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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0429/2022**

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))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE 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 resolution Ethiopia,
- having regard to the joint statements by Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) Josep Borrell and Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič on Ethiopia since the beginning of the conflict in November 2020,
- having regard to Resolution 47/13 of the UN Human Rights Council of 13 July 2021 entitled ‘Situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia’,
- having regard to resolution S-33/1, of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in Ethiopia, adopted on 17 December 2021,
- having regard to the joint investigation by the UN Human Rights Officer and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission,
- having regard to the report of the Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia to the Human Rights Council of 22 September 2022,
- having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia adopted on 8 December 1994, and, in particular, to the provisions of Chapter Three on fundamental rights and freedoms, human rights and democratic rights,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- having regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (including the 1st/2nd optional protocols)
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- having regard to the Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and its additional protocols of 1977 and 2005,
- having regard to the UN Refugee Convention of 1951 and to its 1967 Protocol,
- having regard to the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement,
- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. Whereas the conflict in northern Ethiopia has led to the death of tens of thousands and displacement of millions of people, destroyed the livelihoods of millions and exposed them to hunger in Tigray and in the neighbouring Amhara and Afar regions;
- B. whereas late March 2022, ‘ the Federal government and Tigrayan forces formalised a humanitarian truce, after which critical aid deliveries into Tigray restarted; whereas despite the truce and improved humanitarian access, the humanitarian situation in Tigray has remained dire over the past months;
- C. whereas following the resumption of hostilities, Tigrayan forces reportedly seized fuel stored at a UN warehouse in Tigray’s capital, Mekelle and destined for humanitarian purposes; whereas on 26 August, an airstrike in Mekelle killed at least four people, including two children, according to media reports; whereas aid into Tigray by road and air have remained suspended since;
- D. whereas initially, resumption of those key services and return of contested areas in Northern Ethiopia constituted a demand of the TPLF for entering into formal peace negotiations; whereas on 11 September, without calling for any pre-conditions, the Tigrayan forces finally agreed to the position of the Ethiopian government to start peace talks organised by the African Union (AU) and led by ‘mutually acceptable mediators’, alongside an immediate cessation of hostilities;
- E. whereas throughout the evolution of this conflict, the one constant has been the multiple and severe alleged gross violations of human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law perpetrated by all parties to the conflict, including attacks on civilians, extrajudicial killings, torture, enforced disappearances, sexual and gender-based violence, mass detentions, systematic looting and the systematic and deliberate destruction of basic services, water systems, crops and livelihoods;
- F. whereas, even before the fighting began, there were 15.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia; whereas 5.2 million people in Tigray are facing acute food insecurity; whereas 91 % of the population is in extreme need of humanitarian aid;
- G. whereas since the start of the conflict, humanitarian organisations’ access to conflict zones has systematically been challenged, this in spite of the repeated calls by the international community and humanitarian organisations to ensure unimpeded, sustained and secure access for the relevant stakeholders;
- H. whereas the conflict in the northern part of the country, violence in other parts, and natural hazards such as floods but most notably the drought in the southern part of the country make the main drivers of humanitarian needs; whereas the spread of the conflict in Tigray into neighbouring regions of Afar and Amhara during 2021, has left millions of people, displaced and non-displaced, in need of assistance and protection in these three regions of Northern Ethiopia;
- I. whereas reports stated that children are being recruited into the conflict by the warring parties, mainly the Tigrayan forces; whereas the use of child soldiers constitutes a war crime;
- J. whereas at least 1,900 children under the age of 5 have died from malnutrition in

Ethiopia's Tigray region in 2021; whereas a total of 1.39 million children in the Tigray region are missing out on education because of Ethiopia's civil war, with more than 1 million Tigray children having missed the third year of school due to the situation; whereas children in particular have suffered from a shortage of medical supplies and food and haven't had any access to basic healthcare; whereas according to the summary report released by The Tigray Bureau of Education, permanent damage has been caused in Tigray's education sector due to the number of deaths and the level of destruction within the school system, while 346 males and 1798 females totaling 2164 persons in the education sector have been killed including teachers and education professionals;

