



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

8899th meeting
Monday, 8 November 2021, 3 p.m.
New York

Provisional

President: Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez/Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico)

Members:

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| China | Mr. Zhang Jun |
| Estonia | Mr. Jürgenson |
| France | Mr. De Rivière |
| India | Mr. Raguttahalli |
| Ireland | Ms. Byrne Nason |
| Kenya | Mr. Kimani |
| Niger | Mr. Hamani Baba Babo |
| Norway | Ms. Juul |
| Russian Federation | Ms. Evstigneeva |
| Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | Ms. King |
| Tunisia | Mr. Ladeb |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . | Mr. Kariuki |
| United States of America | Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield |
| Viet Nam | Mr. Dang |

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

21-32413 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ethiopia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; and His Excellency Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, High Representative of the Chairperson for the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in Ethiopia. I welcome the presence today of President Obasanjo, African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa.

The year-long conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia has reached disastrous proportions. The fighting places the future of the country and its people, as well as the stability of the wider Horn of Africa region, in grave uncertainty. In recent days, Tigrayan forces have advanced southwards towards Addis Ababa, acting in coordination with the Oromo Liberation Army. The Government of Ethiopia has declared a nationwide state of emergency and has stated that it is fighting an existential war. Elsewhere, insecurity in the Oromia region continues to worsen, while the situation in parts of the Benishangul-Gumuz region remains tense.

There has been much speculation concerning how the crisis will unfold over the coming weeks. In a country of more than 110 million people, 90 different ethnic groups and 80 languages, no one can predict what continued fighting and insecurity will bring. But let me clear: what is certain is that the risk of Ethiopia descending into widening civil war is only too real. That would bring about a humanitarian catastrophe and consume the future of such an important country.

The political repercussions of intensifying violence in the wider region would be immense, compounding the many crises besetting the Horn of Africa. Just in northern Ethiopia today, more than 7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Efforts to mobilize assistance in Tigray, where more than 5 million people need food and an estimated 400,000 people are living in famine-like conditions, continue to be undermined by an inability to move cash, fuel and supplies into the region. No aid trucks have reached Mekelle since 18 October amid continued air strikes.

United Nations Humanitarian Air Service flights have remained suspended since air strikes on 22 October forced a flight to return to Addis Ababa. We have been unable to move fuel into Tigray since August. While some emergency supplies have been moved, it has been four months since the last major shipment of medicines and health supplies into Tigray. A lack of access means that humanitarian organizations have had to scale back core, life-saving activities, including water trucking, food distributions, mobile clinics and support for acutely malnourished children and mothers. Needs and protection concerns are also rapidly escalating in the Amhara and Afar regions, with large numbers of people fleeing their homes as the fighting continues to expand.

Let us recall that this expanding crisis is happening in a country that was already grappling with enormous humanitarian challenges, including local conflicts, flooding, drought and infectious disease outbreaks. While needs are most acute in the north, across Ethiopia as a whole more than 20 million people are estimated to need some form of humanitarian support. More than 5 million people are internally displaced. Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths travelled to Ethiopia over the weekend to review Ethiopia's increasing needs and plan for a greater humanitarian response, should the fighting continue, as is feared. Unfettered access to conflict areas remains key.

Last week, the report of the joint Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights-Ethiopian Human Rights Commission investigation into the conflict in Tigray, covering the period between November 2020 and June 2021, shed light on the horrific suffering civilians have endured. The report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that all parties to the conflict, including the Ethiopian National Defence Forces, the Eritrean Defence Forces, the Amhara Special Forces and allied militia on one side and Tigrayan forces on the other, committed violations

of international human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law, to include attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, indiscriminate attacks resulting in civilian casualties and extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detentions, sexual and gender-based violence and forced displacement.

The report states that war crimes and crimes against humanity may have been committed. It also outlines steps that should be taken to ensure accountability for those acts. High Commissioner Bachelet highlighted in her remarks last week that incidents of serious human rights violations have continued. More recently, incidents of hate speech and targeting of ethnic groups have increased at an alarming rate. In that regard, the Security Council's call on 5 November for refraining from inflammatory speech and incitement to violence is welcome and timely.

There must be an immediate cessation of hostilities. That has been the call of the Secretary-General, African Union Commission Chair Faki, Intergovernmental Authority on Development Executive Secretary Workneh Gebeyehu, the leader of Ethiopia's key neighbour Kenya President Uhuru Kenyatta and the Security Council. They have also called for negotiations on a lasting ceasefire and for the creation of conditions for an inclusive Ethiopian dialogue to resolve the crisis and create the foundation for peace and stability throughout the country.

The Secretary-General has been in frequent contact with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, urging restraint and dialogue and offering his good offices. Furthermore, the Secretary-General has offered President Obasanjo the full support of the United Nations for his efforts to resolve the conflict. United Nations colleagues on the ground continue to urge all sides to the conflict to show restraint and provide unfettered access to vulnerable populations.

The recently concluded elections in Ethiopia demonstrated the people's commitment to the democratic process. At the ceremony to mark his new mandate last month, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali spoke of his Government's commitment to resolving the ongoing challenges and his intention to launch a national dialogue. The urgency for such an inclusive initiative has never been greater.

In conclusion, let me stress that the United Nations is steadfastly committed to staying and delivering in Ethiopia, in support of all the people of the country.

We continue our work there, including thanks to the dedication of our Ethiopian national staff, who must be provided full protection by national authorities, regardless of their background.

Ethiopia, a founding member of the United Nations, needs our support. We urge Ethiopians to come together to build a shared, prosperous future before it is too late.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Obasanjo.

Mr. Obasanjo: It is a great pleasure and honour for me to be invited to the briefing of the Security Council to discourse the situation in Ethiopia, within the context of its agenda item of peace and security in Africa.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the President and members of the Council for today's invitation, which will allow me to exchange views on the pertinent unfolding developments in one of the strategic countries of the continent of Africa.

