



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2021)0421

Humanitarian situation in Tigray

European Parliament resolution of 7 October 2021 on the humanitarian situation in Tigray (2021/2902(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 26 November 2020 on the situation in Ethiopia¹,
- having regard to the statement of 25 June 2021 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security (VP/HR) Josep Borrell and the Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič on the killing of three humanitarian workers in Tigray,
- having regard to the joint statement of 24 June 2021 by the VP/HR and Commissioner Lenarčič on the airstrike in the Tigray region,
- having regard to the declaration of 4 October 2021 by the VP/HR on behalf of the European Union on the decision to expel seven United Nations officials,
- having regard to the joint statement of 10 June 2021 by the EU and the US following the roundtable on the humanitarian emergency in Tigray,
- having regard to the conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council of 12 July 2021 on Ethiopia,
- 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 2417 of the UN Security Council of 24 May 2018 condemning the starving of civilians as a method of warfare and the unlawful denial of humanitarian access to civilian populations,
- having regard to the remarks of 26 August 2021 by UN Secretary-General António Guterres to the UN Security Council meeting on Ethiopia,

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0330.

- having regard to the statement of 13 September 2021 by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet,
 - having regard to the statement of 17 September 2021 by US President Joe Biden on the Executive Order regarding the crisis in Ethiopia,
 - having regard to the statement of 30 September 2021 by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres following the expulsion of seven UN officials from Ethiopia,
 - having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia adopted on 8 December 1994, and in particular 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 African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights,
 - having regard to the UN 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 Resolution 2286 of the UN Security Council of 3 May 2016 on the protection of the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel in armed conflict,
 - having regard to Resolution 47/13 of the UN Human Rights Council of 13 July 2021 on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia,
 - having regard to the resolution of 12 May 2021 of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the fact-finding mission to the Tigray region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,
 - having regard to the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement,
 - having regard to the resolution of 11 March 2021 of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the EU on democracy and the respect for constitutions in EU and ACP countries,
 - having regard to the Amnesty International report of 10 August 2021 entitled “‘I don’t know if they realised I was a person’’: Rape and other sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia’,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the unilateral ceasefire declared by the Ethiopian Government on 28 June 2021 did not stop the fighting, with the parties to the conflict launching new offensives; whereas the conflict is now spreading to the neighbouring regions of Afar and Amhara and there is a risk that the impact will spread to the whole Horn of Africa; whereas this

11-month conflict has triggered a human-induced crisis and this wide-scale human suffering is entirely preventable;

- B. whereas, even before the fighting began, there were 15,2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia, 2 million of whom in the Tigray region; whereas nearly one million people are living in famine-like conditions and 5,2 million out of 6 million people in Tigray are facing acute food insecurity as a direct consequence of the violence; whereas 91 % of the population is in extreme need of humanitarian aid and 100 000 children will face life-threatening severe acute malnutrition over the next 12 months; whereas in June 2021 the UN had already warned that 5,5 million people in Tigray and the neighbouring regions of Amhara and Afar were in need of food aid and 350 000 were facing starvation; whereas the Tigray region is home to 100 000 internally displaced people and 96 000 Eritrean refugees; whereas it has several large refugee camps in which, according to NGOs, 44 % of those living there are children; whereas as of July 2021, the conflict has displaced around 1,9 million people in Tigray;
- C. whereas there are multiple and severe reports of alleged gross violations of human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law perpetrated by all parties to the conflict; whereas these reports include attacks on civilians, extrajudicial killings, torture, enforced disappearances, mass detentions, systematic lootings and the systematic and deliberate destruction of basic services, water systems, crops and livelihoods;
- D. whereas, despite the Ethiopian Government's expressed commitment to accountability for sexual violence¹, rape and other sexual violence against women and girls continue to be widely used by Ethiopian, Eritrean and Amhara regional armed forces in addition to death threats, the use of ethnic slurs, and capture in conditions of sexual slavery; whereas government forces and officials have harassed and threatened humanitarian organisations and national health providers which support survivors of sexual violence;
- E. whereas there have been several reports of extrajudicial killings since the beginning of the conflict in Tigray, including massacres alleged to have taken place in Mai-Kadra on the night of 9 November 2020, in Axum on 28 November 2020 and in Mahbere Dego in January 2021; whereas in August 2021, Sudanese authorities reported that the bodies of around 50 people were found in the Tekeze River, bordering western Tigray and Sudan; whereas evidence has been found of more than 250 alleged massacres in Tigray since the beginning of the civil war in November 2020; whereas it has been reported that the Tigray People's Liberation Front also committed extrajudicial killings in Tigray's neighbouring regions in August 2021, such as in Chenna and Kobo;
- F. whereas according to credible sources, both the Tigray People's Liberation Front and the Ethiopian National Defence Force have perpetrated human rights violations in Tigray; whereas the Eritrean forces have infiltrated Tigray and other parts of Ethiopia and have also been committing serious human rights violations; whereas the majority of allegations relate to violations committed by the Ethiopian National Defence Force and the Eritrean forces;