- K. whereas in April 2022, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International released a joint report documenting an ethnic cleansing campaign since November 2020 against the Tigrayan civilian population in Northern Ethiopia by newly appointed officials and regional security forces and militias from the Amhara region, with the acquiescence and possible participation of Ethiopian federal forces, amounting to crimes against humanity as well as war crimes;
- L. whereas in its report issued on 9 November 2021, Amnesty International indicates that TPLFs fighters' act in Tigray neighbouring region, amount to war crimes, and potentially crimes against humanity, defying morality or humanity: gang rape, physical assault, dehumanizing verbal assault and stealing from rape victims;
- M. whereas in December 2021, the United Nations Human Rights Council established the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) to investigate allegations of violations and abuses of international human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law in Ethiopia committed since 3 November 2020 by all parties to the conflict; whereas on 22 September 2022, the Commission concluded on reasonable grounds to believe that the Federal government has committed crimes against humanity in Tigray Region and that Tigrayan Forces have committed serious human rights abuses, some amounting to war crimes; whereas the one-year mandate of the ICHREE will soon expire despite further investigations are still needed;
- N. whereas the above mentioned report also concluded that sexual and gender-based violence, in particular rape, has been perpetrated on a staggering scale since the armed conflict erupted; whereas sexual and gender-based violence has been characterised by a pattern of extreme brutality, including gang rape, sexualised torture and ethnically targeted sexual violence; whereas the UN has pointed out the difficulty involved in tracking specific cases of rape or sexual violence; whereas the Ethiopian Government has expressed its commitment to accountability for sexual violence;
- O. whereas the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe considers human development, governance and peacebuilding in Ethiopia as priority areas for action, with 65 % of the multiannual indicative programme dedicated to these fields; whereas as a result of the ongoing conflict the EU has postponed budget support disbursements to Ethiopia worth EUR 88 million; whereas the adoption of the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) under the NDICI- Global Europe instrument has also been postponed;
- P. whereas the European Commission has included humanitarian actions worth

EUR 5 million in Amhara and Afar in order to address the recent developments of the crisis, as part of the total humanitarian funding that has already been mobilised and contracted in 2021, amounting to EUR 53.7 million, to support people in need in Ethiopia;

1. Expresses its deep concern about the renewal of hostilities between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front; underlines that Eritrean troops are also engaged in hostilities; stresses in particular that such re-escalation of the conflict in northern Ethiopia will impact primarily women and children and the most vulnerable populations;
2. Calls to all parties to immediately cease hostilities in order to avoid further escalation and expansion of the military conflict and break the cycle of violence, and to return to the process of dialogue and mediation in order to avoid additional loss of life, mass displacements and the further destabilisation of the country and the whole region of the Horn of Africa; calls, furthermore, on neighbouring countries to refrain from all political and military interventions that could further fuel the conflict;
3. Calls to all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law; reiterates its call for immediate and unconditional access to be granted to humanitarian actors and to be organised independently from the parties to the conflict; calls again for the restoration of all basic services and communication services in Tigray and neighbouring regions;
4. Strongly supports the AU-led mediation process and calls on the EU to actively engage in it, in coordination with international partners;
5. Acknowledges the decision of the UN Security Council to discuss the situation in Ethiopia as a matter of urgency; urges the UN Security Council to take action needed to ensure the protection of civilians and prevent further escalation;
6. stresses that a political settlement is vital for peacebuilding efforts in Ethiopia; underlines that a series of factors make a complete halt to the ethnic-related violence and an immediate political settlement challenging: the continued use of violence by outlawed or ethnic-based armed resistance groups, the ethnic and political polarisation of local and diaspora-based political elites, the fragmented political mobilisation, activism and loyalties of the Ethiopian population, and the multiple regional security problems such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, involving Sudan, Egypt and Eritrea;
7. calls on the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission to take significant steps to develop a peaceful, inclusive and constructive peacebuilding effort between all communities and ensure their protection across the country; stresses that both local and diaspora stakeholders, including the Federal Government, have a conclusive and central role to play in any Ethiopian-led inclusive peacebuilding strategy to which the international community, including the EU, can contribute;
8. Calls on the EU and the international community to engage in providing comprehensive international peacebuilding support which takes into account the

specificity of the Ethiopian context, including the diverse and interlinked nature of the acts of violence rife across the country, in order to facilitate a more comprehensive political normalisation process in Ethiopia;

