



Security Council

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Letter dated 16 April 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to strongly register my Government's dismay at the unwarranted statements made by the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations during the closed session of the Security Council yesterday. In this respect, the pliant and unconstructive role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and especially its persistent position to venture into areas beyond its mandate, is unfortunate and unacceptable.

To begin with, let us get the facts straight. The crisis in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia erupted solely because the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) clique – supported and emboldened for decades by certain powers – unleashed a massive, pre-emptive attack on all the contingents of the entire Ethiopian Northern Command. The purpose of this “blitzkrieg” was to neutralize Ethiopia's largest army contingent, confiscate its weaponry (80 per cent of the total arsenal of the Defence Forces) and seize power in Ethiopia through violence and subsequently invade Eritrea. The TPLF Central Committee endorsed this unprecedented act of insurrection and grave regional destabilization in its meeting earlier in the month.

The unprovoked attack by TPLF also took place during the critical harvest months in the Tigray Region. The timing of the attack demonstrates the callousness of TPLF, particularly in the context of the fact that 1.6 million poor farmers in Tigray have depended – since 2009 – on humanitarian assistance under the global safety net.

In the statements by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Ambassador of the United States to the United Nations, these facts are glossed over. Instead, we heard false allegations of the “use of sexual violence and hunger as a weapon”. We are indeed appalled by attempts to blame those who were forced to resort to legitimate measures of self-defence that other countries would have used under similar circumstances. The allegations of rape and other crimes lodged against Eritrean soldiers are not just outrageous, but also a vicious attack on the culture and history of our people.

Irrespective of the culpability of the defunct TPLF clique, innocent civilians in Tigray Region should not be victimized in any way. Humanitarian assistance has to be delivered. These are the urgent tasks of the moment.

Furthermore, as the looming grave threat has been largely thwarted, Eritrea and Ethiopia have agreed – at the highest levels – to embark on the withdrawal of Eritrean forces and the simultaneous redeployment of Ethiopian contingents along the international boundary. Eritrea avails of this occasion to thank the member States of the Security Council who have insisted on adherence to established norms in this case, too.



I would be most grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sophia **Tesfamariam**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