I also wish to thank the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission for my nomination, on 26 August, to the post of African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa, to intensify engagement with all relevant political actors and stakeholders towards promoting entrenched durable peace and stability within the Horn of Africa, as well as support to AU-led strategies and diplomatic interventions in the region, through the facilitation of inclusive political dialogue, reconciliation and social cohesion processes.

The appointment is a delicate one for two principal reasons. It is the first-ever appointment by the AU of a High Representative for an entire region. The second reason is that each of the eight countries of the region has a specific context. My assignment is part of the AU drive to promote peace, security, stability and political dialogue all over the Horn of Africa region. It has allowed me to engage with most of the leaders of the region, relevant bilateral or multilateral partners, as well as key political actors and stakeholders, especially in Ethiopia.

Apart from those meetings, I also paid visits to Europe, met with the President of the Republic of France, and to Brussels to meet with the leaders of the European Union, from 5 to 8 October. I also travelled to the United States of America, where I met with

the Secretary-General and the Secretary of State of the United States of America, from 9 to 14 October. Those initial visits offered me the opportunity to discourse with world leaders about the objective of the appointment, as well as to solicit their logistical and all other support for the implementation of my mandate.

Since I began the assignment, I have briefed the AU Peace and Security Council on two occasions, the first of which was on 8 October, concerning the region, and the second just this morning, specifically on the situation in Ethiopia.

The Under-Secretary-General has given us a brief outline of the situation developing in Ethiopia. It is pertinent to point out that the crisis situation in northern Ethiopia has continued to drastically deteriorate in recent weeks, leading to a serious escalation of the situation. I have been following those developments with keen attention, and it is owing to the rapid changes in trends that I am here in Ethiopia to pay another visit in order to engage all stakeholders in de-escalating the situation.

It should be noted that, following days of reports of intense fighting in the north of the country, the Ethiopian Cabinet declared a nationwide state of emergency with immediate effect on 2 November, while the central authority urged citizens to prepare to defend the capital. A large demonstration that took place yesterday, 7 November, as well as other similar demonstrations in several cities in support of the Federal Government is evidence of the present reality.

Since my arrival in Ethiopia on 4 November, after my visit to the Sudan a day earlier, I have met with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, the President of Ethiopia and the President of Oromia and held meaningful discussions with them on the ongoing escalation with reflections on how to de-escalate tensions and to pave the way for dialogue.

During my meetings with the Prime Minister, we agreed that I would pay a visit to Mekelle to meet the Tigrayan leaders. It is in that context that I travelled to Mekelle yesterday, 7 November, to engage the leaders of the northern region in an effort to de-escalate tensions and to begin to find an amicable solution to the situation.

To summarize our discussions, all the leaders here in Addis Ababa and in the north agree individually that the differences between them are political and require

a political solution through dialogue. That therefore constitutes a window of opportunity that we can collectively tap into to assist the people of Ethiopia to find a lasting solution to the ongoing crisis.

It is, however, important to mention that the window of opportunity we have is very small and that time is limited when it comes to an intervention in that regard. The ongoing conflict situation continues to have severe humanitarian consequences for the population, with a huge impact on socioeconomic development and stability. The time is now for collective action in finding a lasting solution to avoid further escalation of the situation, which may have a direct effect on the strategic Horn of Africa region as a whole.

Please permit me, in light of all this, to urge the Council to consider the following.

The Council should, first, strongly urge and encourage the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front to engage in political dialogue without any preconditions; secondly, call for an immediate and unconditional comprehensive ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities by all parties; thirdly, call for immediate and hindered humanitarian access; fourthly, call on the parties to ensure respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights laws and practices; fifthly, call for the immediate commencement of an all-inclusive national dialogue and reconciliation; and sixthly, call on the international community to rally behind the AU-led process in order to ensure coherence and unity of purpose in our peacemaking efforts in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Ethiopia.

In the past 48 hours, as I said, I have visited Mekelle, the capital of Tigray. I have consulted with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, the President of Tigray and the President of the Oromia region, as well as the President of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. I have also consulted with the Chairperson of the AU Commission. Tomorrow, I will be paying a visit the Amhara and Afar regions, all in an effort to harmonize the leaders' views in the area of the withdrawal of troops from regions that are not their own, as well as in maintaining humanitarian access.

All of those are, I believe, very important and constitute the priority areas as indicated by most of the leaders that I have consulted with. With the efforts currently under way, I hope that, before the end of the week, we will have a programme in hand that will

indicate how we can address the humanitarian situation and the withdrawal of troops together so as to meet the immediate demands of the stakeholders.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Obasanjo for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I want to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and, in particular, High Representative Obasanjo, for their very important briefings.

In the context of what we have just heard and the excellent work that the High Representative is already doing despite the uncertainties we heard from Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, we want to believe that we may just be beginning to see possible pathways emerging for an end to this crisis. We certainly share the view that we dare not miss the window of opportunity for peace.

That is why, when I consider this conflict, my abiding feelings are of shame and frustration — shame because, as the Council, we around this table have stood by as this crisis intensified over the past year, causing immeasurable suffering for millions of Ethiopians, and frustration, because the Council's voice matters on this issue, and it has the power to deliver change. We remained silent for too long.

But today I want to commend our African colleagues, with whom we worked to gain agreement at last on a Council statement last Friday (SC/14691) — a Council statement that calls squarely for an immediate ceasefire. That African leadership in New York is also manifest at African Union (AU) headquarters, where we saw the AU Peace and Security Council meet just today, and, importantly, also on the ground, where it matters most to the people of Ethiopia.

We depend on regional leaders, in particular High Representative Obasanjo. We rely on regional organizations, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which have a crucial role to play in engaging with all sides, supporting mediation efforts and ultimately assisting Ethiopia to find a solution to this crisis. We welcome the efforts that are taking place as we speak. We call on everyone in Ethiopia to embrace this opportunity. Time is of the essence. The people of Ethiopia are putting their

faith in their country. For the good of their country, the fighting needs to stop, and the talking needs to start.

