

Question for written answer E-001019/2021/rev.1

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 138

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Subject: What tools does the VP/HR have to stop sexual violence in Tigray?

In early 2021 the UN started receiving reports of rape and other forms of sexual assault being used as a weapon in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia. There have, for example, been reports of large numbers of rapes in Tigray's capital, Mekelle, which the Ethiopian Government – led by Prime Minister and Nobel Prize laureate Abiy Ahmed – claims to control. There is also evidence of women being forced to commit sex acts in order to obtain basic supplies from troops.

The conflict in Tigray is escalating and may pose a threat to regional stability throughout East Africa. In the past 10 years the EU has given Ethiopia more than EUR 1 billion in aid, but recently money has stopped being sent because humanitarian organisations have consistently been refused access to people in need in the conflict zone in Tigray, and after refugee camps were set on fire.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has not thus far acknowledged that international law has been broken during his government's tenure.

What tools can the Vice-President / High Representative for Foreign Affairs use to persuade Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to assume responsibility for these horrific crimes and to put a stop to the use of rape as a weapon in the conflict in Tigray?