¹ Statement of 12 August 2021 regarding the latest report by Amnesty International on the alleged rape and other sexual violence in the Tigray Regional State of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

- G. whereas on 13 September 2021 UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet spoke of violations ‘by all parties’; whereas the EU has consistently supported High Commissioner Bachelet’s work;
- H. whereas the final report of the joint investigation by the UN Human Rights Officer and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission into alleged violations of human rights and humanitarian and refugee law committed by all parties to the conflict in Tigray will be published on 1 November 2021;
- I. whereas in addition to the looting and destruction of crops, desert locust swarms were seen southwest of Mekele in Tigray; whereas the ongoing conflict and humanitarian situation has made COVID-19 prevention and vaccination efforts impossible in many areas;
- J. whereas only 10 % of humanitarian supplies for the embattled Tigray region have been allowed to enter the area over the past month; whereas 100 trucks are needed daily to provide sufficient humanitarian supplies to Tigray; whereas since 12 July 2021, only 525 trucks have entered Tigray because of closed borders, controlled access by armed forces, the destruction of infrastructure such as bridges, insecurity for drivers, a severe lack of fuel and cash to return to the supply points and extended delays in searching and clearing humanitarian supplies;
- K. whereas targeting aid workers is considered a war crime and a crime against humanity; whereas three staff members of Médecins Sans Frontières were killed on 25 June 2021 while delivering aid to those needing it most; whereas 23 aid workers have been killed in the region since November 2020; whereas on 22 June 2021, Ethiopian Government forces had blocked ambulances from responding to an airstrike at a market in Togoga; whereas the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported that on 17 June 2021, Eritrean Government forces had stopped and assaulted a vaccination team in Asgede Woreda; whereas the looting of health facilities is reported to be recurrent in Tigray; whereas government forces and officials have harassed and threatened humanitarian organisations and national health providers which support survivors of sexual violence;
- L. whereas more than two million people have been displaced from their homes; whereas nearly 76 500 people in Afar and an estimated 200 000 in Amhara are reported to have been displaced after Tigrayan forces moved into these regions; whereas 55 000 Ethiopian refugees and asylum seekers are reported to be seeking shelter in Sudan;
- M. whereas some refugee camps in Tigray have been destroyed; whereas Eritrean refugees living in Tigray face abductions and forcible returns; whereas healthcare is unavailable and clean drinking water is running out in the refugee camps in Tigray;
- N. whereas there are reports of children being recruited into the conflict by the warring parties, including the Tigrayan forces; whereas the use of child soldiers constitutes a war crime;
- O. whereas the Ethiopian authorities have arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared ethnic Tigrayans in Ethiopia’s capital, and have committed other abuses against them such as closing Tigrayan-owned businesses; whereas incitement to hatred and

discrimination and rising levels of inflammatory anti-Tigray rhetoric are evident throughout Ethiopia, including by high-level government officials;

- P. whereas on 30 September 2021, the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared seven UN staff members (from Unicef, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UNOCHA) *personae non gratae* in Ethiopia;
- Q. whereas there have been intermittent restrictions and shutdowns of the internet and telecommunications in Tigray and neighbouring regions; whereas journalists have been attacked and several media outlets' licences have been suspended, which hampers the ability to monitor the situation on the ground; whereas basic services, including electricity and banking services, continue to be restricted;
- R. whereas the current state of instability in Ethiopia is the result of a long history of ethnic division and ethnic tension;
- S. whereas the unity of Ethiopia, as a multi-ethnic state, is of great importance for the stability of the region and the African continent as a whole;
- T. whereas with a population of more than 110 million people and being strategically located near the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia is a key country on the African continent and a potential partner of strategic importance for the EU and its Member States;
- U. whereas as the world's leading humanitarian donor, the EU continues to stand in solidarity with those in need through its humanitarian funding; whereas from the outset of the conflict in Ethiopia, the EU has continued to consistently advocate for full and unimpeded humanitarian access in line with international humanitarian law;
- V. whereas the recently adopted communication on the EU's humanitarian action envisages strengthening the processes that put the promotion and application of international humanitarian law consistently at the heart of our external action;
- W. whereas the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (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;
- X. whereas the 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; whereas EUR 118 million has been mobilised for assistance to Tigray and Ethiopian refugees in Sudan; whereas as a result of the ongoing conflict the EU has postponed budget support disbursements to Ethiopia;
- Y. whereas in September 2021 the EU attempted to organise a humanitarian air bridge through the Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) in order to deliver urgently needed humanitarian goods to the Tigray region, but faced major hurdles from the Ethiopian Government; whereas as a result only one EU humanitarian air bridge flight was carried out, with only a small proportion of its humanitarian cargo delivered;