We are one year on from the beginning of this crisis. Today we must ask ourselves if we, as the Security Council, have done enough to prevent a catastrophe — a catastrophe that is causing untold harm to the people of Ethiopia. As each month passes, we have seen the situation deteriorate. For the futures of ordinary people in Ethiopia are being stripped away.

As we heard last week from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, there have been shocking human rights abuses committed during this conflict. Women, men and children have been raped in horrific fashion. Indeed, let me be clear: civilians have borne the brunt of violence, international humanitarian law and human rights norms have been cast aside, while life-saving aid has been blocked from reaching starving and sick people.

In recent days, the situation has become even more grave. Humanitarian operations across northern Ethiopia have effectively ground to a halt. Military operations have escalated. A state of emergency has been declared, suspending the basic rights of Ethiopian citizens. More people have been displaced. Lives and livelihoods have been lost. We have also witnessed increasingly shocking incidents of hate speech and dehumanizing language that risk inciting the worst type of violence against individuals or groups within Ethiopian society. We cannot stand by and allow this to continue. Too many lives are at stake. Meanwhile, continued military actions and mobilization now threaten the very stability and territorial integrity that are vital for Ethiopia and the region.

Today our messages are to all parties, and they are clear and simple. First, it is paramount that all parties immediately facilitate the provision of life-saving humanitarian aid to those who desperately need it, in line with international humanitarian law. Secondly, we need an immediate end to the fighting. Civilians must be protected. Thirdly, we need all parties to the conflict to embrace negotiations towards a lasting political resolution. Fourthly, the chilling hate speech, dehumanizing language and incitement to violence must end. Accountability is imperative. Fifthly, we need an inclusive and Ethiopian-led national dialogue that embraces all regions and stakeholders. We cannot wait any longer to act on these five important steps.

Ethiopia has been an inspiring example of peace and stability in Africa. Ireland's relationship with Ethiopia is one of our oldest and closest on the African continent. We remain deeply committed to supporting Ethiopia and its people.

It is also shocking and tragic that the entire country now risks being overrun by violence and conflict. This unnecessary war must end now. All sides in Ethiopia must turn the tide towards peace and now steer the country back to where the people of Ethiopia deserve to be: on a hopeful pathway to peace.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia): I take the floor on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1), on the developing situation in Ethiopia.

I wish to express our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of the Niger for the heinous terrorist attack that took place recently in that country.

I thank His Excellency President Obasanjo, the High Representative of the African Union for the Horn of Africa and Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for their insightful briefings. We thank President Obasanjo for his extensive efforts within the African Union-led process and welcome, in this regard, the communiqué of the African Union Peace and Security Council on the situation in Ethiopia issued today. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia.

One month after our previous meeting on this subject (see S/PV.8875), the situation in Ethiopia continues dangerously to deteriorate, especially during the last two weeks, bringing this sister nation every day closer to a full-scale civil war, which, if not stopped immediately, could result in unprecedented violence and widespread atrocities and threaten the unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia, with the potential for occasioning destabilizing effects in the wider region.

The A3+1 is deeply concerned over the escalation of military confrontation in northern Ethiopia and its expansion to the Amhara and Afar regions as well as its impact on the humanitarian front. Once more, we highlight that the priority at this stage is to achieve an immediate ceasefire, which is crucial for allowing for unrestricted humanitarian access to the affected

communities as well as for the re-establishment of public services in all the conflict areas.

We therefore call for the immediate cessation of hostilities, the full respect for the life and property of civilians and State infrastructure and urge the parties to the conflict to constructively engage in discussions to seek a peaceful solution and pave the way for an inclusive Ethiopian-led dialogue and national reconciliation in the interests of the country. At the same time, we remind all parties that they should respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law, with particular regard for the protection of civilians, which requires all parties to urge their supporters to abstain from acts of reprisal against any community, and refrain from hate speech and incitement to violence and divisiveness, as stated by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on 3 November.

All Ethiopians are one people. As the A3+1 we urge all Ethiopians to embrace one another and refuse to be pitted against one another on account of ethnic, religious or other identities.

Today peace and security in the Horn of Africa is at risk. The lives of millions of men, women and children are at stake, and we have a huge and historic responsibility to prevent large-scale atrocities and famine and to forestall the possible destabilization of the region. Today we have a strong need for diplomacy and mediation.

We welcome the initiatives of the Secretary-General and all international partners and regional leaders to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. We believe that it is important today that we speak with one voice and send a clear and united message to all parties in Ethiopia that violence is not an option in resolving the political disputes, however serious they may be.

We have witnessed during the past year how violence led to the loss of thousands of lives and millions of displaced persons, human rights violations and atrocities and to a dire humanitarian situation. We are left with the question: how much longer, and how many more innocent Ethiopians must perish, before all parties can understand that there can be no military solution to the crisis?

Ethiopia, that great nation and cradle of civilization, which has been an anchor of regional peace and stability, deserves to have us stand with its people in these trying times. In that regard, we believe that the African Union

and the neighbouring countries have a major role to play in helping Ethiopians find their way to peace and stability through political dialogue and reconciliation. We should help them unite again under the common interests of their country.

We reiterate our full support to the African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa, former President Obasanjo, and commend his mediation efforts to achieve a ceasefire and a prompt and peaceful resolution of the conflict. We call on all stakeholders and international partners to extend all possible support to President Obasanjo in his highly important mission, cognizant of the importance of coordinated action.

In conclusion, we, the A3+1, reaffirm our respect for and commitment to the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ethiopia. We stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia through these trying times in their pursuit of peace and stability.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I thank the three African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Ireland, for leading the call to add this item to our agenda. This is indeed a time when a strong and united message from the Council is critical. And I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and the African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa for their briefings, and not least the efforts by the African Union (AU).

