

Debate Pack

CDP-0007 (2022)

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Humanitarian and political situation in Ethiopia

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1 Summary

A debate on the humanitarian and political situation in Ethiopia is scheduled for Wednesday 19 January 2022 in Westminster Hall, from 2:30-4:00pm.

The debate will be led by Laurence Robertson MP.

2 Background

Ongoing conflict in northern Ethiopia and severe drought in the southeast mean millions of people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

The World Food Programme estimates 9.4 million people are in “[dire need of food assistance](#)” in the north.¹ While at least [6 million people will need life-saving assistance](#) in eastern and southern Ethiopia because of drought, according to UNOCHA.² The International Rescue Committee ranks Ethiopia second on its list of the “[ten worst humanitarian crises in the world expected in 2022](#).”³

A [report released in November 2021](#) by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission documented the widespread use of sexual violence, torture and forced displacement by all parties since the conflict began.⁴

The UK Government has repeatedly called for a cessation of fighting and to allow humanitarian aid through to those in need.

The Library has published several papers and debate packs on the situation in Ethiopia including:

- [Humanitarian situation in Sudan, Ethiopia and Tigray](#), debate pack, 1 November 2021
- [Humanitarian situation in Tigray](#), debate pack, 2 September 2021
- [Ethiopia: Situation in Tigray](#), 18 June 2021
- [Ethiopia: Warnings of “full-scale humanitarian crisis” in Tigray region](#), 18 November 2020

¹ “[9.4 million people are ‘living their worst nightmare’ in northern Ethiopia due to ongoing conflict](#)”, UN News, 26 November 2021

² UNOCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin Ethiopia: 3 January 2022](#), 4 January 2022

³ [International Rescue Committee: Ethiopia](#), accessed 13 January 2022

⁴ [Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\)/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\) Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties](#), published in Reliefweb, 3 November 2021, accessed 13 January 2022

- [Ethiopia charts a new course under Abiy Ahmed – but challenges remain](#), 26 September 2018

2.1 Political situation: 14 months of fighting

The [conflict in the northern state of Tigray began](#) in November 2020, when tensions between the new government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, in power since 2018, and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), who had dominated Ethiopian politics since 1991, came to a head.

The fighting unseated the TPLF from their powerbase in Tigray. The Ethiopian Government has since designated the TPLF a terror group, and Tigrayan fighters have unified under the banner of the Tigrayan Defence Forces.⁵

The situation on the ground remains fluid.

In late 2021 rapid advances by Tigrayan forces prompted speculation the capital could be vulnerable.⁶ In November the UK Government urged British nationals to leave Ethiopia because of fears the fighting could move closer to Addis Ababa.⁷

However, Tigrayan advances were halted and reversed by federal forces, supported in the air by armed remotely piloted aircraft (drones). These have reportedly been supplied to Addis Ababa by Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Iran.⁸ In mid-December Tigrayan forces [announced a withdrawal](#) from neighbouring regions and called for the establishment of a no-fly zone over Tigray. The federal government responded by saying forces would pause at current positions and not push further into Tigray.⁹

However, fighting has continued. Airstrikes have killed and injured dozens of civilians in recent weeks:

- In early January an airstrike on a camp for internally displaced people in Dedebit in Tigray killed 56 people and drew international condemnation.¹⁰

⁵ “Tigray conflict: Ethiopia lists TPLF as a terrorist group”, Africa News, 6 May 2021

⁶ [“Tigrayan forces’ capture of two towns raises fears for Ethiopian capital”](#), The Guardian, 1 November 2021

⁷ [“Government urges British nationals to leave Ethiopia now”](#), FCDO, 24 November 2021

⁸ [“Foreign drones tip the balance in Ethiopia’s civil war”](#), The Irish Times, 21 December 2021;

[“Ethiopia’s war turns into testing ground for the deadliest drones”](#), The Times, 31 December 2021

⁹ [Crisis Watch database: Ethiopia December 2021](#), International Crisis Group, accessed 13 January 2022

¹⁰ [“Ethiopia: 56 people killed in airstrike at camp for internally displaced”](#), The Guardian, 8 January 2022

- The UN High Commissioner for Refugees [condemned an airstrike](#) that killed three Eritrean refugees in the Mai Aini refugee camp in northern Ethiopia on 5 January.¹¹
- Aid workers said [17 people working at a flour mill](#) in Mai Tsebri were killed by a drone strike on 10 January 2022.¹²

US President Joe Biden voiced concern about airstrikes and civilian deaths in a conversation with Abiy on 11 January.¹³

Both sides have been accused of carrying out atrocities during the 14 months of fighting.

A [report released in November 2021](#) by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission documented violations and abuses of human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law in Tigray, including the widespread use of sexual violence, torture and forced displacement.¹⁴

The UN Human Rights Council subsequently voted to establish an international expert commission to investigate allegations of violations and abuses in Ethiopia committed by all parties since 3 November 2020.¹⁵

A “moment of opportunity”?

The withdrawal of Tigrayan forces from neighbouring regions and call for a cessation of hostilities and negotiations in December, combined with the federal government’s promise not to push further into Tigray, prompted some to see an opportunity to end the fighting and begin talks.¹⁶

On 10 January 2022 a senior US administration official suggested there was a moment of opportunity for Ethiopia if the parties are “[willing and able to seize it](#)”. The official pointed to the positive signals given by Prime Minister Abiy - releasing political prisoners, openness to dialogue and pledges with regard to humanitarian access - and to the Tigrayan commitment to dialogue. The

¹¹ [“News Comment by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on attack that hit Mai Aini refugee camp in Tigray”](#), UNHCR, 6 January 2022

¹² [“Ethiopia: 19 people killed in latest drone strikes in Tigray”](#), The Guardian, 11 January 2022

¹³ [“Readout of President Biden’s Call with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia”](#), The White House, 10 January 2022

¹⁴ [Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\)/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\) Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties](#), published in Reliefweb, 3 November 2021, accessed 13 January 2022

¹⁵ [Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 17 December 2021](#), UN A/HRC/RES/S-33/1, 21 December 2021

¹⁶ [“A rare chance for peace in Ethiopia”](#), International Crisis Group statement, 23 December 2021

US continues to call for unfettered humanitarian access and a cessation of violence.¹⁷

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission also commended the release of some political opposition leaders and the establishment of the National Dialogue Commission. Josep Borrell urged all parties to “seize the moment” to swiftly end the conflict and enter into dialogue.¹⁸

2.2 Humanitarian situation in Ethiopia

In August 2021 the UN Secretary-General said a “[humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding before our eyes](#)” and warned the unity of Ethiopia and the stability of the region were at stake.¹⁹ More recently António Guterres said he was [deeply saddened](#) by reports that more than 50 civilians were killed and injured in an airstrike in northern Ethiopia in early January. He repeated his call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and for all parties to facilitate humanitarian access.²⁰ Several aid agencies temporarily suspended operations in the area as a result of the airstrike.²¹

On 6 January 2022 UNOCHA said humanitarian partners continue to face security, bureaucratic and operational challenges to operate in northern Ethiopia:

In Tigray, notably due to lack of cash, fuel and supplies, humanitarian space has shrunk to the point where partners were forced to significantly reduce or completely suspend operations, leaving millions of people without adequate access to lifesaving assistance and protection services.²²

14 months into the conflict and the humanitarian situation remains dire.

