

ENGLISH VERSION

To:

President of the Council

Charles Michel

President of the Commission

Ursula Von der Leyen

President of the European Parliament

David Sassoli

Brussels, 23 November 2020

Dear Excellencies Michel, Von der Leyen and Sassoli,

Re: Call to the EU to urgently engage in peace efforts for the Horn of Africa

The European Union must immediately **appoint senior High-level Envoys for the Horn** to engage in and provide support to international, in particular African, efforts to curb the crisis in the Horn of Africa.

The UN has called for an immediate ceasefire of all hostilities. According to the UN, 4.000 people a day are fleeing to Sudan from Ethiopia. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr Filippo Grandi, has called for a humanitarian corridor to reach the 96.000 refugees and internally displaced persons in refugee camps in Sudan and in Northern Ethiopia. The UN is already preparing to receive 200.000 refugees in Sudan. An old refugee camp, that served during the 1984 famine, is sadly brought in use again. The UN Secretary General, Mr António Guterres, has stated the hope that “Ethiopia will be able to find the peace it needs for its development and the well-being of its people.”

This crisis rightly has the full attention of the African continent. The Chairperson of the African Union, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, has appointed three elder statespersons as envoys: Mr Joaquim Chissano, former President of the Republic of Mozambique; Madame Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, former President of the Republic of Liberia, and Mr Kgalema Motlanthe, former President of the Republic of South Africa - as Special Envoys of the African Union. Their efforts should be supported.

Unfortunately, military interventions are not the only problem in the region. After the lost harvest due to the destruction by locust swarms, food reserves are in severe jeopardy. The conflict is now contributing to an already dire situation. A new famine of most severe proportions is looming. The current crisis comes on top of the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving children out of school for six months already. It affects tens of thousands of children in precarious situations, often separated from parents and guardians.

Ethiopia is globally renowned for its world cultural heritage representing one of the oldest human civilisations of which Ethiopians and Africans are rightly proud. The UNESCO world heritage site in Aksum, other heritage sites and religious centres are now under threat. This tragedy is compounded by a terrible loss of civilians, including women and children, sexual violence, mass forced displacement and a refugee crisis.

This regional crisis in the Horn requires the immediate attention of the EU at the highest level. The EU should call on the experience of statespersons to contribute as High-level Envoys to the efforts of the African Union and the UN.



Prof. Dr Mirjam van Reisen, Professor International Relations, Innovation and care, Tilburg University, The Netherlands

Greet Vanaerschot, Secretary General, Pax Christi International

Agnes van Ardenne, former Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation and former Dutch Ambassador to the Food and Agri Organisations of the United Nations in Rome

Genoveva Tisheva, Director of the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Bulgaria

Malgorzata Tarasiewicz, Director Network of East-West Women, Poland

Juan Santos Vara, Professor of Public International Law and Jean Monnet, University of Salamanca, Spain

Prof. Dr Conny Rijken, Professor of Human Trafficking and Globalization, Tilburg University, The Netherlands

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William Grech, KOPIN Supporting Refugees in Malta, Malta

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