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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0424/2022**

4.10.2022

## 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 recent humanitarian and human rights situation in Tigray, Ethiopia,  
notably that of children  
(2022/2858(RSP))

**Mick Wallace**

on behalf of The Left Group

**European Parliament resolution on the recent humanitarian and human rights situation in Tigray, Ethiopia, notably that of children (2022/2858(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Ethiopia,
- having regard to the UN International Covenants of 1966 on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,
- having regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989,
- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979,
- having regard to the UN Refugee Convention of 1951 and to its 1967 Protocol,
- having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, in particular the Fourth Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,
- having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1986,
- having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia adopted on 8 December 1994, and in particular the provisions of Chapter III on fundamental rights and freedoms,
- having regard to the UN Report of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (A/HRC/51/46) of 19 September 2022,
- having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. Whereas in November 2020, an armed conflict erupted between, on the one side, the Federal Government of Ethiopia and its allies (Ethiopian National Defence Force, Eritrean Defence Force, and Fano and Amhara Special Force Police and militia), and on the other side, Tigray forces (Tigray Special Force Police and militia) loyal to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF); whereas in March 2022, parties to the conflict formalised a humanitarian truce;
- B. whereas confrontations resumed in August 2022, with offensives targeting civilians on both sides, notably the reported airstrike against a playground in Mekelle, Tigray, and the alleged renewed attacks in Kobo, Amhara; whereas in September, TPLF issued a statement

communicating that it was open to peace negotiations led by the African Union (AU) and to abide by immediate and mutually agreed cessation of hostilities, an approach supported by the Federal Government; whereas, nevertheless, attacks have persisted;

- C. whereas the human rights and humanitarian situation resulting from the conflict in Tigray is of the utmost concern, with thousands of deaths and injuries on both sides; whereas the head of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, called the Tigray crisis “the worst disaster on Earth”; whereas children are being deeply and irreversibly affected by the conflict;
- D. whereas in August 2022, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that 5.4 million people in Tigray, around 90% of the population, were in dire need of humanitarian assistance; whereas, nonetheless, the Federal Government has consistently obstructed humanitarian access to Tigray, in what OCHA referred to as a “de facto blockade”; whereas this blockade deprives the population of Tigray of material and services indispensable for survival, including healthcare, shelter, water, sanitation, education and food; whereas the Federal Government has also suspended banking services, electricity, internet and telecommunications in Tigray, and obstructed the import of cash, fuel and commercial goods into the region;
- E. whereas according to the World Food Programme (WFP), 89% of households in Tigray are food insecure; whereas over 1,900 children under the age of 5 have died from malnutrition in Tigray between June 2021 and April 2022; whereas nearly one in three children under 5 is malnourished in Tigray, and urgent aid is needed to prevent them from dying; whereas more than half of pregnant and lactating women in Tigray are also acutely malnourished;
- F. whereas according to the Tigray Health Bureau, vaccination rates in Tigray have dropped drastically during the conflict; whereas children receiving full doses of vaccines against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, hepatitis B, and Haemophilus influenza type b, dropped from 99,3% in 2020 to 7% in 2022, and tuberculosis and measles from 90% to 10%; whereas, as a result, deadly childhood diseases are on the rise in Tigray;
- G. whereas 1.4 million children in Tigray are missing education because of the conflict, and for 1 million of them, this is their third year without access to education; whereas permanent damage has been caused to the education sector due to the level of destruction of education facilities and materials, and to the killing of 2164 teachers and students, mostly female; whereas, as a result, primary school enrolment rates have fallen from 90% in 2020 to 21% in 2021; whereas Ethiopia is currently among the top five countries with the most children out of school;
- H. whereas the conflict in Tigray has displaced more than 2 million people, the majority of whom are women and children; whereas family tracing, reunification and similar services are needed for 9,330 recorded unaccompanied children in the region; whereas there are around 55,000 Tigrayan refugees in Sudan;
- I. whereas, as a consequence of the desperate situation, an increase in extreme means to survive has been reported, including child marriage, child labour, human trafficking and sexual exploitation, the latter mainly of women and children;