Several UN agencies have published situation reports on the situation in the northern regions of Tigray, Amara and Afar:

- An estimated 9.4 million people are in “[dire need of food assistance](#)” as a result of ongoing conflict in northern Ethiopia, the World Food Programme warned in November 2021.²³

¹⁷ “[Background Press Call by a Senior Administration Official on Ethiopia](#)”, White House, 10 January 2022

¹⁸ “[Ethiopia: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell on the latest developments](#)”, EU, 8 January 2022

¹⁹ “[‘Catastrophe ‘unfolding before our eyes’ in Ethiopia’s Tigray region](#)”, UN News, 26 August 2021

²⁰ “[Guterres calls for end to conflict in Ethiopia after deadly attacks](#)”, UN News, 10 January 2022

²¹ “[Agencies suspend Tigray aid as ‘scores’ are killed due to airstrikes](#)”, UN News, 10 January 2022

²² UNOCHA, [Ethiopia – northern Ethiopia humanitarian update](#), 6 January 2022

²³ “[9.4 million people are ‘living their worst nightmare’ in northern Ethiopia due to ongoing conflict](#)”, UN News, 26 November 2021; “[Millions more in need of food assistance as a direct result of conflict in northern Ethiopia, says WFP](#)”, World Food Programme, 26 November 2021

- The UN [estimates more than five million people](#) in northern regions require humanitarian assistance.²⁴
- 100 trucks are required to move into Tigray every day to sustain the food assistance for at least 5.2 million people. However, UNOCHA says [only 1,338 trucks entered the region](#) between 12 July and 14 December, which is less than 12 per cent of the required supplies to meet humanitarian needs.²⁵
- According to the Integrated Food Security Phase (IPC) Classification, which measures food insecurity, an [estimated 400,000 in Ethiopia](#) were acutely food insecure in IPC phase 5 (catastrophe) between July and September 2021. This is the highest rating, suggesting at least 20% of households face an “extreme” lack of food and at least 30% of children are suffering from acute malnutrition.²⁶

The head of the World Health Organisation has described Tigray as being under a de facto blockade. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who is from Tigray, said:

Imagine a complete blockade of seven million people for more than a year. And there is no food. There is no medication, no medicine. No electricity. No telecom. No media.²⁷

The UK Government has repeatedly called on all sides to allow the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid in northern Ethiopia. Vicky Ford, the Minister for Africa, said:

The de facto blockade of Tigray imposed by the by the Government of Ethiopia since July remains a principal driver of humanitarian suffering across the region.²⁸

In 2020 Ethiopia, along with the rest of East Africa, experienced what the UN called the “[worst locust swarm in 25 years.](#)” In September 2021 the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) warned desert locusts are breeding in Ethiopia’s northern regions.²⁹

Drought in south and southeast Ethiopia

In addition to the fighting in the north, drought is threatening millions of people across southern and southeast Ethiopia.

UNOCHA suggests at least [6 million people will need life-saving assistance](#) in 2022 in eastern and southern Ethiopia because of drought. UNOCHA says a third consecutive failed rainy season is already having a devastating impact

²⁴ UNOCHA, [Ethiopia – northern Ethiopia humanitarian update](#), 6 January 2022

²⁵ UNOCHA, [Ethiopia – northern Ethiopia humanitarian update](#), 6 January 2022

²⁶ IPC, [Ethiopia: Famine review committee confirms very high levels of acute food insecurity and risk of famine in Tigray](#), July 2021; IPC, [The IPC famine factsheet](#), 11 December 2020

²⁷ “[Blockade creates ‘hell’ in Ethiopia’s Tigray: WHO](#)”, Al Jazeera, 12 January 2022

²⁸ [PQ94309 \[Tigray: Humanitarian aid\]](#), 16 December 2021

²⁹ “[Desert locust situation update 8 September 2021](#)”, FAO, 8 September 2021

on lives and livelihood of pastoral and agro-pastoralist communities in the Somalia, East and South Oromia regions.³⁰

The International Rescue Committee says parts of Ethiopia and Somalia are experiencing the driest conditions in 40 years, with more than 3 million affected across southeast Ethiopia and Somalia.³¹ The IRC ranks Ethiopia as second on its list of the “[ten worst humanitarian crises in the world expected in 2022](#).”³²

³⁰ UNOCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin Ethiopia: 3 January 2022](#), 4 January 2022

³¹ “[Driest conditions in 40 years threaten millions in Somalia, Ethiopia](#)”, Voice of America, 12 January 2022

³² [International Rescue Committee: Ethiopia](#), accessed 13 January 2022

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Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[Ethiopia: Tigray on brink of humanitarian disaster, UN says](#)

The Guardian

Lizzy Davies

14 January 2022

[Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia humanitarian update](#)

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHR)

13 January 2022

[Biden raises concerns with Ethiopia's Abiy over Tigray air strikes, urges ceasefire](#)

CNN

Ivana Kottasová and Sugam Pokharel

10 January 2022

[Aid groups halt work in northwest Tigray after deadly strike: UN](#)

Al Jazeera

9 January 2022

[Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: What's stopping aid getting in?](#)

BBC News Online

Peter Mwai

8 January 2022

[Ethiopian government says it will begin dialogue with political opposition](#)

Reuters

8 January 2022

[Ethiopia announces pardons for high-profile political prisoners](#)

Al Jazeera

7 January 2022

[Tigrayan forces to pull out of nearby Ethiopian regions in ceasefire offer](#)

The Guardian

Emmanuel Akinwotu

20 December 2021

[Ethiopia crisis: Human Rights Council sets up international rights probe](#)

UN News
17 December 2021

[Can Ethiopia avert deepening turmoil and prioritise peace?](#)

Al Jazeera
Ahmed Soliman
25 November 2021

[Ethiopia's Tigray conflict: PM Abiy Ahmed vows to lead from the war front](#)

BBC News Online
23 November 2021

[Ethiopia 'descending into widening civil war': UN](#)

Al Jazeera
9 November 2021

[Ethiopia: Future of Tigray and Horn of Africa 'in grave uncertainty'](#)

UN News
8 November 2021

[One year on, Ethiopia's Tigray conflict no closer to political solution](#)

Council on Foreign Relations
Michelle Gavin
1 November 2021

[UK announces extra £29m of humanitarian aid for Ethiopia](#)

The Guardian
Patrick Wintour
16 October 2021

[Ethiopia is facing an 'immense humanitarian crisis', UN chief warns](#)

The Guardian
Samantha Lock
7 October 2021

[Tigray: AU calls on Ethiopia to do more for humanitarian aid](#)

Africa News
3 September 2021

[Humanitarian situation worsens in Ethiopia's Tigray region](#)

Deutsche Welle
Issac Mugabi
27 August 2021

The latest on the crisis in Ethiopia's Tigray region

Human Rights Watch

Laetitia Bader and Amy Braunschweiger

30 July 2021

Ethiopia: war in Tigray threatens to end Abiy's dream of unity

Financial Times

Andres Schipani and David Pilling

8 April 2021

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Press releases

[UN Human Rights Council Special Session on Ethiopia: UK statement](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

17 December 2021

Simon Manley, UK Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, delivered the UK statement during the UN Human Rights Council Special Session on Ethiopia:

Madam Vice President,

We are here today to stand with the people of Ethiopia who have faced more than a year of conflict and witnessed atrocities on the most extraordinary scale.

We have heard the message loud and clear –from the Joint Investigation Team and directly – and most eloquently - this morning from the deputy High Commissioner. The human rights situation in Ethiopia is dire; crimes of the most serious nature, including possible war crimes, have taken place and continue to occur.

