



DEFEND ETHIOPIA TASK FORCE EUROPE

October 15, 2021

The Situation in Northern Ethiopia

We are Ethiopians and Europeans of Ethiopian origin residing in several European countries, organized as Defend Ethiopia Task Force in Europe (<https://defendethiopia.com/about/>).

The conflict in Northern Ethiopia is approaching its first anniversary and the prospect of it coming to an end any time soon is remote, to say the least. And, with the passage of a resolution on the situation in Tigray in the EU parliament on October 7, 2021, we are concerned that the continental body is indifferent to the plight of the vast majority of Ethiopian people.

We would like to emphasise that the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) did not want to engage in any form of military conflict in Tigray. The current conflict began when the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) carried out surprise attacks on GoE Army Barracks in Tigray. It should be recalled also that TPLF rejected a unilateral humanitarian ceasefire that might have restored some semblance of peace and brought about a respite for their own compatriots suffering in the Tigray region.

Instead, TPLF went on to dramatically expand the conflict into the neighbouring regions of Afar and Amhara, leading to more abuses, death, destruction and internal displacement. If the abuses, death, destruction or displacement in Tigray is wrong, so is it in all other regions. Thus, we were stunned to witness how the international community chose to look only at one side of the story without fact-checking, choosing to blame, isolate, condemn and possibly punish all the people and GoE as we have underlined in [several letters to EU governing bodies](#).

Ethiopians are by nature peace-loving, God-fearing, and tolerant – all of which explains the fact that many regional populations with various religions, ethnic and/or linguistic affiliations lived peacefully together for millennia. Despite being the most populous country in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia never attempted to assert its hegemony on the relatively smaller and weaker neighbours. Every conflict in Ethiopia, including the current one, can be traced to “power-hungry” politicians who invoke one or other of the differences among the populace.

The EU supported a TPLF-dominated, repressive government in Ethiopia for 27 long years without adequately questioning its brutal human rights abuses. Now too, we have yet to hear any word of condemnation against the TPLF for either starting the war, the reported abuses or the expansion of the conflict into Eritrea, Amhara and Afar, after an offer of a ceasefire by the GoE..

We believe that if the EU, USA and UNSC had been critical of the TPLF in equal measure to their criticism of the GoE, the likelihood is that there would have been a ceasefire months ago and there would be talks at this time. It is clear to many that the attitude and one-sided support of the EU, USA and UNSC for the TPLF has, without doubt, emboldened the group to escalate the conflict. It is not too late to take a more balanced approach, leveling criticism wherever it is due, such that the two sides may begin to see that they need to talk and do so in an African context.





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TPLF, emboldened by the support of the EU, USA and UNSC, and dissatisfied with their position in a coalition government, attacked the core of the national army so that it might march triumphantly into Addis Ababa and regain its autocratic dominance. But, Ethiopians have said never again. For this principled resistance, the western powers are considering punishment in the form of sanctions – thus, marginalising Ethiopia economically for many years to come. Sanctions, targeted or not, are blunt instruments that will likely harm innocent people rather than the powers behind the conflict.

Therefore, we plead with the governments and the people of EU member states to be on the right side of history and support the struggle and resistance of Ethiopians against the restoration of a TPLF dictatorship that will guarantee the disintegration of their country.

Sincerely,



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