The development of the crisis in Ethiopia is threatening the stability and the very integrity of the country. It is hitting the civilian population hard — and certainly the most vulnerable the hardest. As a close friend and decades-long partner to Ethiopia and the Ethiopian people, Norway is deeply concerned, both by the magnitude of the crisis and its potential regional impact.

There can be no military solution. That should be evident to all parties: from the federal Government to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Oromo Liberation Army. Further escalation of the fighting will not lead to victory; it will only inflict more unnecessary suffering on the Ethiopian people.

We are deeply concerned by reports of increased ethnic profiling and discrimination. Ethnically charged statements inciting violence will only deepen divisions, perhaps to irreversible levels. Divisive actions today

make peace more difficult tomorrow. We urge Ethiopian leaders to recognize the need for a future inclusive dialogue and reconciliation process.

All parties must exercise maximum restraint and immediately work to de-escalate the conflict. We specifically call on the Tigray Defense Forces, the TPLF and forces from the Oromo Liberation Army not to attempt an attack on Addis Ababa.

We also urge the Government of Ethiopia to refrain from imposing any measures or restrictions upon civilians of specific ethnicities, including Tigray and Oromo.

Norway fully supports the AU peace initiative and the mandate and efforts of the AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa. We call on all parties to fully cooperate with the High Representative, immediately stop fighting and make the necessary concessions for a negotiated cessation of hostilities.

The humanitarian situation is extremely dire. Hundreds of thousands in Tigray are facing famine-like conditions, and there is a serious risk of large-scale famine. At least 2 million persons are displaced in Tigray, and hundreds of thousands in Amhara and Afar. Access to food, health care and other basic services must be restored. And all possible modalities for that must be explored. We call on all parties to immediately facilitate full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

We know that the suffering of the Ethiopian people also goes beyond the current humanitarian crisis. Norway is appalled by the findings in the joint report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. While limited in time and geographical scope, it outlines a pattern of the killing of civilians and the widespread and systematic use of sexual and gender-based violence. The obligations of all are made clear: incidents must be investigated and perpetrators brought to justice. All parties to the conflict must fully respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law, even in the most dire circumstances.

Every day that the fighting continues and the rhetoric grows only makes a credible accountability process and a viable transitional justice mechanism more vital. Those mechanisms will be of the utmost importance to future national reconciliation. The people of Ethiopia, and indeed all people in the broader region, are dependent on the ability of the parties to

urgently find a path to sustainable peace. And we stand ready to assist.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and High Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Obasanjo for their insightful briefings. I welcome the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to our meeting today.

We are deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in Ethiopia, especially the continued fighting and expansion of combat and hostilities in and around the Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions over the weekends. The sharp escalation in military operations and clashes in the past few weeks have plunged Ethiopia and the region into a more serious level of instability, pushing the parties to a point of no return. Those developments have also brought about consequences and adverse impacts on the daily life of millions of people, while hindering humanitarian activities.

We therefore urge all parties to end hostilities immediately and start an inclusive Ethiopian national dialogue towards an immediate, unconditional and sustainable ceasefire. Only with a sustainable ceasefire can the primary conditions for a credible and inclusive dialogue be established to find a political settlement to the long-lasting political grievances that led to the conflict.

The escalating hostilities threaten to worsen the already dire humanitarian situation in Tigray, Amhara and Afar, where millions of people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. There are 5.2 million people, especially those 400,000 people who live in famine-like conditions, who must rely on food aid every day.

We welcome progress in the practical activities carried out over the past few months by the United Nations, humanitarian organizations and international and regional partners to help Ethiopians, including people in Tigray.

We also welcome the visit made by Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and the African Union's High Representative for the Horn of Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo, to the northern Tigray region of Ethiopia on Sunday in order to discuss humanitarian access and a possible ceasefire. However, we understand that the access to, and the distribution of, humanitarian assistance are greatly insufficient in the face of the urgent needs of people in the region. We therefore call for

the immediate removal of restrictions and the granting of humanitarian access, as well as full compliance with international humanitarian law, the rapid restoration of public services and the intensification of humanitarian assistance. All measures must be taken to protect civilians and humanitarian workers.

As we have stated previously, the crisis in Tigray is due to complicated political, historical and ethnic reasons. Therefore, rather than inciting further hatred, the parties concerned must put the interests of their people first and patiently engage in dialogue and reconciliation.

It is high time for a compromise to be made towards a comprehensive solution for the sustained stability and development of Ethiopia on the basis of respect for the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Without a constructive dialogue in place, further bloodshed and confrontational rhetoric will drive the parties farther apart and block the path of peace. Dialogue should start right away; otherwise it will be too late to save Ethiopia from catastrophe. The international community should support all efforts to that end, including through swift and effective actions — all while ensuring full respect for the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia.

The conflict and situation in Tigray have had a significant impact on the region. All parties must therefore exercise restraint. The principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means should be upheld at all times.

In that connection, we support the role of the High Representative of the Chairperson for the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa and his efforts to help bring about a ceasefire and a prompt and peaceful resolution to the conflict. We also support the constructive engagement of neighbouring countries and regional organizations, especially the African Union, for the sake of peace, stability, security, national reconciliation, national unity and development in Ethiopia.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, High Representative of the Chairperson for the African Union (AU) Commission for the Horn of Africa, for their briefings. And I

welcome Ambassador Amde, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, to today's meeting.

Lately, the situation in Ethiopia has deteriorated. The escalation and spread of the conflict have resulted in increasing civilian casualties and worsening humanitarian conditions. The AU and the leaders of countries of the region have all expressed their concern in that regard.

As a good friend of the people of Ethiopia, China sincerely hopes that all the relevant parties will put the interests of the country and its people first, keep calm and exercise restraint in order to avoid further escalation of the situation. We also hope that they will commit to resolving conflict and differences through political dialogue so as to create conditions for peace and reconciliation.

