



Global Ethiopian Advocacy Nexus (GLEAN)

Advocacy and public diplomacy to promote Ethiopia's interest and the wellbeing of the Ethiopian people

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To: **Kenneth Roth**
Executive Director
Human Rights Watch

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Cc: **Laetitia Bader**
Director, Horn of Africa
Human Rights Watch

A STATEMENT BY MS. LAETITIA BADER, HORN OF AFRICA DIRECTOR, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, IS BIASED, GROSSLY EXAGGERATED, AND DISHONORABLE

The story dated February 11, 2021, titled '*ETHIOPIA: UNLAWFUL SHELLING OF TIGRAY URBAN AREAS*' reported by Laetitia Bader, is biased, exaggerated, mostly non-factual and dishonorable. It is incomprehensible that a prestigious organization that protects and fights for all human rights abuses cherry picks and chooses which life is more valuable and which life is not.

We would like to draw your attention to the many human rights cases of abuse that Ms. Bader and your organization ignored:

- Nearly **1200** people were massacred in Mai-Kadra by the retreating TPLF forces and its cohorts as it fled across Tigray and over to Sudan. Although these killings were verified and reported by several human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, we have not heard any report or condemnation of the act from Ms. Bader or the organization. Instead, we have been witnessing a cover-up promoting TPLF's misinformation campaign and false narratives. TPLF planned, instigated, and perpetrated the insurrectionist terror. TPLF is the perpetrator and not the victim. Ms. Bader's attempt to corroborate her statement with "evidence" she obtained by interviewing refugees in Sudan who are the killing squad members, called *Samri*, was disrespectful of the people who were the victims of this massacre.
- Despite the treacherous & treasonous acts of TPLF against the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) Northern Command, which constitutes nearly 70% of Ethiopia's Military capability, and the gruesome killing and murder of 100s of members in cold blood, TPLF sympathizers such as Ms. Bader never condemned it, let alone raising their voices for the hundreds of army members who were slaughtered while asleep or the inhumane mistreatment of over 8,000 members of Northern Command held as hostages. This is despite the admission by

Page 1 of 2

TPLF of carrying out a preemptive strike against multiple units of Northern Command in Tigray region. We know Ms. Bader (who is the expert in the region) and your organization are aware of these facts. However, you conveniently chose not to report on or condemn the act.

- The ENDF showed remarkable restraint during their advance and carefully selected their targets while carrying out rule of law enforcement operations in Tigray. While there is documented evidence that retreating TPLF forces intentionally destroyed infrastructure, including roads, bridges, airports, telecommunication infrastructure, and later looted major factories by disguising themselves wearing Ethiopian and Eritrean Military uniforms. Again, this evidence was intentionally ignored. Ms. Bader should be accountable to provide evidence for her unfounded claim of *unlawful shelling of Tigray urban areas*, except echoing the TPLF's misinformation and disinformation. Ms. Bader stated the satellite imagery that shows shelling was evidence for this accusation, but how does Ms. Bader know which party is responsible for the damage from those images? An organization such as HRW's stature and staffed with a number of highly accomplished researchers to accept such unfounded statements and pure propaganda shows the alarming decline of HRW's values and research standards.
- The accusations made against the Ethiopian National Defense Forces for human rights abuse are false. Members of the ENDF were massacred by TPLF terrorists and fellow military men and women who were recruited by TPLF to switch their loyalty to launch a treasonous attack on the national defense unit. Yet, ENDF has never failed to protect the people of Tigray region. It is a very well-known fact that ENDF members have always been on the side of the people of the Tigray region, including during the trying times of the major locust invasion and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the years, the ENDF not only demonstrated its loyalty to Ethiopia's constitution but also to the UN principles by participating in many peacekeeping missions and operations across Africa. Portraying the ENDF, which is working to enforce rule of law and order as a foreign invader is not only unethical and morally unacceptable, but also deliberately ignores the fact that Ethiopia is a sovereign nation and Tigray is another region.

GLEAN stands in solidarity with the Ethiopian people and the international community in the efforts to avert the humanitarian crisis confronting Ethiopia. We call on the international community to condemn remnants of TPLF, large number of criminals and thugs released from the region's prisons by the TPLF as they retreated from the urban areas. These two criminal forces are responsible for jointly impeding the humanitarian response in the region and the plethora of sexual abuse. TPLF's ultimate goal is to undermine the government's law enforcement operations and hinder peace and stability to prevail in the region.

We call upon the Human Rights Watch and Ms. Bader to abide by your time-honored approach of independent, non-biased investigative reporting and take corrective action. Ethiopia is working in all fronts to rebuild Tigray and continue on the path towards a peaceful, prosperous and democratic country.

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