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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0383/2020**

24.11.2020

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Ethiopia  
(2020/2881(RSP))

**Miguel Urbán Crespo**  
on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Ethiopia  
(2020/2881(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Ethiopia,
  - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Geneva Convention of 1951 and its Additional Protocol,
  - having regard to the statements of 13 November by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Ethiopia,
  - having regard to the statement of 9 November 2020 by HR/VP Josep Borrell on the latest developments on Ethiopia and the statement of 12 November 2020, by HR/VP Josep Borrell and Commissioner Janez Lenarčič on Ethiopia,
  - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure
- A. whereas on 4 November, Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed Ali, declared a state of emergency and launched military operations in the northern Tigray regional state in what he stated was a response to multiple attacks by the Tigray security forces on military camps in Tigray Region; whereas since then, there have been armed confrontations between federal forces (Federal Army, Amhara Region's Special Force Police and Amhara local militia) on one side and the Tigray regional forces (Tigray Special Force Police and militia) loyal to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), on the other side;
- B. whereas the fights have caused thousands of deaths and injuries on both sides and grave Human Rights violations and violations on International Humanitarian Law; whereas, according to the UNHCR, as of 20 November, over 31,000 refugees had fled the conflict and crossed the border into Sudan; whereas the UN warned of a "large-scale humanitarian crisis" and the United Nations' agencies are planning for the possible arrival of 200,000 refugees over a six-month period; whereas the fighting is also causing the internal displacement of the population; whereas UNHCR has asked the two parties to the conflict to open corridors to allow people to leave and supplies to arrive at the same time; whereas the UN agencies are seeking \$50m in immediate funding which will go towards providing food and setting up new camps
- C. whereas the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), demanded access to the Tigray region, which remains totally isolated (internet and telephone access have been cut off) since the beginning of the fighting; whereas according to UNHCR "the lack of electricity, telecommunications and access to fuel and cash limit any humanitarian aid response in Tigray, and in the rest of Ethiopia" including tending to those wounded and killed in the fighting;

- D. whereas according to Amnesty International, on the 9th of November hundreds of civilians were killed in Mai-Kadra, west of Tigray; whereas although it has not been possible to corroborate the responsibility for the massacre, according to Amnesty International, there are testimonies that the victims were killed by forces loyal to the TPLF; whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, considered that if confirmed, they could be considered "war crimes" and announced an investigation;
- E. whereas there are reports of physical and digital surveillance, mass arbitrary arrests and detentions, and job suspensions of ethnic Tigrayans and Tigrinya speakers across the country; whereas the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) said that a justified risk/threat of fear of ethnic profiling and discrimination has arisen in the country;
- F. whereas the TPLF has fired several missiles at the Eritrean capital of Asmara on the 14th of November; whereas Tigray's regional leader and Ethiopian refugees have denounced the involvement of Eritrean troops aiding the Ethiopian government's campaign; whereas there is a risk that the war could spread to other parts of Ethiopia or even over to neighbouring countries in an already tense region;
- G. whereas peace in Ethiopia is essential for the stability of this region; whereas UN Secretary General António Guterres said that "stability in Ethiopia is important for the entire Horn of Africa region" and urged an immediate de-escalation of tensions and a peaceful resolution of the conflict;
- H. whereas the current conflict comes after 2 years of tense relations between the federal and Tigray's regional authorities; whereas the differences deepened in September when TPLF-led regional government decided to hold regional elections, even though the National Election Board had decided to postpone national and regional elections because of the COVID-19; whereas federal's government did not recognise the legitimacy of the Tigray elections, cut relations and froze the federal budgets;
- I. whereas the TPLF led the country for 27 years until April 2018 when, after mass anti-government protests, Abiy Ahmed Ali was appointed prime minister; whereas since then, Abiy Ahmed Ali released thousands of opposition activists, allowed exiled dissidents to return to the country and signed a peace treaty with Ethiopia; whereas he also accused former government officials of corruption and human rights abuses, and expelled key TPLF politicians from the central government opening a deep chasm between the Tigray region, governed by the TPLF, and the federal government;
- J. whereas the worrying violence in Tigray follows over 18 months of unrest and violence in different regions throughout the country; whereas the government has come under criticism due to the detention of the opposition leaders, and security officers were accused of killing hundreds of people following unrest involving different ethnic groups;
- K. whereas even before the fighting began, there were 15.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia, 2 million of them in Tigray region; whereas the Tigray region is the 5th most populated region in Ethiopia with over 6 million people

and is home to 100 000 internally displaced people and 96 000 Eritrean refugees, whereas it has several important refugee camps where, according to NGOs, 44% of those living there are children;