This Council has received credible reports of mass killings, torture, and disappearances. We have heard the most horrific accounts of the widespread use of rape and sexual and gender based violence as a weapon of war. Most recently, we have seen the mass detention of people based on their ethnic origin, alongside inflammatory and hateful rhetoric from public figures. No one, I repeat no one, can seriously argue that this situation does not deserve the urgent attention of this Council.

The UK is fully committed to supporting the peace process and African Union High Representative Obasanjo’s efforts for national reconciliation . And we are not here to point fingers at any one side.

But a sustainable peace requires respect for human rights. Yet all parties to the conflict have reportedly committed violations or abuses. There are clearly deep divisions in Ethiopian society and an alarming level of mistrust between communities, which creates a high risk of further deterioration. That is why it is so important to create an independent and impartial human rights mechanism and to take the necessary steps to prevent more atrocities. We must guarantee that all violations and abuses are reported, that we can and will combat impunity, and that we provide all victims and survivors the support they need and the justice that they deserve.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

It is past time for all parties to put the Ethiopian people first

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

8 November 2021

Statement by Ambassador James Kariuki, UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN at the Security Council briefing on Ethiopia:

Thank you Mr President, I would like to thank High Representative Obasanjo and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their important briefings. I also thank the A3+1 and Ireland for calling today's meeting and for their work on Friday's statement by this Council.

The UK shares the serious concerns already expressed today about the situation in Ethiopia including by the African Union Peace and Security Council.

The introduction of a State of Emergency by the Government of Ethiopia must not be used as an excuse to ignore human rights and international humanitarian law.

Violations and abuses of human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law are already taking place as a result of this conflict. The report released last week by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission documented these in detail, including the widespread use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, torture, attacks on civilians and forced displacement.

All parties should act to implement the recommendations contained in that joint report, ensure accountability and prevent further suffering. Indeed addressing the humanitarian and human impact of this tragic conflict should be our immediate focus. And when it is over, we must come together and help Ethiopia heal.

Therefore it is vital that all parties stop fighting and start talking. Tigrayan forces need to stop their advances and return to Tigray. The humanitarian blockade needs to be lifted. Hate speech and ethnic profiling must end: it serves only to set Ethiopian against Ethiopian and deepens divisions which will make recovery from this crisis even harder.

The United Kingdom gives its full support to the Secretary-General and His Excellency African Union Special Envoy Obasanjo and urges all parties to make use of their good offices. We stand ready to provide any support that is required.

In the last year, this conflict has brought only destruction, suffering and despair. It is past time for all parties to put the Ethiopian people first. Thank you.

UK provides almost £30 million to humanitarian catastrophe in northern Ethiopia

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
16 October 2021

The Minister for Africa Vicky Ford has announced an additional £29 million of humanitarian aid to people affected by the catastrophic conflict in northern Ethiopia.

The announcement marks World Food Day today (16 October) and increases the UK's commitment to the crisis to more than £75 million – making the UK the second largest donor.

The Minister is also calling on all parties in Ethiopia to urgently agree a ceasefire to allow humanitarian aid through and for the Ethiopian government to lift the de facto blockade of humanitarian relief into the Tigray region. The people of Tigray need 500 trucks of critical assistance per week, but less than 10% of this has been met since June.

The conflict has caused a humanitarian catastrophe, with the UN estimating that 5.5 million people face acute food insecurity. Over 400,000 people in northern Ethiopia are experiencing famine-like conditions – more than in all of the humanitarian crises in the rest of the world combined.

Minister for Africa Vicky Ford, said:

The Ethiopian people are facing a humanitarian catastrophe and are in urgent need of support.

This pledge will provide vital food, water and healthcare to the hundreds of thousands of people facing famine in northern Ethiopia.

This is a man-made crisis. I urge all parties to urgently agree a ceasefire to allow humanitarian aid to reach starving people.

The new funding comes as the UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer, recently concluded his third visit to Ethiopia since the start of the conflict in November 2020, where he pressed for improved humanitarian access to the areas affected by conflict.

Special Envoy Nick Dyer said:

On my third visit to Ethiopia since the start of the Tigray conflict, I saw a further deterioration of the crisis and the conditions for humanitarian operations.

We are pleased to provide more funding but humanitarian agencies need access into all areas where people are in need now, so that lives can be saved and catastrophic famine avoided.

The conflict in northern Ethiopia has spread beyond the borders of Tigray now, so we are expanding UK funding to reach those in urgent need in Afar and Amhara.

The funding will be delivered by UN agencies and NGOs, including the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund. Our partners expect to deliver lifesaving nutrition treatment for more than 100,000 malnourished children, and 27,000 pregnant and new mothers.

The pledge will also deliver clean water and sanitation for 26,000 people and provide services to prevent and respond to gender-based violence for almost 3,000 women and children.

It will also support people who have been forced to flee their homes by the spread of conflict across northern Ethiopia, providing shelter, healthcare, and support to children who have been separated from their families and to survivors of sexual violence.

Lifesaving humanitarian work in Tigray should not be politicised

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

6 October 2021

Statement by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the Security Council briefing on Ethiopia:

Thank you Mr President and thank you Secretary-General for your briefing.

Mr President, I start by paying tribute to UN staff around the world who work tirelessly to deliver principled humanitarian aid, assessing and addressing needs on a neutral, impartial basis. I think we all agree that their lifesaving activities should not be politicised, and that Member States should make every effort to support and facilitate their work.

That is why the United Kingdom, like many of Ethiopia's partners, was deeply disappointed by the Government of Ethiopia's decision to expel seven UN officials. The strength of international concern about this is apparent in the fact that over 40 countries quickly joined a joint statement delivered by the United Kingdom at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on 4 October.

Mr President, as we have heard and seen, the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia is now critical.

The UN personnel who were expelled were dealing with the increasingly desperate needs of those in the north of Ethiopia. Our special envoy for famine prevention and humanitarian affairs visited Tigray and Amhara just last week and saw first-hand the UN's efforts to respond to this emergency.

The removal of key UN personnel will have a direct impact on the ability of the international community to deliver vital humanitarian assistance.

But unfortunately, Mr President, this is not the only obstacle to delivering aid in northern Ethiopia. I want to reiterate our urgent call for the TPLF to cease their military campaign and act in the best interests of ordinary people in Tigray. And likewise, I reiterate our call on the Federal Government to work with the UN and other international partners to eliminate all barriers to humanitarian access.

As we have heard before, that needs to include urgent action to restore telecommunications and banking services in Tigray, enable deliveries of food and fuel and expedite issuing of visas for humanitarian response staff. Time is of the essence: thousands of truckloads of food and medicine and millions of litres of fuel need to move into Tigray in order to avert deaths on a catastrophic scale before the end of this year.

Finally, Mr President, it should be evident to all that there will be no military solution to this conflict. It is past time to stop fighting and as the Secretary-General urged, to start talking. We welcomed the African Union's decision to appoint His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo as an envoy in August, and I reiterate our full support for him, the African Union and the United Nations as they work to end this tragic conflict and help those in need.

'Over 400,000 people in Tigray are experiencing famine conditions – more than in the rest of the world combined'

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

26 August 2021

Statement by Ambassador James Kariuki at the Security Council briefing on the crisis in Tigray:

Thank you Mr President. Let me also offer the UK's condolences for all those who lost their lives in today's terrorist attack in Kabul.

I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. You describe a desperate situation, and it is right this Council considers how it can help. So I would like to make three points in response to what we have heard.

