal war on Tigray. While the Commission’s investigation will continue, the preliminary findings establish beyond a shadow of a doubt that the invading forces have committed, and continue to commit, heinous war crimes and crimes against humanity in Tigray. The core conclusions vindicate what the Government of Tigray has been conveying to the world.

Even so, while the shocking crimes identified by the Commission are part of a well-orchestrated campaign to eliminate the people of Tigray, the international community has failed to call this affront to humanity by its rightful name: genocide. Having completely encircled Tigray for two years, our enemies have deployed all kinds of weapons, including starvation and bombing, to subjugate the people of Tigray, and, failing that, eliminate them once and for all. The Government of Tigray urges the international community to live up to its pledge of “Never Again.”

As partners-in-destruction, the Eritrean dictatorship of Isaias Afewerki and the Abiy regime have been implicated in the commission of heinous atrocities in Tigray. Both regimes have deployed starvation as a tool of war. The Eritrean regime’s violation of international humanitarian law was so egregious that the then head of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, publicly singled out the despotic regime for weaponizing starvation against Tigrayans in June 2021. The Commission’s investigation found that starvation has been weaponized against the people of Tigray, vindicating prior claims.

The Commission also finds the deployment of rampant Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) against Tigrayan women and girls and rape and sexual violence against Tigrayan men and boys. In many cases, these heinous acts of sexual violence resulted in permanent damage to the reproductive organs of the victims, establishing the genocidal intent of the perpetrators.

The violations of internationally recognized human rights in Tigray are systematic, and widespread. Since the central state is implicated in the perpetration of heinous crimes, there has been no effort or desire to ensure justice and accountability. The Abiy regime continues to pay lip

service to the idea of justice by putting two national mechanisms in place supposedly to ensure accountability, namely, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Inter-Ministerial Task Force (IMTF). However, both institutions have been deployed to create the appearance that the Abiy regime is heeding international calls for accountability while scuttling efforts to ensure it in practice. After all, the organs of the state accused of heinous crimes against the people of Tigray cannot be credible adjudicators of conflict nor impartial dispensers of justice.

Problematically, the Commission suggests that its mandate required it to build on the so-called joint investigative team (JIT) report issued by the EHRC and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). However, insisting on building on a deeply flawed investigation is a recipe for delaying justice and accountability. While the Government of Tigray appreciates the OHCHR's attention to the serious rights violations in Tigray, its fateful decision to conduct a joint investigation with the EHRC has undermined efforts to secure justice for the millions of Tigrayans on the receiving end of cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment by the invaders. In fact, the refusal by the JIT to share its internal database with a body entrusted with the full mandate to investigate the matter only demonstrates the desire to absolve the genocidal invaders of the heinous crimes they have committed and continue to commit in Tigray.

The Government of Tigray regrets that the OHCHR's disastrous decision to partner with an entity established by, and beholden to, the very state being investigated for committing heinous crimes has set back the causes of justice and accountability, thereby tarnishing its image and undermining its credibility. The Government of Tigray also regrets that the Commission's request for cooperation from different UN entities operating in Ethiopia went unanswered. This lack of cooperation has been routine for quite some time, making an immediate intervention from the United Nations Secretary-General an imperative. Moreover, the report of the OHCHR prepared earlier regarding Tigrayan refugees in the Sudan who had fled the genocidal war on Tigray must be released immediately. The Human Rights Council should also strongly urge the relevant United Nations institutions to fully cooperate with Commission by handing over all relevant documents.

The Government of Tigray has always called for an independent investigation to be conducted by an impartial international entity. By contrast, the genocidal invaders have fought tooth and nail to impede such efforts. Our constructive communications with the Commission and cooperation with its investigation show our genuine commitment to making its work a success. Since the Abiy regime continues to enforce a total communications blackout in Tigray, the Government of Tigray has found it exceedingly difficult to provide evidentiary documents within the timeframe requested by the Commission. Nonetheless, we continue to have productive and open channels of communications with the Commission. We also remain committed to cooperating with the Commission going forward.

In that regard, the people and Government of Tigray will provide the Commission with evidence related to the numerous violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws in Tigray.

However, since no corner of Tigray has been spared from the genocidal reach of the invaders, the Commission cannot fulfill its investigative mandate without unimpeded physical access to Tigray. The international community in general and the Human Rights Council in particular must prevail on the Abiy regime to allow the Commission access to various crime spots across Tigray.

The Government of Tigray would also like to underline that Tigray Army is composed of fighters that have been compelled to exercise their legitimate right of self-defense against enemies hell-bent on exterminating the people of Tigray. Tigray forces have no quarrel with brotherly peoples in neighboring regions. Nonetheless, to the degree that there have been allegations of isolated wrongdoing by Tigray forces, the Government of Tigray takes those allegations seriously and will ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice. Indeed, we had responded to allegations of crimes committed by Tigray forces in Chena and Kobo.

What is clear is that the genocidal Abiy and Isaias regimes have no interest in helping the Commission uncover evidence that would establish their guilt. These genocidal regimes continue to peddle fictitious narratives to create equivalence between the widespread, systematic rights violations they committed and the isolated incidents of rights violations by Tigray forces. The international community in general and the Commission in particular playing along with such a charade will result in a grievous miscarriage of justice.

The international community must grapple with its failure to prevent the atrocity crimes, including genocide in Tigray. The Commission's findings of heinous rights violations in Tigray should provide further impetus to use all tools at the international community's disposal to stop the relentless genocidal assault on Tigray. In this regard, the Government of Tigray endorses the recommendation of the Commission to introduce the situation in Ethiopia as a standing agenda before multilateral bodies, such as the United Nations Security Council. Moreover, the international community must press Ethiopia to restore essential services to Tigray, urge all invading forces to withdraw from Tigray immediately, to allow unhindered humanitarian access and unfettered access to journalists and international organizations.

