

LCLI CHRONICLE

IMPORTANT PREFACE

On occasion, it is appropriate to notify Fellows of the Leading Causes of Life Initiative of a particularly significant concern that one or other of us has and wants all of us to know about. This is the case with a letter sent to me by Horst Kleinschmidt.

Written to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cape Town, noting that it has already been discussed with the Anglican Archbishop Mokgoba (a post previously held by Archbishop Desmond Tutu) and Fr Michael Lapsely (one of our LCLI Fellows), it concerns what is happening in Tigray, northern Ethiopia.

The letter is self-explanatory. Below it are the original attachments to which it refers. Here I wish to acknowledge Horst's wish to share it with us all, to encourage you each to reflect on its substance, and ask you to see it as an invitation for the future to share with us all in a similar manner perspectives we might otherwise not get.

Jim Cochrane

'Concerning Genocide in the Making: Tigray'

Dear Archbishop Breslin,

The dire situation now unfolding in the Tigray region of Ethiopia is the burden on my missive to you. An unprecedented war in which civilians are the prime victims started some three months ago. It is with the utmost urgency that South African civil society, and faith communities in particular speak out and call for a cessation of the attack on Tigray - from the south, by the Ethiopian army, from the north by the army of the country of Eritrea and from the west by Sudanese militia. This is not least facilitated by drone-bombing supplied to Ethiopia by the UAE, in turn supplied by the USA. Chinese made drone-bombs are also in evidence.

No journalists or independent human rights observers have been allowed into Tigray. Reports from the BBC offer a small glimpse into the atrocities. Those who are fleeing to neighbouring countries tell the tale. Otherwise all information depends on social media - here in Cape Town between Ethiopian refugee WhatsApp etc families and loved-ones in the war zone, or in Addis Ababa. Images tell of mutilations of hands or arms. The raping of women and abuse of children takes place, sometimes in public spaces.

Two monasteries have been bombed, as has the oldest mosque in Africa and been destroyed. The number of casualties admitted to is only a fraction of those who have died so far.

The EU, USA, UK and some other countries have condemned what is going on but African Governments have remained silent, including the AU, until recently chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa. It is so important that African voices of all levels of society speak out.

[Cont. PTO]

A delegation of three Ethiopians based in Cape Town are briefing religious leaders, the media and others since early this week. They are a retired Ambassador of Ethiopia to the UK who due to covid is located here but now applying for political asylum. He is Ambassador Haile Abera. Second is Mrs Lula Gabreyesus, a refugee from Eritrea resident in Cape Town for the past 25 years. And Mr Mussie Tesfaye Bertha, an Ethiopian business man based in Cape Town and refugee from his country.

Who am I the writer of this mail? As a life-long fighter for liberty and human rights in our own country, I see it as a civic duty to raise the alarm when fellow Africans are subjected to ethnic or other wars or when populations are subjected to violations as is happening in Tigrai right now. To establish my credentials may I point you to my website as indicated below. I am acting in my own persona and seek no benefit or favour to assist the above persons.

Earlier this week we briefed Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, facilitated by Fr. Michael Lapsley. The Archbishop strongly urged us to communicate with you to be briefed by the delegation about the situation. Several other initiatives are also under way, including the briefing of senior journalists.

Archbishop, would you kindly afford us an opportunity over coming days to brief you? We seek half an hour of your time.

We look forward to your reply.

For your information we attached are several recent and relevant public documentations.

We thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Horst Kleinschmidt
www.horstkleinschmidt.co.za

Links:

- BBC view: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55832711>
- Axum massacre: [personal account of Axum massacre](#)
- Memorandum (3 Ethiopians): [Briefing about Tigrai](#)
- Human Rights Watch: [Ethiopian unlawful shelling](#)
- Eritrea Hub: [Martin Plaut – Eritrea Hub](#)
- Facebook info: https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1060288644493353&id=261522124370013&anchor_composer=false