First, all parties must cease hostilities and unfettered humanitarian access must be provided to relieve the toll of this conflict on ordinary Ethiopians.

As the Secretary General told us, over 400,000 people in Tigray are experiencing famine conditions. That is more than in the rest of the world combined.

Only a fraction of the 100 trucks of aid required every day are getting into Tigray. Banking, electricity and communications services remain suspended, posing serious obstacles to humanitarian operations.

The spread of fighting into neighbouring Amhara and Afar states, displacing tens of thousands of civilians, will only extend the human suffering and prolong the conflict. We therefore call on Tigrayan forces to immediately cease fighting in Amhara and Afar.

We reiterate that Eritrean troops must withdraw completely from Ethiopia, as the Government of Ethiopia has requested. And we call upon the Ethiopian Government to fully enable humanitarian access. That includes removing bureaucratic barriers to aid delivery and allowing sufficient cash and fuel into Tigray to enable humanitarian operations.

Secondly, Mr President, I want to emphasise the need for all parties to ensure the protection of civilians and to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law. The Secretary-General's briefing gave further weight to the reports we have been receiving of atrocities from all sides. These include brutal and systematic sexual violence, massacres, and indiscriminate shelling of towns. We have also witnessed an increase in hate speech and attacks on the humanitarian community.

The United Kingdom fully supports the joint investigation by the UN Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. It is crucial to prospects for peace and reconciliation that this investigation is thorough and robust. And perpetrators of atrocities must be held to account.

Thirdly, Mr President, let me underline the urgency of pursuing political dialogue to end this crisis. The United Kingdom is a longstanding friend and partner of Ethiopia. We have been proud to work alongside Ethiopians to support their progress in reducing poverty and building sustainable economic growth. This conflict is already reversing that progress. It now threatens the long term stability and prosperity of the country and of the region.

We want to see Ethiopia return to a positive trajectory. Ten months in it is clear there is no military solution to this conflict. The only way that Ethiopia can return to peace and prosperity is through an inclusive political settlement. That requires talks between the parties – urgently, and without preconditions.

We support the efforts of the Secretary General and Under Secretary-General Griffiths and by the Africa Union to make this possible, and we therefore welcome the announcement today of the appointment of former President Obasanjo as AU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa.

Mr President, it is abundantly clear what the parties need to do now to end the dreadful toll of human suffering in Ethiopia.

The United Kingdom joins the Secretary-General and other members of this Council in calling on all parties to cease hostilities, allow unfettered humanitarian access, comply with international law, and begin a process of dialogue to resolve the conflict.

Thank you, Mr. President.

'It is time to put the interests of Ethiopian people first'

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

2 July 2021

Statement by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, UK Minister of State for the UN, at the Security Council briefing on the situation in Ethiopia:

I would like begin by thanking Under-Secretary DiCarlo and Acting Under-Secretary Ramesh Rajasingham for their expert insights and briefings today.

Today is an important opportunity. It is right that this Security Council considers how to help end this devastating conflict and support all of the people of Ethiopia.

I shall not repeat the picture of suffering outlined by our briefers. It is stark. It is real. But after eight months of conflict, we remain deeply concerned by all that we have heard and that we are seeing.

Instead, I want to make three brief points: on the immediate humanitarian situation, the need for conflict resolution and in addressing human rights concerns, so that Ethiopia can move on from this most tragic of conflicts.

But before I go any further, I want to pay tribute up front to the twelve humanitarian workers – and I'm sure I speak for every member of this Council – who have been killed since this conflict began. Protection of humanitarian workers, of their offices, of their equipment, is a central tenet of international humanitarian law.

Their work is especially vital in Tigray where, as OCHA have outlined today, and as the IPC data shows, at least 353,000 people are now in famine conditions.

People have died from hunger. People are dying from hunger. People will continue to die unless they get the help they need and get the help they need now. This is a man-made famine and we need to act.

In this regard, the United Kingdom welcomes the unilateral ceasefire declared by the Government of Ethiopia.

All sides – the Federal Government of Ethiopia, Tigray Defence Forces, Amhara militias and Eritrean Defence Forces – have an opportunity to end the cycle of violence and suffering.

We urge them to take it. And we call on Eritrean forces to withdraw, as requested by the Ethiopian government.

Our immediate priority has to be for humanitarian assistance to get through to those that require it. The restoration of basic infrastructure, including electricity, communications and banking services and ensuring food and other needed goods can reach Tigray. It is essential to prevent further loss of life.

Enabling humanitarian agencies to get visas for their staff and import communications equipment so they can operate effectively is imperative. Indeed we've heard that today. Denial of humanitarian access is a direct violation of international humanitarian law.

At the same time, we, the international community, and UN agencies must be ready to respond.

The response to date has frankly been insufficient. The ceasefire gives us the opportunity to address this and urgently increase the amount of aid reaching the starving people of Tigray. And in this regard the United Kingdom has already allocated £47.7 million.

A full and sustained ceasefire will give all parties time and space to address the root causes of this conflict through both dialogue and reconciliation and for an inclusive political process to be initiated.

The United Kingdom welcomes and endorses African Union Commission Chairperson Faki's call for all parties to uphold their responsibilities under international law to protect civilians.

He is of course right that a comprehensive and all-encompassing permanent ceasefire is absolutely necessary to pave the way for sustainable peace in Tigray.

We will support the African Union in its efforts in pursuit of peace and stability in Tigray, Ethiopia, and, indeed, the wider region. And we encourage the United Nations system to consider how it can also assist as the situation develops, as part of a very much joined-up process and coherent strategy.

Finally, Mr President, Special Representative Patten and High Commissioner Bachelet have highlighted serious allegations of human rights abuses and violations. They also described systematic sexual violence which, as the United Kingdom Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, I have been particularly moved by.

The United Kingdom is supporting the ICRC and UN agencies to provide essential services to survivors of sexual violence and an extra £16.7 million of funds we announced in June will support and drive towards accountability.

And this week, Mr President, we have additionally deployed an expert to advise on support for the safe collection – and this is vital, this is imperative – for the safe collection and preservation of evidence, in order to bring the perpetrators of sexual violence to justice at the appropriate time.

The United Kingdom welcomes the proposed inquiry of the African Commission for Human and People's Rights and it fully supports the ongoing Joint Investigation between the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. We will also co-sponsor a resolution on Tigray at the Human Rights Council in Geneva this month.

Mr President, transparency and accountability will be vital if Ethiopia is truly to move past this tragic conflict. We collectively owe this to the victims. We owe it to the survivors.

Our message is clear: it is time for all sides to put down their weapons; it is time to allow unrestricted access for humanitarian aid; and it is time to put now the interests of Ethiopian people first.

I hope this Council can now work constructively, with the African Union and partners, to ensure progress on these most critical of issues and turn around the situation for the sake of the people of Tigray and the sake of all Ethiopians.

Thank you, Mr President.

5

PQs

Horn of Africa: Humanitarian Aid

13 Jan 2022 | 98899

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Humanitarian Bulletin: Ethiopia, published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on 3 January 2022, what steps she is taking to ensure that adequate (a) nutritional, (b) water, sanitation and hygiene, and (c) education support reaches affected populations in the (i) Somalia, (ii) Southern Oromia and (iii) Eastern Oromia Regions of Ethiopia.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK shares the concerns outlined by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in their report on 3 January. We concur with OCHA's analysis that 6.4 million people in Oromia and Somali regions require food assistance due to drought conditions. Humanitarian agencies report alarming nutrition indicators among young children which in some locations in Somali region exceed internationally agreed emergency thresholds. In the financial year 2021/2022 the UK has provided almost £59 million to humanitarian agencies working throughout Ethiopia including Oromia and Somali regions.