Last Friday, the Security Council issued a press statement on the situation in Ethiopia (SC/14691), calling for a cessation of hostilities and the commencement of political dialogue. We hope that all the relevant parties will respond positively.

The current situation in Ethiopia is the result of a combination of political, historical, ethnic and other factors. A solution can only be found from within. Countries of the region and regional organizations know best with regard to the historical background and current challenges in Ethiopia, and can therefore play a leading role in the political settlement of the Ethiopian issue. China has always supported African solutions to African problems.

In that connection, we welcome the political good offices of High Representative Obasanjo. We call on all the parties concerned and the countries of the region to fully support the High Representative in his work. We also welcome the Secretary-General's offer to extend his good offices to Ethiopia. We call for enhanced coordination between the United Nations and the AU so that they can work together constructively to promote nationwide peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia. The international community, and the Security Council in particular, should give the time and space needed for the AU and others to make use of their good offices. Using trade restrictions or cutting off aid as a means to exert maximum pressure on Ethiopia will only impede efforts to reach a political settlement and will not help the parties resolve their conflict and rebuild mutual trust.

The current humanitarian needs in Ethiopia are enormous. The international community should help Ethiopia improve its humanitarian response capacity and scale up the delivery of aid in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance can reach as many people as possible.

When providing humanitarian support to Ethiopia, we should respect the country's sovereignty and leadership, follow the United Nations guiding principles for humanitarian action and avoid politicizing humanitarian issues. All the parties concerned in Ethiopia should fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, protect the safety and security of civilians, including foreign nationals, facilitate humanitarian relief operations and prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

Ethiopia is a country with a long history and a splendid civilization. At every historical juncture, the people of Ethiopia have been able to come together to defend the country's sovereignty, unity and long-term development. We are confident that the people of Ethiopia have the capacity and wisdom to overcome the country's current challenges, maintain national unity and get the country back on track towards peace, stability, development and revitalization.

China stands ready to work with the international community to continue to support the efforts of the people of Ethiopia.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I want to thank High Representative Obasanjo and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their important briefings. I also thank the African members of the Security Council — namely, Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Ireland, for calling today's meeting and for their work on Friday's statement (SC/14691) for the Security Council's consideration at today's meeting.

The United Kingdom shares the serious concerns already expressed today, including on behalf of the African Union Peace and Security Council, about the situation in Ethiopia. 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 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission documented those in detail, including the widespread use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, as well as 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.

It is therefore vital that all parties stop fighting and start talking. The 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; they serve only to set Ethiopian against Ethiopian and deepen divisions, which will make recovery from this crisis even harder.

The United Kingdom gives its full support to the Secretary-General and 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 past year, this conflict has brought only destruction, suffering and despair. It is past time for all parties to put the Ethiopian people first.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank President Obasanjo and Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo for their briefings. I would like to make three points.

Immediate action is needed to bring about a ceasefire and facilitate the start of a political dialogue. France calls on the Federal Government, the regional government of Tigray and its allies to demonstrate their openness to dialogue without delay. The parties must immediately cease hostilities, freeze the positions of their forces, refrain from internationalizing the conflict and agree on a phased withdrawal to pre-conflict positions.

France calls on the Ethiopian authorities to withdraw the designation of the Tigray People's Liberation Front as a terrorist organization so as to start urgent negotiations. The Tigray regional government should recognize that the future of the Tigray region can be determined only through an inclusive national dialogue and constitutional arrangements, including regarding the border dispute with the Amhara region.

All parties should support the efforts of the African Union, President Obasanjo and Kenya, all of whom have expressed their deep concern for the stability and unity of Ethiopia and the region, as well as their hope that a dialogue can finally silence the guns. Like the Secretary-General and Ethiopia's main partners, including the European Union, France supports those steps. The Security Council has also expressed its unanimous support for their efforts.

Such statements recalled the international community's commitment to Ethiopia's unity and territorial integrity. Actors in the region who exploit the vulnerabilities that the conflict has exacerbated will be held accountable. France reiterates its call for a complete and verified withdrawal of Eritrean forces.

The international community is therefore unified and mobilized in supporting peace efforts and providing international guarantees to overcome mistrust. We encourage the parties to take this opportunity.

Now more than ever, all parties need to respect international humanitarian law and human rights. The protection of civilians must remain a priority. Fighting in urban areas increases the risk for the population. France is concerned by the violence, forced displacements and hate speech targeting the ethnic origin of victims. It calls on all parties to put an end to such violence, combat the impunity of its perpetrators and shoulder their responsibility.

France takes note of the publication of the report of the joint investigation by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. We expect all parties to undertake credible investigations into the alleged facts. The allegations are extremely serious, in particular the extrajudicial executions and the many cases of sexual violence.

All parties should ensure full access for all United Nations humanitarian and medical personnel. The obstruction of medical aid is unacceptable. We hope that such obstacles will be rapidly removed. Finally, France calls on the parties to guarantee access to prisoners and start talks for their release.

Mr. Ragutahalli (India): Let me join other speakers in thanking His Excellency Mr. Obasanjo, High Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, and Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and

Peacebuilding Affairs, for updating the Security Council on the recent developments in the northern parts of Ethiopia. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, Ambassador Taye Amde, at today's briefing.

The conflict in northern parts of Ethiopia has seen an escalation in recent weeks and is threatening to expand towards the central parts of Ethiopia. The fighting has intensified and the humanitarian situation has worsened, adversely affecting millions, particularly women, children and the elderly. It is concerning to note that the humanitarian efforts led by the United Nations have been stalled in recent weeks. It is important that humanitarian assistance be resumed at the earliest available opportunity. We also reiterate the importance of the founding principles of humanitarian assistance, that is, humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

We have noted the report of the joint investigation team of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We also note and welcome the recognition and acceptance of the report by the Ethiopian Government as an important document that could complement ongoing efforts by the Ethiopian Government to address the allegations of human rights violations and abuses. We further note that the report could not confirm the deliberate or wilful denial of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in Tigray or the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

The Ethiopian Government has announced a state of emergency in response to the persisting conflict and expansion of violence beyond the Tigray region. The inclusive national dialogue announced on 4 October has not moved forward. A military offensive may not help in the resolution of the crisis; there inevitably has to be a dialogue. India has consistently underscored the importance of mutual trust, engagement, dialogue and reconciliation to address all issues related to the ongoing conflict.