- J. whereas gender-based and sexual violence have been largely used as a weapon of war, mostly against women and girls; whereas Ethiopian and Eritrean forces and regional militias have targeted Tigrayan women and girls with particular brutality, at times, suggesting an intent to destroy Tigrayan ethnicity; whereas Tigrayan forces have committed rape and sexual violence against Eritrean refugees, and Amhara women and girls; whereas all survivors face devastating long-term consequences on their health, including trauma, unwanted pregnancy, and HIV; whereas access to post-rape medical and psychological assistance in Tigray is very inadequate, and there are significant delays to access them, including abortion; whereas such delays endanger the lives, health and well-being of survivors, violates their sexual and reproductive rights, and compounds their trauma;
  - K. whereas children are reportedly being recruited as child soldiers by the parties to the conflict; whereas the use of child soldiers constitutes a war crime;
  - L. whereas thousands of Tigrayans are being held in Afar, Amhara, and Western Tigray; whereas children are being detained with adults; whereas the conditions of the detainees are life-threatening, including killings, torture, starvation and denial of medical care; whereas in Afar, detained children aged 4-5 are suffering from epidemic skin diseases with no access to medical care;
  - M. whereas in December 2021, the UN Human Rights Council established the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) to investigate allegations of violations of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law since November 2020; whereas according to ICHREE, there are reasonable grounds to believe that, in several instances, the violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed by all parties amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity; whereas these violations include extrajudicial killings, rape and other forms of sexual violence, indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including children, persecution on ethnic grounds, and starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare;
  - N. whereas hostilities have expanded beyond Tigray to other areas of Ethiopia and risk spreading beyond its borders, with consequences for peace in the entire Horn of Africa;
1. Expresses its deepest concerns about the dramatic human rights and humanitarian situation in Tigray, and notably its impact on children; deplores the ongoing armed conflict between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray Special Forces; calls on conflict parties to agree to a ceasefire and to engage in the AU-led peace process based on justice, truth and reparations, which is the only way to find a lasting solution to the conflict;
  2. Strongly condemns the violence from belligerent parties, notably the attacks that might amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the deliberate targeting of civilians, the recruitment of child soldiers, the continued use of rape and other forms of sexual violence, and the efforts to systematically destroy the Tigray community by the Federal forces; calls on all parties involved in the conflict to immediately cease hostilities and violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including by ending the use of starvation as a method of warfare, releasing child soldiers and

those arbitrarily detained, and protecting civilians;

3. Calls on the Federal Government and its allies to ensure immediate, safe and sustained humanitarian access to Tigray, among others, to deliver food and medical services, including vaccines, to protect and reunite unaccompanied children with their families or appoint guardians for them, and to rebuild education facilities and materials;
4. Calls for all necessary means to be mobilised to rescue victims of child marriage, child labour, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking, and to take steps towards putting a definite end to these atrocities, including by criminalising demand;
5. Strongly condemns all forms of violence against women and girls; calls on the Federal Government and Tigray authorities to provide adequate and timely healthcare services for victims of rape and sexual violence, including psychological support and abortion services; welcomes the steps taken by the Federal Government to eradicate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and echoes the calls from UNFPA and UNICEF for an increased investment of resources by the Government and development partners to accelerate the implementation of the National Costed Roadmap to End Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation;
6. Calls on the Federal authorities to restore all services in Tigray, including banking services, internet, telecommunications and electricity, and to allow the import of cash, fuel and commercial goods into the region;
7. Reiterates that the Federal Government bears the primary responsibility to meet the needs of people on its territory and that the Tigray regional authorities are also responsible for addressing the needs of people under their effective control; calls on the Federal Government and Tigray authorities to implement the principle of the best interest of the child in all decisions concerning children and the armed conflict, and to take all the necessary measures to ensure that the rights of children are respected, protected and fulfilled;
8. Calls on the Ethiopian Federal Government, the Eritrean Government and Tigray authorities to investigate and to bring justice members of their forces who have committed serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law; calls on the Federal Government to cooperate with and facilitate unfettered access for the ICHREE and the AU Commission of Inquiry; calls on all parties to the conflict to endorse the recommendations delivered by the joint investigation by the UN Human Rights Officer and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission;
9. Calls on the Ethiopian Government to sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
10. Calls for the renewal of the mandate of the ICHREE, and to ensure that it counts on the necessary time and adequate resources to fulfil the mandate, given by the Human Rights Council, to investigate allegations of international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law violations, and advise the parties on transitional justice, accountability, internal reconciliation, and healing;
11. Calls on the Norwegian Nobel Committee to rescind the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali in 2019;

12. Calls on all actors to take any necessary action to ensure that this conflict does not lead to possible destabilisation 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, including the United Arab Emirates supporting Ethiopian forces against Tigray; calls for the immediate withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Ethiopian territory; calls for an inter-Ethiopian dialogue to prevent escalation in other regions;
13. Calls on the EU and its Member States to urgently mobilise additional resources for humanitarian aid to address the new needs and the hunger emergency in Tigray 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 yet reached the target of 0.7 % of their GDP and that some have reduced their share of development and humanitarian aid; recalls that development aid should not be used for migration control, policies, including readmission;
14. Underlines that the situation of refugees in the region continues to deteriorate; calls in this sense on the EU and all its Member States to step up resettlement from the region, provide humanitarian visas to those at risk and facilitate family reunification; calls on the EU and its Member States to ensure effective access to international protection in the EU and ensure the respect of the fundamental rights of persons seeking international protection in accordance with EU and international law;
15. Urges the Council to adopt an arms embargo halting the transfer and sale of arms and all other military equipment to Ethiopia and Eritrea; welcomes the decision of the UN Security Council to discuss the situation in Tigray as a matter of urgency; urges the Member States of the EU to press the UN Security Council to hold regular public meetings on Tigray, and to take action aimed at protection civilians and preventing further escalation;
16. 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;
17. 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.