Ethiopia: Peace Negotiations

10 Jan 2022 | 98243

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help support parties to the conflict in Ethiopia in establishing a (a) stable ceasefire and (b) path towards a negotiated peace following developments in the conflict since 21 December 2021.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are extremely concerned by the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia and the implications it has for the country as a whole. The UK is working to bring an end to the violence. I have called on all parties to urgently agree a ceasefire and allow humanitarian aid through. I spoke to Ethiopian Minister of Justice Gedion on 6 December and pressed for an end to the fighting and for peace talks. I have continued to emphasise the need for a ceasefire through calls

with my African counterparts, including from Kenya and the African Union (AU). We have spoken with a variety of international partners about the situation in Ethiopia, and have urged them to support a ceasefire and support the efforts of AU High Representative Obasanjo to bring an end to the violence.

Tigray: Humanitarian Aid

10 Jan 2022 | 94309

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of humanitarian aid trucks entering Tigray province in Ethiopia in each of the last 10 weeks.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The delivery of humanitarian assistance into Tigray remains hugely constrained. The de facto blockade of Tigray imposed by the Government of Ethiopia since July remains a principal driver of humanitarian suffering across the region. According to the latest available information from the UN, no humanitarian aid trucks entered Tigray during the period 14 December 2021 - 5 January 2022. We assess that in the six weeks prior to this period less than 10 per cent of the required humanitarian cargo was successfully delivered to Tigray.

The UK calls on all warring parties to ensure the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid across all regions of northern Ethiopia affected by fighting.

The UK has committed £76 million to the crises response - making the UK the second largest donor globally. FCDO officials speak regularly with representatives from the UN and other humanitarian agencies on contingency planning for an increase in needs inside Ethiopia as well as for further displacement of refugees into neighbouring states. Our priority is to ensure that all Ethiopians in need receive life-saving aid and that humanitarian access to areas affected by insecurity is maintained. I raised my concerns with State Minister Redwan in November and Justice Minister Gedion in December, and pushed for an end to the blockade.

Ethiopia: Armed Conflict

05 Jan 2022 | 92854

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking, in advance of the special session of the UN Human Rights Council planned for 17 December 2021, to secure support

among members of that council for resolutions on (a) humanitarian access throughout Ethiopia, (b) independent and robust investigations into human rights abuses during the conflict in that country and (c) ceasefires and a negotiated end to the conflict in that country.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 17 December, a special session of the UN Human Rights Council agreed a resolution that: urges all parties to stop targeting humanitarian workers and allow humanitarian aid to resume; established an International Commission of Human Rights Experts in Ethiopia to investigate and collect evidence from the conflict, and; reiterates firm support for the ongoing mediation efforts of the African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa Region to find the urgently needed political, non-military solution. The UK supported the special session and the resolution.

Ethiopia: Food Aid

21 Dec 2021 | HL4864

Asked by: Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the humanitarian relief effort in Ethiopia of the UN's suspension of food distribution in the Amhara region; and in particular, on the number of deaths of children in that region.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

This conflict in Ethiopia has caused a humanitarian catastrophe, with the UN estimating that 9.4 million people across the north of the country require life-saving aid. Over 400,000 people in Tigray are experiencing famine-like conditions. The context could not be more serious.

We remain extremely concerned about the limited delivery of humanitarian aid across northern Ethiopia with conflict and access restrictions hindering the ability of aid agencies to work. Such restrictions are also complicating the conduct of needs assessments meaning we lack a detailed understanding of humanitarian requirements across northern Ethiopia. However, experience from other contexts shows us that young children bear the brunt of such crises. For example it is likely that many children in Afar, Amhara and Tigray have succumbed to otherwise preventable diseases such as diarrhoea due to the limited availability of clean water and healthcare and nutritional services.

Ethiopia: Peace Negotiations

21 Dec 2021 | 91890

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps she has taken to support the African Union initiatives for ceasefires and negotiations between combatants in Ethiopia.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are extremely concerned by the ongoing conflict in northern Ethiopia and the implications it has for the country as a whole. The UK is working to bring an end to the violence. I have called on all parties to urgently agree a ceasefire and allow humanitarian aid through. I spoke with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Redwan on 18 November, stressing the need for all parties to the conflict to engage in meaningful talks, lift the blockade on aid, and end the mobilisation of civilians and ethnically targeted arrests. I also spoke to Ethiopian Minister of Justice Gedion on 6 December and pressed for an end to the fighting and for peace talks. I have continued to emphasise the need for a ceasefire through recent calls with my international counterparts, including Kenya and the African Union (AU). I spoke with the AU High Representative for the Horn of African Region, Olusegun Obasanjo on 4 November to discuss the situation and make clear our strong support, for his efforts to end the conflict. I also spoke with AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Bankole, on 8 November and pressed him on the need for the AU to find a way forward.

Tigray: Detainees

16 Dec 2021 | 91898

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the special session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on 17 December 2021, if she will discuss with international partners the wellbeing of men and women considered to be of fighting age who have allegedly been subjected to systematic mass detention in western Tigray.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We have frequently and consistently raised the need for full humanitarian access in Ethiopia at the Human Rights Council and at the UN Security Council. The Foreign Secretary, as Chair of the G7 Foreign and Development Minister's meeting, made a statement on 12 December also calling for unimpeded humanitarian access. The statement also called for an additional independent investigation on human rights violations as recommended by the

Joint Investigation report from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. In my most recent discussion with Ethiopian Government Ministers - with Minister of State Redwan on 18 November and Justice Minister Gedion on 6 December - I raised our concerns about mass detentions, ethnic profiling, and hate speech. We will continue to take all opportunities to raise these important matters.

Ethiopia: Armed Conflict

14 Dec 2021 | 87601

Asked by: Sir Mark Hendrick

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps the Government is taking to help tackle the escalating conflict in Ethiopia and the prospect of a humanitarian catastrophe in that country.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are extremely concerned by the ongoing conflict in northern Ethiopia and the implications it has for the country as a whole.

The UK is working to bring an end to the violence and to facilitate humanitarian access. I have called on all parties to urgently agree a ceasefire and allow humanitarian aid through. I spoke with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Redwan on 18 November, stressing the need for all parties to the conflict to engage in meaningful talks, lift the blockade on aid, and end the mobilisation of civilians and ethnically targeted arrests. I also spoke to Ethiopian Minister of Justice Gedion on 6 December and pressed for an end to the fighting and for peace talks. I have continued to emphasise the need for a ceasefire through recent calls with my international counterparts, including Kenya and the African Union (AU). I spoke with the AU High Representative for the Horn of African Region, Olusegun Obasanjo on 4 November to discuss the situation and make clear our strong support, for his efforts to end the conflict. I also spoke with AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Bankole, on 8 November and pressed him on the need for the AU to find a way forward.

UK officials have also travelled to Tigray on multiple occasions since November 2020 to promote mediation and humanitarian efforts. Overall, the UK has provided more than £76 million of funding to respond to the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict, making the UK the second largest donor.