We therefore call upon all stakeholders to purposefully take the opportunity provided by the mediation efforts of the African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa, His Excellency Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo. We welcome his meeting with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and take note of his visit to Mekelle. He also briefed the AU Peace and Security Council this morning. We also welcome the engagement

of countries of the region in that process. We urge all sides to exercise restraint and work together in order to build the trust and confidence that could pave the way for dialogue.

The political and economic stability of Ethiopia is paramount not only to the Horn of Africa, but to the entire African continent. It is in the interests of the region that the current politico-military situation be resolved within the constitutional framework of Ethiopia. In that regard, we support the initiatives of the African Union. It is important that regional initiatives led by the AU be encouraged and actively supported by the Security Council.

In conclusion, India reiterates its strong commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ethiopia.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and High Representative Obasanjo for their briefings.

Estonia is deeply concerned about the recent escalation in northern Ethiopia. Such developments continue to cause civilian casualties, prolong human suffering and risk the stability of the country and the whole region. We call upon the Tigray People's Liberation Front to withdraw its troops from Amhara and Afar, and on the Government of Ethiopia to refrain from air strikes on civilian targets. All parties must do their utmost to protect civilians, including humanitarian and medical workers, in line with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

There is no military solution to the conflict. We call upon all parties to immediately end hostilities without preconditions, engage in negotiations for a lasting ceasefire and create conditions for the start of a political dialogue.

In that context, we would also like to express our full support for the international and regional efforts in achieving a peaceful resolution to the conflict. We encourage the continued engagement of the African Union and support the mediation efforts by High Representative Obasanjo.

The deteriorating humanitarian crisis in the Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions is deeply worrisome, as more and more people are in need of urgent assistance. All parties to the conflict have an obligation to facilitate safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all areas affected by the conflict. It is also essential to restore

basic services and the entry of the fuel, cash and humanitarian supplies needed for aid operations.

We reiterate our deep concern about reported human rights violations and abuses, including widespread sexual and gender-based violence. We welcome the publication of the joint report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. We call for the full implementation of the recommendations of the report and ensuring accountability for the perpetrators. It is now up to the Ethiopian Government to carry out its promises on that.

In conclusion, I would like to express deep regret that, one year after the start of the conflict, the situation in northern Ethiopia has only deteriorated, with expanded hostilities, mounting deaths and suffering of civilians and a catastrophic humanitarian situation. In order to preserve the stability, unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia, all sides must cease the hostilities and solve their differences through a genuine and inclusive national dialogue.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): Let me start by recognizing and thanking the Security Council for releasing the press statement (SC/14691) last Friday calling for a ceasefire and expressing our strong concerns about the situation in Ethiopia. I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing. I also thank Mr. Obasanjo, High Representative of the Chairperson for the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa region, for his briefing, specifically for his on-the-ground reports and efforts in the region. We strongly urge all parties to support and cooperate with him as he works to bring peace and stability to the region.

The conflict in Ethiopia has been ongoing for a full year, and that is a tremendously sad milestone. As my Irish colleague stated earlier, we have really remained silent for too long. Over the past year, we have seen constant violence; we have witnessed widespread human rights abuses and atrocities; we have seen credible, documented and persistent reports from a wide range of sources of looting, displacement, extrajudicial executions, rape and sexual violence as weapons of war; and we have seen the threat of mass starvation loom large as humanitarian aid and medical supplies are delayed and denied from going to civilians who need it most.

The joint report Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission details all of that very clearly. It makes it plain that there have been many human rights violations and abuses. And it demonstrates that the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), the Eritrean Defense Forces, the Amhara regional forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) are all culpable. There are no good guys here; there are only victims on all sides.

That vital report was limited in geography and chronology. Both should be expanded to ensure that more recent allegations from across the region can be investigated and perpetrators held accountable. In the meantime, the violations and abuses documented cannot be tolerated. Suspected individuals need to be removed from active duty pending investigation. Independent bodies must be allowed to investigate and ensure accountability. Humanitarians must be allowed unimpeded access. And the violence must stop.

This is not the Ethiopia that we thought we would see two years ago, when we were applauding the country as the fastest growing economy in Africa. The unity and integrity of the Ethiopian State faces an existential threat from within, and millions of innocent civilians are at risk as the conflict expands and warring parties advance towards Addis Ababa.

It is time for all parties to immediately halt hostilities and refrain from incitement to violence and divisiveness. The bellicose rhetoric and inflammatory language on all sides of the conflict only aggravate the situation and lead to communal violence. It is time for the Government of Ethiopia, the TPLF and all other groups to engage in immediate ceasefire negotiations without preconditions to find a sustainable path towards peace.

It is also long past time for the Eritrean Defense Forces to withdraw from Ethiopian territory. It is time for them to put their weapons down. Let me repeat that: it is time for them to put their weapons down. This war among angry, belligerent men victimizing women and children has to stop.

As we call for peace, I want to address some critics who have said that the United States is biased towards one side of the conflict. Let me be crystal clear. We condemn violence on all sides. We condemn all human rights violations and abuses committed by all sides. We therefore condemn the violence by the ENDF and the

Eritrean Defense Forces, and we condemn the TPLF's violence. We condemn the TPLF's expansion of war outside Tigray. The TPLF must redraw from Afar and Amhara. We call on the TPLF and the Oromo Liberation Army to immediately stop the current advance towards Addis Ababa.

