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 The Government of National Regional State of Tigray
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 Office of President

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 Date 27/11/2021

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 Ref No L/22/225/84

To: HE António Guterres
 Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN)
 New York, NY

Subject: Concern on the Meddling of non-African countries in the genocidal war of Ethiopia

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

I am writing to inform you officially of our grave concern about the role played by certain non-African countries in the current civil war in Ethiopia. We have a reason to believe these states are complicit in the most serious atrocity crimes, including genocide, as well as in creating chaos and state failure in Ethiopia and in the Horn of Africa Region.

In recent years there has been a consistent pattern of destabilization by several Middle Eastern countries that have meddled in conflicts in other states. Prominent among these meddlers are Iran, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. We have seen the deleterious consequences of their destabilization in Libya, Syria and Yemen. I do not need to remind you of the gravity of the human rights and humanitarian crises in these countries and the wider and longer-lasting costs of those conflicts, including state collapse and regional instability.

We are now seeing a similar scenario playing out in Ethiopia.

I am writing to draw your attention to this issue and to request that you use your good offices to directly engage Iran, Turkey and the UAE to request them to cease supplying weapons to the Federal Government of Ethiopia. I also urge you to bring this to the attention of the UN Security Council. These weapons are used to attack civilians and civilian targets in violation of international humanitarian law and their use is escalating the war and further destabilizing Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa region.

Over the last two decades, the United Nations has partnered with the African Union in establishing an African Peace and Security Architecture, to guide conflict prevention and resolution. The norms, principles and institutions of this partnership were intended to promote negotiated solutions to African conflicts based upon good neighborliness and to minimize external interference in the affairs of the continent. In line with long-standing partnerships to support peace and security, African conflict

resolution efforts in Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan have been vigorously supported by the United Nations, the European Union and the United States.

By contrast, Iran, Turkey and the UAE have shown blatant disregard for the African Peace and Security Architecture and have consequently become active in destabilizing the continent. All have on occasions made valued humanitarian and investment contributions. However, their readiness to provide arms to belligerents and to intervene in a partisan manner in internal political issues including armed conflicts has proved profoundly destabilizing. Additionally, their mode of intervention routinely involves hiring mercenaries, in blatant contravention of the African convention on mercenaries.

These dynamics have played out in the case of the war in Ethiopia. Successive African mediation initiatives have been rebuffed by the Federal Government of Ethiopia, in part because that government is adamant it can rely on uncritical support from outside the continent.

During the first months of the civil war which pitted the Federal Government of Ethiopia, its allies the State of Eritrea and Amhara region, against the National Regional Government of Tigray, armed drones were a devastating component of the arsenal deployed against our people. Those drones were flown from the airbase at Assab, Eritrea, which was leased by Eritrea to the UAE. It was well-known to all involved in the conflict that the UAE, which had previously been using those drones against civilian and military targets in Yemen, redeployed those assets in support of the Ethiopian and Eritrean military operations in Tigray.

Those drone operations ceased promptly in January this year when the UAE closed down its base in Assab.

Since August, the Federal Government of Ethiopia has been spending the country's scarce resources on buying arms from numerous countries. In particular, they purchased drones from China, Iran, and Turkey. The UAE facilitated transfer and may have financially supported some of these transactions. Between September and November this year, according to an investigation by Aljazeera and confirmed by other sources, the UAE provided 90 flights of military cargo aircraft to Ethiopia, including transporting Chinese drones for use in the war.

In recent weeks the drone campaign has resumed. The targets are mostly civilian.

Recent targets of drone attacks include the following:

- civilian residences in the city of Mekelle,
- civilian homes and property in and near the town of Gashena in Amhara region,
- civilian transport vehicles,
- prisoners of war being transported by our forces.

Because all outside reporting from the war zone is prohibited, no independent journalists have yet reported on these stories. But please be aware that we are scrupulously documenting every single civilian casualty from this drone campaign and we shall in due course be insisting on a full independent investigation into these attacks, which will include calling for full accountability for all those involved in the supply of these weapons systems and their operation.

Iran, Turkey and the UAE are states parties to the Geneva Conventions and numerous other international instruments that prohibit attacks on civilians and civilian targets.

Iran, Turkey and the UAE are states parties to the Genocide Convention and are therefore under an obligation to prevent and punish the crime of genocide. We believe that acts that constitute genocide have been perpetrated against the people of Tigray, and that there is also a very high risk of further acts of genocide being perpetrated in the near future.

As I have indicated, armed drones are being used against civilian targets and are causing widespread civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian objects. While the primary perpetrators of such crimes are individuals in senior positions in the Federal Government of Ethiopia, the Regional State of Amhara, and the State of Eritrea, please be aware that any state that supplies lethal weaponry to the Federal Government of Ethiopia and its allies under the current circumstances are potential accomplices in the crime of genocide and any other grave violations that may be perpetrated in the course of this conflict.

Turkey and the UAE have signed the Arms Trade Treaty of 2013, which as you are well aware was adopted with the purpose, inter alia, of “Contributing to international and regional peace, security and stability [and] reducing human suffering.”

The Treaty expressly prohibits arms transfers if the transferring state “has knowledge at the time of authorization that the arms or items would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes.”

I request you to inform Turkey and the UAE of the concern, expressed by your own Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, that “the risk of commission of atrocity crimes, including genocide, is real and must be addressed as a matter of utmost urgency.”

The Arms Trade Treaty also requires transferring states to assess the potential that the arms exported would “contribute to or undermine peace and security.” I request you to use your judgement as to whether the arms transferred to Ethiopia risk undermining peace and security.

Excellency,

The moral foundation of the United Nations and the African Union is a commitment to peace and human rights and an empathy for those who are suffering the consequences of war and mass atrocity. The Middle Eastern states meddling in Ethiopia lack that empathy and are undermining those principled commitments. They have got away with it for too long and they are now becoming culpable parties in international crimes and in the destruction of Ethiopia. Please do not permit them to continue with impunity.

On behalf of the Government of the National Regional State of Tigray, let me repeat my assurances that we reluctantly engaged in armed conflict in order to secure the survival of our people; that we have always been committed to finding a negotiated end to the conflict; and that we seek to ensure stability, respect for human rights, and an end to starvation in Tigray, Ethiopia as a whole, and the wider Horn of Africa.

Please accept, Mr. Secretary General, assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,



Debretsion G/Michael /PHD/
President

