



## DEFEND ETHIOPIA TASK FORCE EUROPE



20 October 2022

H.E David McAllister, Chair Committee on Foreign Affairs, [david.mcallister@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:david.mcallister@europarl.europa.eu)

**Subject:** European Parliament's resolution on the recent humanitarian and human right situation in Tigray, notably of children

Dear Mr McAllister,

We are once again writing to you on behalf of the Belgian chapter of Defend Ethiopia, a worldwide movement of the Ethiopian diaspora, to express our dismay at the European Parliament's (EP's) plan to pass a resolution on **"The recent humanitarian and human right situation in Tigray, notably of children."**

We were pleased when we learnt that the EP's Foreign Affairs, Development and Women Committees of the EP visited Ethiopia from 19-23 September 2022. We were expecting that this EP mission to Ethiopia would shed light on the country's situation. Unfortunately, we are very disappointed that before these two committees presented their findings to Members of the Parliaments, a decision was taken to pass a resolution selectively on "The recent humanitarian and human right situation in Tigray, notably of children." The passing of the resolution without the two committees' findings indicates the Parliament's biased position on the nature of the conflict.

We would like to remind Members that the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) hijacked hundreds of UN humanitarian food delivery trucks in the past and recently stole hundreds of thousands of litres of WFP fuel and then turned around and claimed that children are dying of starvation and that mass atrocities are being committed by the Ethiopian army against the people of Tigray to scaremonger the EU and the US.

Last August, the TPLF stole more than 500,000 litres of fuel from the World Food Programme depot to enable it to continue its war of aggression against the peoples of Afar and Amhara instead of helping the needy people in Tigray. The Executive Director of WFP condemned the theft in a statement issued on 25 August: *"The loss of this fuel will push communities in Tigray, already struggling with the impacts of the conflict, further towards the brink of starvation."* Furthermore, the statement added, *"now it will be impossible for WFP to distribute food, fertilizer, medicines, and other emergency supplies across Tigray, where an estimated 5.2 million people face severe hunger. The loss of this fuel will push communities in Tigray, already struggling with the impacts of the conflict, further towards the brink of starvation."*

As you are members of a democratically elected institution, abiding by the rule of law and respect for human rights and democracy, we call upon you to re-examine the situation in Ethiopia as a whole fairly and transparently by taking into account the following facts: the fighting in northern Ethiopia, including Tigray, is not a war between two states. Instead, it is a war between a democratically elected government and a regional party unwilling to accept the peaceful transfer of power as provided for in the laws of the country. It is an insurrection organized and led by TPLF, the very group that brutalized the Ethiopian people for 27 years and robbed the country's resources.

The 27-year TPLF rule was characterized by arbitrary arrests, lack of freedom of the press, restricted campaign possibilities for the opposition, brutal suppression of peaceful protests, shrinking space for human rights defenders and civil society organizations and lack of accountability of government officials. Human rights organizations have documented these massive rights violations. For instance, in 2017 alone, the last year of TPLF rule, [Human Rights Watch, in a letter](#) to the UN Human Rights Council, wrote, “ [over 800 protesters have been killed](#), thousands of political activists, human rights defenders, journalists and protesters have been arrested.”

The genocide perpetrated against the Anuak in 2003 is another case in point. It has been documented by [Human Rights Watch](#) and [SOS Torture Network](#). We believe that the European Parliament can play a constructive role by sharing its democratic experience and by supporting the Ethiopian people's aspiration to live in peace with respect for human rights, the rule of law and political pluralism prevailing throughout Ethiopia, including in Tigray. For this, the war that TPLF started in the first place must stop. It is imperative that the TPLF lays down its arms for the population of Tigray to enjoy their fundamental rights, such as the right to free expression.

We believe that the EU can have a meaningful role by supporting the Ethiopian government's effort to expedite aid delivery to all in need of assistance across the country, including those affected by the conflict in Amhara, Afar and in particular those in recently liberated areas in Tigray. We also believe the way out of the current crisis is an all-inclusive national dialogue to reconcile differences, and usher in an era of peace, development, and national unity. In the final analysis, such measures that should be encouraged and supported by the European Parliament.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration,

**Initiated** by Defend Ethiopia Belgian Chapter ([defeth.be@gmail.com](mailto:defeth.be@gmail.com))

**Endorsed** by Defend Ethiopia Task Force in Europe ([DETF-EU](#)) organized in Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom ([SteeringGroup@DefendEthiopia.com](mailto:SteeringGroup@DefendEthiopia.com))