9. Calls on the renewal of the mandate of the ICHREE by the Human Rights Council, and on providing it with sufficient time as well as technical assistance and budgetary resources required to implement this mandate without limiting its temporal or geographic scope; stresses the crucial role of the ICHREE given the gaps outlined in the steps taken by the government thus far, including its mandate to make recommendations on transitional justice and reconciliation, to identify those responsible, and preserve evidence and make recommendations in any future accountability process; calls on all parties to the conflict to provide the necessary cooperation to the Commission including unconditional access to areas affected by the conflict and violence;
10. Underlines that findings of the ICHREE could also feed into domestic processes leading to accountability; calls on the European Commission and member states to support domestic accountability initiatives only based on clear, transparent, effective, and measurable benchmarks that ensure independent and impartial justice and accountability for victims and survivors;
11. Condemns the continued use of rape and other sexual violence and calls for those suspected of committing rape or sexual violence to be held accountable; insists that victims are urgently provided with assistance, immediate access to healthcare services, including sexual healthcare and abortion, and also psychosocial support; calls on the Ethiopian Government to fulfil its commitment to engage investigations in relation to the many severe cases of gender-based violence in the conflict committed by all warring parties and to ensure that those responsible for these atrocities are brought to justice in open, accessible civilian courts, in full compliance with the international standards without recourse to the death penalty; demands to publicly present the outcomes of any findings;
12. Condemns any form of recruitment of child soldiers or children's involvement in any act of conflict or war.
13. Condemns the killings of all civilians, including refugees, humanitarian and medical workers, women and children, as well as damage to or the destruction of critical infrastructures aimed at providing civilian care, schooling, shelter or protection; underlines the urgency of ensuring effective civilian protection, given the multiple reports of human rights violations and contraventions of international humanitarian and refugee law by all parties to the conflict;
14. Expresses strong concerns about food shortages and the reported risks of famine especially for vulnerable groups like children caused by the combination of the current military conflict, bad harvests and droughts;
15. Calls for the international and regional borders with neighbouring countries to remain open for the safe and free movement of civilians; calls on the EU and its Member States to provide humanitarian visas to those at risk and facilitate family reunification; recalls that Ethiopia is an important country of origin of, and transit and destination for, migrants; insists that the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the regional authorities

protect the population and guarantee their fundamental rights, including the right to work and live in any part of the country as a citizen;

16. Urges the Ethiopian Government and the TPLF to refrain from violence, arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances and human rights violations towards journalists and human rights defenders or related to people's ethnicity both in Tigray and throughout Ethiopia;
17. Deplores any move by political representatives, officials or public figures either from Ethiopia including from Tigray or the international community who, rather than promoting peace and development, equality, unity, respect for human and democratic rights and the prevalence of the rule of law for Ethiopia, embark on preaching ethnic federalism, thereby creating mistrust between communities and instigating ethnic conflict;
18. Welcomes the joint investigation by the UN Human Rights Officer and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission; urges the Ethiopian Federal Government and all parties to the conflict to endorse its recommendations in order to achieve accountability;
19. calls on the Commission to reconsider its limitation of budget support to implementing measures in order to enable the continued implementation of development projects outside the conflict zone; calls for EU and Member States' assistance to be provided in the form of grants and not loans in order not to increase the debt burden of the country; calls also for the mobilisation of additional funding from the EU Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (SEAR) in order to address the most acute needs of the people affected by the conflict in Tigray and the other areas directly affected by the spread of the northern Ethiopia conflict, with a particular focus on the bordering regions of Afar and Amhara;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the European External Action Service, the Federal Government and House of Federation of Ethiopia, the Tigrayan authorities, the Government of the Republic of the Sudan, the Government of the State of Eritrea, the governments of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and its member states, the Pan-African Parliament, and the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.