- Z. whereas on 21 June 2021 the EU appointed Annette Weber as the new EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa; whereas following a mandate from the VP/HR, the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs Pekka Haavisto visited the region twice earlier this year to discuss the ongoing crisis in Ethiopia and its regional impacts;
- AA. whereas on 26 August 2021 the African Union appointed the former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo as a mediator for the conflict;
- AB. whereas in December 2018 the newly installed Government of Ethiopia set up the Ethiopian Reconciliation Commission and the Ministry of Peace; whereas thus far, both institutions have failed to live up to their initial mandates of encouraging peace and preventing and resolving armed conflict in Ethiopia in the difficult environment following their creation;
- AC. whereas during the ongoing conflict the Ethiopian Prosperity Party, led by Abiy Ahmed, declared itself the winner of a general election that was boycotted and the result of which was denounced by some opposition parties; whereas there was no electoral process in Tigray; whereas the EU did not send an election observation mission;
- AD. whereas Ethiopia is a signatory to the Cotonou Agreement, Article 96 of which stipulates that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential element of ACP-EU cooperation;
1. Demands the immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties, which is a necessary prerequisite for much-needed improvements to the humanitarian situation in Tigray and other regions, in particular Afar and Amhara; calls for an immediate return to constitutional order and for the establishment of a ceasefire monitoring mechanism;
 2. Calls on all national, regional and local actors concerned to allow immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access and relief to affected populations in Tigray, ending the de facto blockade on humanitarian assistance and critical supplies, including food, medicine and fuel, and to facilitate assistance to populations in need in the regions of Amhara and Afar;
 3. Strongly condemns the deliberate targeting of civilians by all the belligerent parties, the reported recruitment of children by warring parties, including the Tigrayan forces, and the continued use of rape and sexual violence; recalls that deliberate attacks against civilians and the recruitment and use of child soldiers constitute war crimes;
 4. Condemns the killing of civilians, refugees, and humanitarian and medical workers; calls on forces on all sides to respect international human rights and international humanitarian and refugee law and to ensure the protection of people in the affected areas; calls for accountability for crimes committed during the ongoing conflict and for those responsible to be found and brought to justice; calls for those suspected of committing rape or sexual slavery to be investigated for such war crimes and crimes against humanity as rape, sexual slavery, torture and persecution;
 5. Urges the Tigray People's Liberation Front to halt its offensive and withdraw its forces immediately from the Amhara and Afar Regions; calls on the Amhara regional government to withdraw its forces from western Tigray, and for the Eritrean Government to withdraw its forces immediately and permanently from Ethiopia; calls

on neighbouring countries to refrain from all political and military interventions that could further fuel the conflict;

6. Calls for an independent and impartial inquiry commission to investigate the attacks targeting specific ethnic and religious groups with the intention of inciting intercommunity violence and endangering the peace and security of the Ethiopian people; calls on the Ethiopian Government to ensure that those responsible are held accountable;
7. Recalls that the Ethiopian Government is responsible for the safety and security of the refugees and internally displaced persons on its territory; calls on the Ethiopian authorities to provide immediate and adequate protection and assistance to the thousands of Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers displaced from camps in Tigray and to determine the fate and whereabouts of the thousands of unaccounted Eritrean refugees; deplores the hateful and inflammatory language used by high-level officials and urges all actors involved to choose their words carefully in order to avoid a further escalation and prevent additional human suffering; calls for the international and regional borders to remain open for the safe and free movement of civilians; 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;
8. Calls on the Ethiopian authorities to immediately account for the forced disappearances of all civilians, to release those detained without credible evidence of a crime and to end all discriminatory treatment; deplores the use of hate speech by public figures that may stoke violence, intimidation and discrimination against Tigrayan or other communities, thereby creating mistrust and instigating ethnic conflicts, and urges national, local and regional authorities to adopt a more inclusive dialogue and to refrain from engaging in incitement to violence;
9. Encourages the authorities to set up a court-like restorative justice body which would be charged with the task of investigating human rights abuses which took place during the conflict, including the circumstances, factors and context of any violations, thereby giving victims the opportunity to testify and allowing for the creation of an impartial historical record of the past, and calls for the body to draft a reparations policy, together with recommendations for measures to prevent future violations of human rights;
10. Strongly condemns all attacks on humanitarian aid workers and critical infrastructure, including hospitals and medical facilities, and the widespread looting and destruction of humanitarian aid; strongly condemns the blocking of ambulances trying to provide medical assistance to the wounded following the bombardments;
11. Deplores the fact that seven UN human rights and humanitarian workers of Unicef, the OHCHR, UNOCHA and the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Ethiopia were declared personae non gratae by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia; expresses concern for the safety and well-being of independent humanitarian and human rights workers in the region and for the neutrality of humanitarian aid distribution in Tigray; welcomes the strong statement by the EU and its 27 Member States of 30 September 2021, which firmly condemns the expulsion of these workers and calls on the government to reverse its decision;