Ethiopia: Humanitarian Aid

08 Dec 2021 | 86601

Asked by: Helen Hayes

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much and what proportion of the £29 million of humanitarian aid allocated to people affected by the conflict in northern Ethiopia, announced on 15 October 2021, has been given to aid agencies working in Tigray and neighbouring regions.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The majority of the £29 million of humanitarian funding announced on 15 October has been allocated to needy communities in Tigray and neighbouring Afar and Amhara.

£18.4 million has been allocated to humanitarian projects in Tigray and the neighbouring regions, including health supplies, nutrition, water and sanitation, and protection services. £9 million has been allocated to Ethiopia-wide humanitarian funding mechanisms (the International Committee of the Red Cross and Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund) which distribute resources according to where the greatest needs are. We expect the majority of those funds will also reach Northern Ethiopia given the significant needs due to the conflict. The remaining £1.6 million has been used to provide additional staff for humanitarian agencies scaling up in Northern Ethiopia, including Gender-Based Violence specialists, and improve data and analysis on the humanitarian situation.

Overall, the UK has provided more than £76 million of funding to respond to the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict, making the UK the second largest donor.

Ethiopia: Armed Conflict

03 Dec 2021 | 81154

Asked by: Stephen Farry

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in Ethiopia.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are extremely concerned by the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia. We continue to engage with all parties to the conflict and have regular discussions with them. We are fully supportive of the efforts of the African Union (AU) High Representative for the Horn of African Region, Olusegun Obasanjo, to find a

path to meaningful negotiations. I spoke with him on 4 November to discuss the situation and make clear our strong support, and also spoke with AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Bankole, on 8 November. We also supported efforts by US Secretary of State Blinken to resolve the conflict in Ethiopia on his visit to Kenya on 17 November and his call for an unconditional ceasefire in Ethiopia.

I also spoke with State Minister Redwan on 18 November, stressing the need for all parties to the conflict to engage in meaningful talks, lift the blockade on aid, and urged him to end the mobilisation of civilians and ethnically targeted arrests. I have continued to emphasise the need for a ceasefire and a humanitarian corridor through recent calls with my international counterparts, including those from Kenya, Ethiopia, the UN A3, and the African Union.

The Foreign Secretary spoke to Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen on 5 November, where she also made clear there is no military solution and that negotiations are needed to avoid bloodshed and deliver lasting peace. We have made these points repeatedly to the Ethiopian Government and the Tigrayan authorities.

Ethiopia: Armed Conflict

01 Dec 2021 | 82086

Asked by: Ruth Jones

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the security situation in Ethiopia.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are extremely concerned by the security situation in Ethiopia. I issued a statement on 24 November about the deteriorating situation and urged British nationals to leave while commercial flights are available. We have consistently called on all parties to end hostilities and seek a political dialogue and a peaceful solution.

The Foreign Secretary spoke to Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen on 5 November, where she made clear there is no military solution and that negotiations are needed to avoid bloodshed and deliver lasting peace. I spoke with the Ethiopian State Minister Redwan on 18 November and made similar points. We are fully supportive of the African Union (AU)'s mediation efforts. I spoke with AU Special Envoy Obasanjo on 4 November, and with AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole on 8 November.

Ethiopia: Overseas Aid

30 Nov 2021 | 81964

Asked by: Stephen Doughty

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has suspended or re-allocated any Official Development Assistance to Ethiopia in the last three months.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We remain a major development and humanitarian donor - and one of the biggest donors to Ethiopia with an overall UK commitment of more than £76 million to respond to the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict, making the UK the second largest donor. Given the severity of needs, in the last three months, funds have been drawn from ongoing development programmes in Ethiopia, as well as from bilateral development interventions which we have not been able to deliver due to insecurity or were not delivering lifesaving activity. Some planned funding originally earmarked for the Government of Ethiopia has also been re-directed towards humanitarian agencies operating in Afar, Amhara and Tigray. No Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been suspended. The UK is committed to ensuring that our aid is fully accountable. While we continue to urge all sides involved in the Tigray conflict to de-escalate and halt violence, we must make sure our ODA only serves to improve conditions for the intended beneficiaries. We will always review ODA when circumstances around its use may change.

Ethiopia: Peace Negotiations

26 Nov 2021 | HL4038

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote a peaceful solution to the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are extremely concerned by the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia. The Minister for Africa spoke at a Westminster Hall Debate on 3 November. She stated that there is no military solution and the UK has been clear on this from the start. We have consistently called on all warring parties to end hostilities and seek a political dialogue and peaceful solution. The Foreign Secretary spoke to Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen on 5 November, where she also made clear there is no military solution and that negotiations are needed to avoid bloodshed and deliver lasting peace. We have made these points repeatedly to the Ethiopian Government and the Tigrayan authorities. We are fully supportive of the African Union (AU)'s mediation efforts, and the Minister for Africa spoke with AU Special Envoy Obasanjo on 4 November, and

with AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole on 8 November.

Ethiopia: Humanitarian Situation

19 Nov 2021 | 72436

Asked by: Jim Shannon

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the International Development Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2019-21, The Humanitarian Situation in Tigray, HC 1289, published on 30 April 2021, what steps her Department has taken to implement the recommendations set out in that report; what representations she is making to the Ethiopian government on ensuring protection for (a) Ethiopians from violence and (b) vulnerable communities in the region; what steps her Department is taking to enable access by independent monitors to Tigray to collect criminal evidence and bring those who are responsible to justice; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that humanitarian agencies have access to vulnerable communities in (i) Tigray and (ii) neighbouring regions.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK Government welcomed the International Development Committee's (IDC) report "The humanitarian situation in Tigray" published on 30 April and our response to the recommendations highlighted in the report is available to view online

(<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmintdev/554/55402.htm>).

We are extremely concerned by reports of widespread human rights violations and abuses in Ethiopia. The Foreign Secretary spoke to Deputy Prime Minister Demeke on 5 November. HM Ambassador Addis Ababa spoke to Prime Minister Abiy on 28 October. I raised my concerns with Deputy Foreign Minister Redwan on 18 November. We support the conclusions of the joint investigation by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which collected harrowing evidence from Tigray. It is essential that all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses be held to account. All parties must implement the report's recommendations and ensure that victims have access to support.

The humanitarian context in Tigray is catastrophic. To avert region-wide famine and massive loss of life we are clear that the Government of Ethiopia must lift the blockade of Tigray and allow aid in. The humanitarian crisis now extends beyond Tigray impacting millions of people in Afar and Amhara following attacks by the Tigray Defence Force (TDF). The TDF's advance must stop and the TDF must allow humanitarian supplies and commercial goods to

reach all areas of need. On 16 October, I announced an additional £29 million of humanitarian aid to people affected by the conflict in northern Ethiopia. This increased the UK's commitment to the crisis to more than £76 million making the UK the second largest donor.

Ethiopia: Politics and Government

16 Nov 2021 | 72447

Asked by: Stephen Doughty

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had (a) at the United Nations Security Council and (b) with the African Union and Governments in the region on securing (i) a ceasefire, (ii) full humanitarian access and (iii) investigations into human rights atrocities in Ethiopia.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We regularly discuss the conflict in Ethiopia with a wide variety of partners, including at the UN and the African Union (AU). I spoke on 28 October at a UN Security Council (UNSC) open debate, stressing the importance of cooperation between the UN and AU in this conflict. The Foreign Secretary spoke with the AU Horn of Africa Envoy Olusegun Obasanjo on 12 October and offered our full support to his efforts. I spoke with him on 4 November to discuss the situation in Ethiopia and reiterate our support. I also spoke with the AU Commissioner Bankole Adeoye on 8 November about the urgent need for a ceasefire and humanitarian access in Ethiopia. During the World Leaders Summit at COP26, I was also able to discuss the situation with leaders of different African States. The Foreign Secretary also spoke to Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen on 5 November, where she made clear there is no military solution and that negotiations are needed to avoid bloodshed and deliver lasting peace.

