



An Open Letter to Secretary Blinken

United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken
Department of State
2201 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20520

1st December 2021

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write with a request for immediate targeted sanctions to be implemented against the leadership of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

On November 9th 2021, Amnesty International published a report highlighting the testimony of sixteen women from the town of Nifas Mewcha in Ethiopia's Amhara region. The TPLF attacked the town in mid-August, as verified by Amnesty International, survivors were raped at gunpoint, robbed, and subjected to physical and verbal assaults by TPLF fighters, who also destroyed and looted medical facilities in the town. Furthermore, Amnesty reported 14 of the 16 women Amnesty International interviewed said they were gang raped.

This is the latest in a series of awful atrocities committed by the TPLF. They have expanded the war far beyond the regional borders of Tigray into the neighbouring provinces of Afar and Amhara. In September, USAID's Mission Director for Ethiopia Simon Jones confirmed TPLF forces had looted humanitarian aid, he stated: *"We do have proof that several of our warehouses have been looted and completely emptied in the areas, particularly in Amhara, where TPLF soldiers have gone into."* On November 13th the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission published a report confirm the TPLF had killed more than 150 civilians in the Amhara region on suspicion of being informants or offering aid to government forces. It is clear the TPLF is systematically attacking civilians and disrupting the path to peace in Ethiopia.

We would also like to remind you that in July the Ethiopian Government declared a unilateral ceasefire. The TPLF described it as a "sick joke" and shortly after invaded Afar and Amhara. In recent days the Ethiopian Government has outlined its terms for a new ceasefire, the TPLF have not. In a recent State Department briefing it was claimed; "we are not imposing sanctions at this time on elements aligned with the Government of Ethiopia and the TPLF to allow time and space to see if the current talks can make progress." We thoroughly disagree with this statement, the recent threat to delist Ethiopia from the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) come January 2022 is a direct trade sanction on the Ethiopian Government and innocent civilians.

At this stage in the conflict the TPLF is the sole aggressor and is responsible for many atrocities and crimes against humanity in recent months. Despite this, neither the United States nor other

members of the international community have implemented targeted sanctions against the TPLF leadership. Many members of the TPLF leadership have significant foreign assets and capital. Sanctions against these individuals and the organisation would not only damage their operational ability thus easing tensions in Ethiopia and force the TPLF to consider a ceasefire, but it would also demonstrate a balanced foreign policy from the United States that is reflective of the current context of the conflict that the people of Ethiopia are enduring.

AEPAC has consistently cautioned the international community against using sanctions as a political tool in this conflict. Such measures risk further destabilising the country and hurting the most vulnerable in the country. However, as the U.S. has ignored those calls and pursued aggressive punitive actions against the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments for their role in this year-old conflict, it is time to extend that to the TPLF leadership for balance and as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,



Mesfin Tegenu
Chairman
AEPAC

On behalf of:

U.S. Diaspora Groups

- We Can
- New York Tristate GERD Support
- Ethio-Canadian Network for Advocacy and Support
- Global Ethiopia Advocacy Nexus
- Global Ethiopian Diaspora Society
- Ethiopian American Civic Council
- Ethiopian Dialogue Forum
- Global Alliance for the Rights of Ethiopians
- Bridge Generation
- EAN
- EDTF
- Advocates for Ethiopia
- Ethiopian Public Diplomacy Network
- United for a Brighter Ethiopia