12. Calls on the Ethiopian Government to sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; calls on the warring parties to guarantee unfettered access to independent human rights monitors and investigators, including UN and African Union investigators;
13. Underlines the important work of journalists in the region and calls upon all actors to ensure free access to the press and to allow journalists to carry out their work in safety;
14. Calls for basic public services such as electricity and banking services to be fully re-established, and for restrictions on telecommunications and internet access in Tigray to be lifted; highlights the importance of ensuring education and schools for the children in Tigray and beyond;
15. Recalls the importance of Ethiopia for the stability of the Horn of Africa and the continent as a whole; recalls that the EU and other international interlocutors have offered to serve as mediators between the sides to the Ethiopian conflict, but these offers have not been accepted by Ethiopia; calls on all belligerent parties to come to the negotiating table without preconditions; calls for an Ethiopian-led inclusive national political dialogue to find a solution to the crisis, including representatives from all the affected areas (Tigray, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Afar, Oromia, Sidama, Somali, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), and Gambella);
16. Recalls that the situation can only be resolved through peaceful means and with inclusive dialogue among all warring parties, an effective ceasefire and the protection of human rights;
17. Reiterates the EU's readiness to support, engage in and organise a dialogue, in close coordination with others, in order to keep the space for dialogue open and try to forge a basis for talks between the two principal warring parties;
18. Expresses its support for regional mediation efforts such as those of the African Union mediator President Obasanjo; welcomes, furthermore, the recent appointment of a new EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa;
19. Regrets that the UN Security Council has so far not addressed the situation in Tigray; urges the EU and its Member States to press the UN Security Council to hold regular public meetings on Tigray and to take decisive action to ensure unhindered humanitarian access, to safeguard the protection of civilians, to end grave violations of international law, and to ensure accountability for the atrocities; calls on the UN Security Council to consider deploying UN peacekeepers to the region;
20. Urges the EU Member States to encourage the VP/HR to hold an intersessional briefing on Tigray at the UN Human Rights Council before the end of the year in order to present the findings of the report of the OHCHR-Ethiopian Human Rights Commission joint investigation; stresses that the joint investigation should help lay the foundation for a robust international investigative mechanism to be established by the UN Human Rights Council as a matter of urgency;
21. Calls on the EU Foreign Affairs Council to act swiftly, resolutely and in a united manner to adopt the measures necessary to effectively address the seriousness and urgency of the situation on the ground in Tigray;

22. Welcomes and supports the Commission's decision of December 2020 to postpone budget support disbursements to the Ethiopian Government; welcomes the diplomatic efforts and repeated statements by the VP/HR and the Commission urging accountability and unhindered humanitarian access, and condemning the abuses by all parties; strongly reiterates the EU's support for Michelle Bachelet's important work as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights;
23. Calls for the EU and its Member States to consider adopting measures to protect human rights and to ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses are held accountable, for example through the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Mechanism;
24. Emphasises that the EU stands on the side of the people of Ethiopia; emphasises its willingness for a peaceful solution to the conflict; suggests, however, the use of sanctions by the Commission against members of the Government of Ethiopia, the Government of Eritrea and the Tigray People's Liberation Front and others responsible for actions prolonging the conflict and exacerbating the humanitarian situation for millions of Ethiopians if the humanitarian situation has not significantly improved by the end of October 2021, in particular after a new Ethiopian Government has been formed;
25. Calls on the Member States to halt exports of arms and surveillance technology to Ethiopia that are being used to facilitate attacks on civilians and perpetrate human rights violations;
26. Welcomes the US Executive Order of 17 September 2021 regarding the Ethiopian crisis, which targets those responsible for and complicit in prolonging the conflict in Ethiopia, obstructing humanitarian access, preventing a ceasefire and committing human rights abuses; regrets, however, that the US has continued its budget support and that this has meant that US actions have been less effective and resolute than the EU's actions;
27. Strongly welcomes the Commission's life-saving support in the region and supports a further extension of it; calls for the mobilisation of additional funding of at least EUR 30 million from the EU Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve 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;
28. Urges the EU and the leaders of its Member States to prioritise the human rights and humanitarian situation in Tigray and northern Ethiopia during the forthcoming African Union-EU summit and leaders' meeting, and to identify concrete actions and promote greater coordination in strategy and messaging;
29. 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.