On 5 November the UNSC issued a Press Statement, following the introduction of the nationwide State of Emergency by Prime Minister Abiy on 2 November, expressing deep concern about the conflict and its impact on the humanitarian situation and wider region. The UNSC most recently met on 8 November, where the UK called for all parties to stop fighting and start talking, and to implement the recommendations contained in the joint report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

Ethiopia: Human Rights

11 Nov 2021 | HL3664

Asked by: Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights into alleged violations of human rights in Tigray, published on 3 November; what implications the findings will have on the UK's Overseas Development Assistance funding to Ethiopia; and what steps they will take, if any, to support (1) internally displaced persons, and (2) refugees.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK strongly supported a resolution at the June session of the Human Rights Council backing that investigation and ensuring that its report and its findings will be debated by the Human Rights Council.

The report by the joint UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Ethiopian Human Rights Commission investigation, published on 3 November, concludes that "There are reasonable grounds to believe that all parties to the conflict have violated the rights of refugees as stipulated under international human rights law, humanitarian law, refugee law, and national laws. Such acts warrant further investigation and may amount to war crimes". It is essential that all those responsible for violations of human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law are held to account.

The UK is a major humanitarian and development donor to Ethiopia with Ethiopia one of the largest recipients of UK Overseas Development Assistance. We keep this relationship under review and will take action to adjust our engagement as necessary as the operating context changes.

Within Tigray approximately 2 million people have been displaced by the ongoing violence with Eritrean refugees also impacted and in some cases directly targeted by belligerents. Humanitarian operations in Tigray have come to a standstill owing to the de facto blockade imposed by the federal government since late June. Prior to the blockade UK funded partners were working in the most challenging circumstances to provide life-saving assistance to displaced persons, refugees and others.

Ethiopia: Politics and Government

26 Oct 2021 | HL3006

Asked by: Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Ethiopia regarding the expulsion of seven United Nations officials from that country.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 30 September the Minister for Africa called on the Government of Ethiopia to reverse the decision to expel seven United Nations Officials from the country with immediate effect. The removal of key UN personnel will have a direct impact on the ability of the international community to deliver vital humanitarian assistance. The UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer visited Tigray where he saw first-hand the UN's efforts to respond to this emergency. This was reiterated at the 48th session of the UN Human Rights Council on 4 October where a joint statement was issued by the UK Ambassador to the UN on behalf of over 40 countries, and raised at the UN Security Council briefing on Ethiopia on 6 October. The Minister for Africa also raised the expulsions and situation in Ethiopia on her visit to the UN on 13 October, with many senior representatives of the UN and the three current African members of the UNSC. She urged consensus to press all parties in Ethiopia to deliver an urgent ceasefire and for a humanitarian corridor to be opened to deliver then humanitarian assistance that is urgently required.

Ethiopia: Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs

25 Oct 2021 | HL3008

Asked by: Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the results of the visit to Ethiopia by the Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs in September.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer, visited Amhara and Mekelle in Ethiopia last month (September). The Minister for Africa Vicky Ford spoke to him immediately on his return. He concluded that the humanitarian situation has significantly deteriorated and the risk of famine is high. There are 6 million people, with 3 million of those being children, who are in dire need of food, health, water and sanitation assistance.

In Amhara the Special Envoy saw the World Food Programme (WFP) in action. He and Minister Ford have reiterated the need for WFP and other partners to have access to all areas so they can provide vital humanitarian aid. The UK Government is committed to continue to address the humanitarian crises in the north including Afar, Amhara, and Tigray regions. On 16 October - World Food Day - Minister Ford announced an additional £29m of humanitarian aid to people affected by the catastrophic conflict in northern Ethiopia. This increases the UK's commitment to the crisis to more than £75m - making the UK the second largest donor.

The Special Envoy has called for all sides to stop fighting and find a political solution to avoid civilian suffering. He raised this with the Ethiopian authorities when he met them during his visit, including the Ethiopian Minister of Finance.

The humanitarian situation in Tigray is a man-made crisis and it is completely unacceptable. Minister Ford urges all parties to urgently agree a ceasefire and to allow humanitarian aid to reach starving people.

Tigray: Armed Conflict

14 Jul 2021 | HL1589

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the relevance of (1) the Responsibility to Protect doctrine, (2) the UK Approach to Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, and (3) the duty to prevent atrocity crimes, in the context of the war in Tigray.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK Government has been at the forefront of the international response throughout the conflict in Tigray. We have engaged directly with the Government of Ethiopia, and that of Eritrea, to press for protection of civilians, unfettered humanitarian access and an end to the conflict. This is in line with our approach to protection of civilians, commitment to Responsibility to Protect and atrocity prevention policy. We have also worked through international fora including the G7 leaders' communique of 13 June.

Tigray: Armed Conflict

12 Jul 2021 | 28216

Asked by: Neil Coyle

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to bring together all sides in the

Tigray conflict in Ethiopia to a negotiating table to help find a lasting political solution to that conflict.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK Government is deeply concerned about the conflict in Tigray that has gone on for more than eight months and which has taken a terrible toll on the people of Tigray. It is more apparent than ever that there can be no military solution to this crisis. Political negotiation is the only way to resolve this and other conflicts in Ethiopia. So we urge, and have been urging, all parties to the conflict to begin an inclusive political process that can foster national reconciliation and consensus.

The UK endorses the views of African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Faki that a comprehensive and all-encompassing permanent ceasefire is necessary to pave the way for sustainable peace in Tigray. We support the efforts of the AU in this regard.

Ethiopia: Politics and Government

16 Jun 2021 | 12349

Asked by: Dr Kieran Mullan

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the political situation in Ethiopia.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We remain concerned by the political situation in Ethiopia due to the impact of the continued fighting in the Tigray region and ethnic and political tensions and violence elsewhere in Ethiopia. I have a long-standing concern about the deterioration of political freedoms in Ethiopia, and I raised the delay to elections with President Sahle-Work during the 17 May Sudan Conference in Paris. On 14 April, the British Ambassador met, alongside Ambassadors and representatives from other Embassies in Addis Ababa, the Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney General and pressed concerns about the narrow political and civic space and arrests of candidates. This builds on discussions the Foreign Secretary had with Prime Minister Abiy during his visit to Ethiopia on 22 January this year, which also included the situation in Tigray.

I joined a meeting of development ministers from key donor nations, including USAid Administrator Samantha Power, on 9 June to further discuss the situation in Tigray. We agreed that the humanitarian situation is of grave concern, and that enhanced support is needed. The UK will allocate a further £16.7 million to respond to the crisis, bringing our total spend on Tigray to £47.7 million since November 2020. Whilst we scale-up our response, it is

clear that the humanitarian crisis will not end whilst the conflict continues. We must see an end to fighting and the withdrawal of Eritrean forces.