We also call on the Ethiopian Government to respect international humanitarian law. We are not taking sides. Innocent people — innocent Ethiopians — are starving in northern Ethiopia. Withholding food and medical supplies is not acceptable. It is not an acceptable tactic at any time, and, frankly, it is unconscionable, and not what we would expect from Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Government must allow United Nations agencies and their partners to staff their operations with the specialized expertise required to mount an effective response. The reckless expulsion of United Nations officials is an affront to the United Nations and the people of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Government must also investigate the terrible killings of humanitarian and human rights workers and hold those responsible to account. It must also cease all arbitrary detentions and ethnic targeting in Addis Ababa.

Given the nationwide state of emergency, we are concerned about the safety of United States citizens and Government personnel and their dependents. The security of our facilities remains paramount. We will do everything in our power to keep our people safe, but we also ask that the state of emergency not be used as a pretence to attack civilians.

We and everyone here know that the only solution to the conflict is a political solution. To that end, the African Union has an important role to play in resolving the conflict and sustaining regional peace and security. I thank President Obasanjo once again for his efforts. Similarly, we support Kenyan President Kenyatta's 3 November call for all parties to return to political negotiations, as well as his efforts in that regard.

Ultimately, the only ones who can bring lasting peace to Ethiopia are its leaders and its people. Only a broader dialogue about the future of their State, where all of Ethiopia's people are represented, can lead to broader democratic and economic renewal. It is never too late for peace but the longer this conflict goes on, the harder the road to peace becomes and more people will die. As Council members heard from High Representative Obasanjo, the window of opportunity is limited, and time is running out. I urge all parties — I

repeat, all parties — in the strongest possible terms to back away from the brink, lead their people towards peace and resume the development agenda that will lead to prosperity for all Ethiopians.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We listened carefully to the briefings by the High Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, as well as Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo, on the most recent developments in the situation in northern Ethiopia.

We welcome the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to today's meeting.

The Russian Federation has watched with concern as the situation continues to develop in the Ethiopian regions of Tigray, Afar and Amhara, where clashes are under way between Government forces and units of the Tigray Defense Forces and other groups that have joined them, including the Oromo Liberation Army. Fighting around the cities of Dessie and Kombolcha last week clearly showed that ongoing violence will lead to additional casualties and dire humanitarian consequences for civilians.

The continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the areas affected by the hostilities is of particular concern. In Dessie and Kombolcha, where a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons lived prior to the conflict, clashes have led to a rapid rise in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons. As a result of ongoing attacks by the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the total number of civilians in need of humanitarian assistance has already reached 7 million. Humanitarian aid to all regions of the country must be increased. We continue to stress that it must be provided in close coordination with the sovereign Government and in strict accordance with the basic guiding principles of the United Nations.

As we have stated in the past, divisions in Ethiopia run deep and have a complex historical context. Moreover, developments in the country could have a considerable negative impact on the entire region. In that regard, over the past few months, we have called for stakeholders with influence in the region, as well as the media, to act responsibly to avoid escalating the international rhetoric and to refrain from adding fuel to the fire of already spiralling interethnic strife.

We also believe that imposing illegal unilateral sanctions, threatening to use such sanctions and refusing to provide economic assistance are highly counterproductive and will serve only to exacerbate the situation for ordinary people who are already suffering, rather than lead to reconciliation.

There is no other way to resolve the conflict but to support national and regional efforts to end the intra-Ethiopian military confrontation and establish a dialogue, with the aim of restoring peace and achieving gradual socioeconomic stabilization throughout the country. At various points in history, Ethiopians have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to live in inter-ethnic harmony and build a common State. That was confirmed by the holding of peaceful and democratic general elections earlier this year. The high level of support for the country's Government was also demonstrated by recent mass protests in Addis Ababa.

We are aware of the recent mediation efforts of the United Nations and the African Union. Regrettably, as the situation on the ground demonstrates, to date they have failed to yield significant results. In that regard, we hope that Mr. Obasanjo, as an honest and impartial broker, will take the urgent steps necessary to reverse the momentum in the direction of peace. All the necessary signs from the Security Council were conveyed in its press statement, adopted on 5 November (SC/14691).

We also welcome the work conducted in the region by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths. We hope that those efforts will generate momentum for the work of humanitarian personnel on the ground, including with regard to providing unfettered humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to preserving the unity and territorial integrity of the friendly country of Ethiopia. We firmly believe that there can be no other basis for resolving outstanding contentious issues.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Mexico.

I would, of course, like to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and President Obasanjo for their very enlightening briefings.

We convened today's meeting because of our deep concern about the situation in Ethiopia. The advance of

the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the mobilization of the Oromo Liberation Army and the continued aerial bombardment of Mekelle by the Ethiopian army constitute an exponential escalation of hostilities, whose impact is now spreading to the regions of Amhara and Afar.

The recent decision of the Government of Ethiopia to declare a state of emergency clearly demonstrates that if the parties continue the military option, the conflict will spread to the entire country and have serious consequences, not only for the people of Ethiopia, already enduring them, but also for the entire region. That is why we support and encourage regional efforts to find a negotiated solution to the crisis, in particular those of the African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa, President Obasanjo.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, we are concerned about the fact that aerial attacks in Mekelle have already compelled the United Nations to suspend its flights to that city. That has stopped the entry of cash and humanitarian personnel, thereby worsening living conditions for civilians. We are concerned about the fact that although food and basic goods are available for the people of Tigray, they cannot be delivered due to the lack of fuel and money to pay contractors. The Ethiopian Government must provide security guarantees to ensure the resumption of, at the very least, the two weekly flights to Mekelle, which had been operating until a few weeks ago. All parties must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and ensure unfettered access for humanitarian aid, without further delay.

Mexico also takes note of the report of the joint Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights-Ethiopian Human Rights Commission investigation into the conflict in Tigray, which describes attacks on civilians, such as extrajudicial executions, torture and forced disappearances, sexual and gender-based violence, the forced displacement of civilians, the denial of access to humanitarian aid and the arrest and intimidation of journalists, inter alia. Such violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict must be investigated and punished. In that regard, my delegation reiterates the Council's call on all parties to broker a ceasefire and for the right conditions to be established for a national dialogue. Mexico calls for the immediate launch of negotiations, without preconditions of any kind.

