

February 4, 2021

The Honorable Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Marc.Garneau@international.gc.ca

Dear Minister Garneau,

Greetings on behalf of Canadian member organizations of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of more than 150 churches and church-related organisations working together in over 140 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of impoverished and marginalised people regardless of religion, politics, gender, race or nationality, in accordance with the highest international codes and standards. We hope this finds you and your staff well in these difficult times. Please accept our congratulations on your appointment to a new role in Cabinet as Minister of Foreign Affairs. We wish you success in this role as the world continues to address challenging issues in pandemic times.

Our faith communities hold long-standing relationships with partners around the world working for peace, justice and human rights, particularly for the most vulnerable: women, children, displaced peoples, and human rights defenders impacted by conflict, violence and injustice.

We write today with deep pain and concern for the people suffering in the current humanitarian crisis facing the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The crisis has reached an alarming stage, and it is urgent that Canada respond quickly to help bring the suffering to an end.

In a statement released by the [Norwegian Refugee Council](#), [Secretary General Jan Egeland](#) warned: “In all my years as an aid worker, I have rarely seen a humanitarian response so impeded and unable to deliver in response for so long, to so many with such pressing needs. As an international community, we are clearly failing to deliver against the humanitarian imperative we are facing.” Unless quick action is taken, the danger of a protracted armed conflict and even greater suffering looms. Canada has a strong relationship with the Ethiopian Government, and Ethiopia is one of the highest recipients of Canadian official development assistance, some of which is programmed through Canadian churches and civil society. Canada can join allies like the European Union and Norway in taking immediate steps to help end the crisis in Ethiopia.

We urge Canada to:

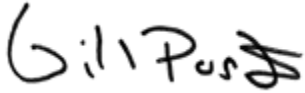
- Call on the Ethiopian government to provide unhindered, immediate, sustained and full access to the entire Tigray region for the delivery of humanitarian aid to all civilians affected by the fighting in the region, including Eritrean refugees;
- Call for an immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties; and
- Call on the Eritrean government to withdraw its troops from the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

Thank you for your response to this urgent issue. We look forward to your response, and the possibility of working with you to promote international humanitarian law.

Sincerely,



Karin Achtelsetzer, Executive Director
Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR)



Will Postma, Executive Director
Primate's World Relief and Development (PWRDF)



Guy Smagghe, Director
Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D)



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