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Press release from Justice and Accountability Group,
Europe, the USA, and Ethiopia.

The Inaction and indifference of the Tigray Interim Regional Administration (TIRA) and the Tigray Genocide Commission (TGC) in seeking justice and accountability.

It is to be recalled that the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) has been legitimately established (resolution S-33/1) on 17 December 2021 to investigate the atrocity of crimes committed by all parties and combatants in Northern Ethiopia. Unfortunately, the ICHREE has been denied access to Tigray by the Federal Government of Ethiopia (GoE) since its creation and has yet to engage directly with victims. Despite the extension of its mandate, (resolution A/HRC/RES/S1/27) for a year until December 2023, the GoE has been unwavering in its effort to terminate the commission's mandate. It has become clear, both the Tigray Interim Regional Administration (TIRA), and the Tigray Genocide Commission (TGC) have been surprisingly quiet in demanding for ICHREE to access Tigray to execute the investigation of atrocity crimes.

During the 53rd Human Rights Council session, where the Annual report of the UN-High Commissioner was presented, many member countries and human right organizations, such as the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, expressed their clear stance for justice and accountability. In contrast GoE, the African Union (AU), and African members of the HRC were demanding the termination of the ICHREE by portraying the atrocity crimes as a deserved consequence of the execution of 'law enforcement,' as narrated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Whilst the GoE and its supporters are expected to demand the end of the UN led investigation, the silence from both the TIRA and TGC is shocking. We read in the Reporter that the head of TGC is already accepting the “termination of the mandate of



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ICHREE” in September 2023. Without extended mandate of ICHREE and meaningful visits to the Tigray region, effective investigations into the vast array of crimes are not

possible. Direct contact with victims and affected areas is crucial for the collection of key evidence that show the depth and breadth of the crimes committed and the resulting impact. It should be noted TGC has been exclusively established to pursue justice and accountability efforts on behalf of the victims of the genocide that has taken place in Tigray.

Tigrayans have been expecting TIRA and TGC to be vocal and show a much more firm, and principled stance, on the mandate of the ICHREE at a time when the mandate of the ICHREE is both undermined and threatened. There is a need for a strong diplomatic engagement by reiterating the need for an independent investigation into the extensive violations of human rights and atrocity crimes committed in Tigray.

The head of TGC has also disclosed that there has not been any direct engagement with ICHREE so far. TGC is waiting for ICHREE to contact, instead of proactively engaging itself in an assertive way and demanding attention for a rigorous investigation of the atrocity crimes committed on the people of Tigray. Such inaction and indifferent attitude may have affected the evidence transfer process from TGC to the independent investigation. The passivity has also affected the efforts of different Tigrayan diaspora groups, who are advocating for justice and accountability at international justice platforms. We have been experiencing difficulties to access firsthand reliable fatality, disability, and destruction data.

TIRA leadership and the TGC should also be cautious about their stand regarding the transitional justice mechanism promoted by the GoE as it will not provide justice for the atrocity crimes committed on the people of Tigray, including ethnic cleansing and genocide committed by Eritrea. The people of Tigray and the direct victims require justice on their terms. It is obvious, there is a very palpable unwillingness on the part of the GoE to ensure that extensive investigations are conducted with a view to delivering the required justice and holding key preparators to account. Hence, we strongly do not



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believe that the Transitional Justice mechanism of GoE will deliver the equitable justice Tigrayan victims need and deserve.

Therefore, we urge the TIRA to be assertive on the need for exhaustive investigations of the atrocity crimes committed and express its support for the extension of ICHREE’s mandate. TIRA and TGC should understand that discounting ICHREE’s efforts to investigate the atrocity crimes committed in Tigray and championing the idea of domestic justice camouflaged under “transitional Justice” is treasonous. It is tantamount to declaring that perpetrators of the most heinous crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing go Scot-free and unaccountable.

Justice and Accountability Group!