Mexico deplors the fact that, in spite of signs of the destructive potential of the conflict and repeated warnings by United Nations agencies about the gravity of the humanitarian situation, the Security Council has been unable to prevent an escalation of the conflict. We are deeply concerned about the use of war-like rhetoric that stokes animosity among ethnic groups. We know where the use of hate speech can lead in such a diverse country.

Nevertheless, we are confident that the Security Council has learned from past mistakes and that, this time, it will assume its responsibility to facilitate a political process that will lead to peace in Ethiopia.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia.

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor and for allowing the participation of my country in this briefing. I also congratulate you on Mexico's presidency of the Council for the month of November.

I recognize the presence of His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo, High Representative of the African Union to the Horn of Africa, and Under-Secretary-General Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo. I thank them both for their briefings.

A year ago, the northern command of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces was attacked from within. The unsuspecting men and women in uniform were slain in the dark hours of 4 November 2020. The long-standing service and sacrifice of the National Defence Forces was rewarded by unprecedented levels of betrayal and a treasonous attack waged by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Ethiopia will never forget those patriots and their service and sacrifice. That day will also go down as a day of infamy in Ethiopia's proud history. In that connection, I would like to extend our thanks to the members of the Council who have stood with my country during this very trying year.

In the past year, we have reversed the military threat posed by TPLF. In parallel, we have made all efforts to provide food and non-food items to people in need in Tigray; we signed a humanitarian assistance agreement with the United Nations; we spent close to 100 million Ethiopian birr for assistance and reconstruction; we declared a humanitarian ceasefire and withdrew our forces; and we implored the treasonous group to hand

over the leaders of its criminal scheme and to leave its rank and file members to live in peace. All of that is proven to be in vain, as it did not help us gain peace.

Today I will not provide the Council with details on the humanitarian assistance we delivered to our people in need. As a result of the continued and now widespread criminal belligerence of the TPLF, the people of Tigray that need urgent humanitarian assistance are not having any aid delivered. The people in the Afar and Amhara regions are rendered vulnerable. Cities and towns are shelled; residents are killed on their doorsteps; citizens are being robbed of the earnings from their toil. True to its unscrupulous and cruel nature, the TPLF is causing terror and mayhem.

As we speak, Ethiopians in the northern part of the country are fending for their lives and the lives of their children. The trucks we sent to Tigray with food and medical supplies are transporting weapons and youth combatants who have been frauded or forced into fighting against their brothers and sisters for no apparent public interest but for the greed-driven political agenda of a few individuals.

We honour and respect the call for political dialogue. It is an approach we fully prescribe to and even applied in resolving many intra- and inter-state disputes.

Inherently, our current situation is not any different. There are deep-seated political differences and grievances in our nascent democracy. We are also a diverse nation and a home to 83 languages and many groups that the headlines do not care to mention, with unaddressed legitimate quests and demands. However, no political group, despite their grievances, has raised an arm against its brethren. No ethnic or political group, despite its unfulfilled demands, has waged war against the motherland.

Diversity is not Ethiopia's problem. Our challenge is not, as some reluctantly posit, a failure to manage diversity. Diversity is Ethiopia's asset. Our problem is a criminal group that refused to accept equality and let go of ill-gained supremacy and privilege. Unfortunately, that group garnered support from many sources: some media outlets in the West and some staff members and leaders of international organizations openly support the group. It may come as a surprise that we sometimes learn the motives and next steps of the group from statements and speeches by high-placed officials within those entities.

As members may recall, even the Council was made to convene over false reports alleging heinous crimes, including the use of hunger as a weapon of war. Thankfully, the truth has come out and those malicious accusations have been dispelled by the report of the joint investigation by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Our plea to members of the international community, States and non-State actors to refrain from providing moral and material support went unheeded.

The TPLF became emboldened and numbed itself to an extent. It stopped counting the lives of the Ethiopians from Tigray whom it sacrificed on its hopeless journey. It is now emboldened to a level where it threatens to unseat a popularly elected Federal Government and destabilize a nation of 112 million people. Once again, we reiterate our plea to the group's supporters — who have been providing it with communications equipment, satellite information, weapons and even fighters — to desist from that not only illegal but immoral act.

Ethiopia is pained. What we have gone through at the hands of that criminal group will require intergenerational efforts to heal. For that, Ethiopia needs its children to engage in dialogue and reconcile. We have, time and again, expressed our readiness and explained our preparations for a national political dialogue. Had it not been for the bloodshed caused by the TPLF, even the political future of that group would have had a prospect of resolution through dialogue.

In line with our commitment, we entertained the offers for support and undertook to work with all of our

friends to learn from their experiences and draw the available and relevant lessons and support. We accepted the High Representative of the African Union to the Horn of Africa and assisted him in his role. We believe that the regional solution is best placed to support us in getting out of the problem,

That being said, our route to dialogue and a political solution will not be straightforward or easy. For now, we are focused on halting the TPLF and rescuing and reaching our public, which has suffered immensely under the group's cruel and deceptive methods. In that regard, we remind everyone concerned that there are no two parties here. There is a Government representing the will of the Ethiopian people and representing the Ethiopian State; and there is a group advancing its greedy and criminal cause through atrocities. Any attempt, including the media campaign we have been witnessing in the past few days, to launder the TPLF and diminish the horrors it has committed against the Ethiopian people will only be counterproductive.

Out of our conviction in peaceful solutions to all disputes, we will keep engaging all well-meaning actors, the AU High Representative and regional leaders. In the course of this process, we hope that we will have the understanding of the Council and its membership. I assure Council members that my country will prevail, as it has in the past, in the face of all adversities.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.