Ethiopia: Elections

18 May 2021 | 1138

Asked by: Helen Hayes

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the democratic legitimacy of Ethiopia's planned federal elections; and what recent discussions he has had with his Ethiopian counterpart on democratic rights and participation in that country.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Foreign Secretary spoke with Prime Minister Abiy during his visit to Ethiopia on 22 January. During this conversation he discussed the importance of credible elections for any country seeking inclusive and peaceful democracy. Most recently, I raised the elections delay with President Sahle-Work during the 17 May Sudan Conference in Paris. On 14 April, our Ambassador (alongside Ambassadors and representatives from other Embassies in Addis Ababa) met the Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney General. During this meeting we pressed concerns about the narrowing of political and civic space. Ensuring security, freedom of expression, freedom of the media and allowing political parties to organise and campaign are critical to credible elections. These are basic political rights which, if withheld or constricted, increase the risk of social unrest around the planned elections. Some parties have decided not to compete in the election. We encourage the inclusion in dialogue of parties who have not taken part in this election.

We are supporting the organisation of elections with up to £15m of support to UN programming to support the National Elections Board of Ethiopia. We note the recent postponement, estimated at 2-3 weeks, of the elections and are urging clarity for voters on arrangements. We continue to be in close contact with the National Elections Board of Ethiopia and the UN as they continue with preparations to hold the vote.

6

Urgent Questions

Ethiopia

14 Jun 2021 | House of Commons | 697 cc33-45

Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs if he will make a statement on the deteriorating situation in Ethiopia.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Duddridge): I congratulate my hon. Friend on securing this urgent question, and I thank him for his work not only on Ethiopia, but on Zambia and Angola, where he serves as a trade envoy, and for the excellent work he does on the Business Council for Africa.

The Government are deeply concerned about the situation in Ethiopia. Our greatest concern is the rapidly growing human rights and humanitarian crisis in Tigray. We are now more than seven months into the conflict in Tigray, and there is no sight of an end. It has taken a terrible toll on the people of Tigray. More than 350,000 people are assessed to be in famine-like conditions in total—more than anywhere else in the world—and, sadly, this is expected to rise. A region-wide famine in Tigray is now likely if conflict intensifies and impediments to the delivery of humanitarian aid continue. This crisis has been caused by insecurity, an ongoing lack of humanitarian access and the deliberate destruction of agricultural equipment and medical facilities. It is a man-made crisis.

Officials from our embassy in Addis Ababa have visited Tigray five times to assess the situation and guide our humanitarian response. The UK's special envoy for famine prevention and humanitarian affairs, Nick Dyer, visited Tigray last month. Our ambassador is due to visit this week. During these visits, we have heard many harrowing reports of atrocities committed by all parties to the conflict. This includes extrajudicial killings, and widespread sexual and gender-based violence. It is simply unacceptable, it must stop and the perpetrators must be held to account.

The head of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, has said the humanitarian disaster is in part due to the presence of the Eritrean troops in Tigray. He says they are using hunger as a weapon of war, and we therefore need to see the immediate withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Tigray and Ethiopian soil now. The Government of Ethiopia have said this will happen, but it has not yet happened. I am particularly shocked about reports that Eritreans are dressing up in Ethiopian uniforms and committing atrocities.

The concern of the G7 nations about the situation was set out in yesterday's communiqué, following the leaders' summit this weekend. The G7 leaders

called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and unimpeded humanitarian access to the area. I am pleased that all G7 nations in the EU, along with a growing number of other nations, including Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Belgium and Poland, have joined the UK's call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. His Holiness the Pope expressed his concerns and also called for an end to fighting this weekend. It is vital that that happens to allow life-saving aid to reach the hundreds of thousands in need.

The international community response to this crisis needs to be scaled up urgently. That will involve co-ordination to ensure aid gets in.

7

Debates

[Ethiopia, Sudan and Tigray: Humanitarian Situation](#)

03 Nov 2021 | House of Commons | 702 cc376-400WH

Motion that this House has considered the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia, Sudan and Tigray. Motion lapsed.

[Tigray](#)

08 Sep 2021 | House of Commons | 700 cc85-110WH

Motion that this House has considered the humanitarian situation in Tigray. Agreed to on question.

[Conflict in Tigray Region of Ethiopia](#)

25 Mar 2021 | House of Commons | 691 cc1173-1180

Agreed to on question.

8

Early Day Motions

[First anniversary of the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia](#)

EDM 609 (session 2021-22)

2 November 2021

Helen Hayes

That this House, noting the first anniversary of the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia on 3 November 2021, deeply regrets the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians as result of airstrikes, massacres and crop destruction, and the displacement of more than 2,000,000 people; deplores the horrific sexual violence to which an estimated 10,000 women have been subjected; notes with grave concern that some 5.2 million people are now in humanitarian need; and calls on the Government to press the UN Security Council for a ceasefire with agreements on boundaries and access corridors; immediate and full humanitarian access to all areas affected by the conflict with safety guarantees for humanitarian workers; withdrawal of all Eritrean troops from Ethiopia; a fully independent investigation of human right abuses, including the use of sexual violence, with judicial action to follow; and an inclusive national dialogue to secure a sustainable peace.

[Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia](#)

EDM 112 (session 2021-22)

26 May 2021

Helen Hayes

That this House notes the high level of sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, resulting in an estimated 10,000 women being raped in the four months to March; further notes the leadership role the UK government has played in global efforts to eliminate sexual violence in conflict; notes that the UN Day for the Elimination of sexual violence in conflict is on 19 June; and calls on the UK government to table a resolution at the UN Security Council setting up a tribunal to investigate sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray as a war crime, a crime against humanity or a constitutive act of genocide.

[Violence in Tigray Province, Ethiopia](#)

EDM 1603 (session 2019-21)

9 March 2021

Carol Monaghan

That this House strongly condemns the violence unfolding in Ethiopia's Tigray Region; notes that fighting between Ethiopian Forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has claimed many civilian lives; acknowledges reports

that Eritrean fighters have participated in the conflict on Ethiopian terrain; notes the findings of the United Nations Security Council Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide that extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, mass executions and property looting are prevalent in Tigray; recognises United Nations allegations that possible crimes against humanity have been committed in Tigray; is alarmed by reports that humanitarian organisations' access to the Region is being restricted; is concerned that an estimated 60,000 refugees have fled Tigray into neighbouring Sudan to escape the violence since November 2020; is appalled by recent reports of massacres carried out by Eritrean personnel against civilians, including at Maryam Dengelat church and the holy city of Aksum; calls for an end to violence committed by all parties in the conflict; fully supports the United Nations in its mission to facilitate peace, transparency, and emergency relief; and calls on the UK Government to exercise all its diplomatic capabilities to bring an end to this conflict.

Political prisoners on hunger strike in Ethiopia

EDM 1567 (session 2019-21)

1 March 2021

Patrick Grady

That this House notes with concerns reports about the deteriorating health of Jawar Mohammed, Bekele Gerba, Hamza Adane and Dejene Tafa, who are on hunger-strike in prison in Ethiopia; notes that these men and sixteen others were arrested after unrest that broke out in the Oromo region following the killing of musician Hachalu Hundessa in June 2020; notes that former US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Powell has said that the treatment of these prisoners by the Ethiopian government is exacerbating a serious crisis, especially as their health deteriorates; further notes findings by Amnesty International in 2020 that Ethiopian security forces committed grave human rights violations between December 2018 and December 2019 in the region, including burning homes to the ground, extrajudicial executions, rape, arbitrary arrests and detentions; and calls on the UK Government to make representations to counterparts in the United Nations, African Union and Government of Ethiopia to secure appropriate medical treatment for the hunger strikers, the release of any prisoners detained arbitrarily on politically-motivated charges, an end to political violence, steps to negotiate peaceful settlements of the conflicts affecting the country, and respect for freedom of speech, human rights and the rule of law.

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