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September 12, 2021

The Right honorable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Langevin Block, 80 Wellington Street,  
Ottawa, ON. K1A 0A2

**Re: Is Canada's Failure to Condemn Genocidal Ethiopia Because of its Mining Interest?**

**Your excellency,**

We, groups of Tigrayan Canadian associations (listed below), have been communicating with your government since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia and his partners, the President of Eritrea, Isaias Afewerki, and militias from the Amhara regional government waged war on Tigray in November 2020. For nearly a year, we in the Tigrayan-Canadian community have been reaching out to our government to take meaningful action to help end the atrocities. We have shared corroborated accounts about the atrocities committed on the people of Tigray, written letters and petitions, organized multiple campaigns, and held countless demonstrations across Canada.

Moreover, we have written a letter conveying these concerns directly to your office, which your office acknowledged receiving, and to relevant authorities in the Global Affairs Canada office. However, while other Western governments such as the European Union, United States, the UK, and international organizations like the Bretton Woods institutions have suspended their development aid to Ethiopia, the Canadian government continues to provide support to a regime that has been accused of carrying out acts that amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We have not even heard a strong condemnation against the atrocities - the only exception being when the Foreign Affairs Minister Marc Garneau and his counterparts from France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States issued a joint statement expressing their 'extreme concern' about reports of thousands in Tigray living in famine conditions.<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> World - Canada, other G7 nations condemn Ethiopia violence in Tigray region, Canadian Press, April 2, 2021



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We are particularly alarmed to learn that “Ethiopia is still the largest recipient of Canadian development assistance, which has included earmarking \$15 million to reform the mining sector in Ethiopia through the Supporting Ministry of Mines in Ethiopia (SUMM) project.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, a government-funded agency report found that “a Canadian government program claims to have introduced feminist principles to Ethiopia’s mining sector has created opportunities for several Canadian mining companies in the country’s war-torn Tigray region.” As Canadians, we expect the Liberal government to honour and respect its stated commitment to human rights, not only here in Canada but everywhere in the world where these rights are threatened, and especially in Africa given its verbal commitment to protect women and Black lives.

Given your commitment to feminist values and your support for a feminist development policy, we are extremely disappointed to learn of your ongoing support for a Prime Minister who has weaponized Sexual and Gender Based violence against tens of thousands of women and girls in Tigray. Amnesty International recently published a report, which presents in heartbreaking detail, the accounts of Tigrayan women and girls who have been subjected to rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, and sexual mutilation, by troops under the command of Abiy Ahmed and his allies. Amnesty International further stated that these actions may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

As has been corroborated by every reputable news organization and international organizations operating in the region, for almost 10 months now, an all-out brutal war has been waged on the Tigrayan people by Prime Minister Abiy and his allies. This war has left tens of thousands of civilians dead, displaced millions and includes a man-made famine deliberately created to kill hundreds of thousands. Other egregious human rights violations in Tigray include weaponized rape, gang rape, and sexual slavery, ethnic cleansing, disruption of essential services, looting and destruction of health and education facilities as well as the forcible disappearance of thousands of Tigrayans across Ethiopia. Any ongoing support for a regime that has committed these atrocities against its own citizens is fundamentally opposed to Canada’s values, principles, and commitment to human rights.

**Your excellency,**

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<sup>2</sup> Leaked report accuses Canada of covering for mining companies in war-torn Ethiopia, The Breach, Aug 13, 2021



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We would like to request that your government take meaningful actions to help end the humanitarian catastrophe in Tigray. To this end, first, we would like to request that the Canadian government publicly and unconditionally condemn the atrocities that have been committed against Tigrayans. Second, we request that the Canadian government leverage all the economic, political, and diplomatic tools at its disposal to stop the atrocities, pressure the Abiy administration to adhere to a meaningful ceasefire and allow humanitarian access into Tigray. Third, we request that until such a time that the Ethiopian government conducts itself in a manner that aligns with Canada's values and principles, especially as it relates to the protection of women and girls from Sexual and Gender-Based violence, Canadian financial support for the Abiy administration be halted.

Canada said "not again" after the horrific Rwandan genocide. But all indications show that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and his allies have committed atrocities that amount to **war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.**

Hoping to see Canada playing an influential role in world politics especially in areas of human rights, respect, and dignity for girls and women, as well as promotion of peaceful means to resolve conflicts.

Wishing you a successful election,

*Tes Gebrezghi*

Tes Gebrezghi, Chair, Ethiopian Canadians for Peace

Signed By:

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- Tigrayan Community Associations in Canada

C: Hon. Marc Garneau, Minister, Global Affairs Canada



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