1. Is deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict that has claimed the lives of hundreds of people and that has forced almost 27 000 others to flee to neighbouring Sudan; Strongly condemns, and deplores the loss of lives in attacks carried out by belligerent parties;
2. Urges all forces to take immediate steps to de-escalate the conflict and calls for a multilateral ceasefire; calls on conflict parties to engage in a sincere, peaceful and inclusive dialogue which is the only way to find a lasting solution to the question of regional autonomy and the unity of the country; regrets in this sense that Ethiopian Prime Minister has rejected peace talks proposed by the African Union;
3. Recalls that deliberate attacks against civilians are strictly prohibited and constitute war crimes; calls on forces on both sides to respect international human rights and international humanitarian law and ensure the protection of people in affected areas;
4. Emphasizes the urgency of ensuring the protection for the refugees and humanitarian access and safe corridors, given the reports of potential human rights violations on both sides and contravention of international humanitarian law; urges federal and regional authorities to allow immediate access to humanitarian organizations and human rights monitors in Tigray;
5. calls on federal and regional authorities to immediately lift all communications restrictions including phone and internet access in Tigray as an act of accountability and transparency for its military operations in the region and in accordance with the right to freedom to expression;
6. calls to take any necessary action to ensure that this conflict does not lead to possible destabilization of Ethiopia and the wider region; in this sense, calls on the external actors to not interfere in and to remove themselves from the conflict;
7. Calls for an end to all foreign involvement in the conflict, which is an obstacle to peace in the region; expresses concern on the reports of armed drones from the United Arab Emirates supporting the Ethiopian campaign from an Eritrean air base of Assab;
8. Strongly condemns: the massacre committed on the 9th of November in Mai-Kadra, the massacre of at least 54 people perpetrated on the 2nd of November in the Oromo region, and the attack in the region of Benishangul-Gumuz that has cost the life of 34 people; notes with grave concern that inter-ethnic tensions and violence are rising in Ethiopia; raises concern over the current conflict that can further exacerbate ethnic tensions in other parts of the country;
9. Urges federal authorities to end the practice of arbitrarily arresting, surveilling or otherwise targeting ethnic groups; underlines that ethnically motivated attacks and reportedly ethnic profiling of citizens heightened the risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity such as it has been highlighted by UN seniors officials; calls on the Ethiopian authorities to take strong measures towards any ethnic profiling and ensure the protection of ethnic minorities across the country;
10. Considers that respect for the rights of all minorities in Ethiopia and the participation of all groups in the political life of the country is the only way to guarantee and preserve the country's multicultural roots;

11. Calls on the Ethiopian authorities to enable an investigation by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission in collaboration with the African Courts for Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) and UNHCHR, into recent alleged ethnically motivated incidents in Oromiya, Benshangul Gumuz, Southern Nations and Nationalities, Addis Ababa and in Tigray, as well as security forces' alleged use of excessive and unnecessary lethal force, arbitrary detention and arrest, and repression of political opponents;
12. Reiterates that the Ethiopian government bears the primary responsibility to meet the needs of people on its territory and the Tigray regional authorities are also responsible for addressing the needs of people under their effective control;
13. Welcomes the Ethiopian government's commitment to holding general elections before September 2021 and the commitment to a free and fair election; expresses nevertheless, its concern over detention of several political opposition leaders since June 2020 and serious due process violations that undermine the detainees' rights to a fair trial; calls on authorities to release the political prisoners and to guarantee the international fair trial standards;
14. Is deeply concerned about the economic and social situation of the country's population, in particular women, minorities, refugees and displaced persons, whose numbers are constantly increasing in the light of the crisis and regional instability; reiterates its support for all humanitarian organisations operating on the ground and in neighbouring host countries; supports the appeals of the international community and humanitarian organisations for increased assistance to refugees and displaced persons;
15. Condemns the structural adjustment plans carried out by the IMF and the World Bank and the "conditions" attached to the loans granted by those institutions to Ethiopia; notes that they require, the delegation of increasing proportions of development policy to the private sector and the liberalisation/privatisation of several national sectors, particularly in the fields of telecommunications, banking/insurance and logistics;
16. Calls on the EU and its member states for urgent mobilization of additional resources to address potential new needs as a result of the conflict; calls for EU and Member States' aid to be provided in the form of grants and not loans so as not to increase the debt burden; regrets that many EU Member States have not reached the target of 0.7% of their GDP and that some have reduced their share of development aid; urges that development aid should not be used to limit or control borders or to ensure the readmission of migrants;
17. Underlines that this conflict may increase asylum applications from Ethiopians in the EU; calls in this sense, on EU and all its Member States for ensuring rights and a safe passage to Ethiopian migrants and to facilitate access to European asylum and ensure their human rights; requires on the EU to ensure the migrant people, effective access to protection in full respect of the Geneva Convention and EU law and to do so based on equal sharing of all challenges and responsibilities among the EU member states;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Federal Government and House of Federation of Ethiopia, the African Union, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council;