

File No. 210189

Committee Item No. _____

Board Item No. 38

COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Date: _____

Board of Supervisors Meeting

Date: March 2, 2021

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Prepared by: Lisa Lew

Date: February 26, 2021

Prepared by: _____

Date: _____

1 [Urging Congress to Introduce and Pass a Resolution Calling for Immediate Ceasefire and
2 Respect for Human Rights in Tigray, Ethiopia]

3 **Resolution urging the United States Congress to introduce and pass a Resolution**
4 **calling for peace and respect for human rights in Tigray; condemning human rights**
5 **violations and violence against the people of Tigray; urging the Ethiopian government**
6 **to immediately restore all forms of communication, critical services, and allow**
7 **unimpeded, sustained, and secured access for humanitarian aid; and urging the United**
8 **Nations to undertake a full and independent investigation into the atrocities in Tigray**
9 **and to employ all preventative and diplomatic efforts to protect civilians in the region**
10 **and address the humanitarian crisis.**

11
12 WHEREAS, Ethiopia, located in east Africa, is a landlocked country bordered by Eritrea
13 to the north, Sudan to the west, Kenya to the south, and Somalia to the east; and

14 WHEREAS, There are 10 regional states with over 80 different languages within
15 Ethiopia, the second most populous country in Africa; and

16 WHEREAS, Tigray regional state, located in the northern part of Ethiopia, bordered by
17 Eritrea to the north, Sudan to the west, the Amhara regional state to the south, and the Afar
18 regional state to the east, represent nearly 7 million people with half of the population less
19 than 18 years of age and approximately 13 percent of the population representing children
20 less than 5 years of age; and

21 WHEREAS, The Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response plan for the Ethiopia
22 Situation (Tigray) report, the Tigray region of Ethiopia included 96,000 registered Eritrean
23 refugees, approximately 100,000 Ethiopian internally displaced persons, 500,000 people
24 dependent on food relief assistance, and 1 million people received safety net assistance prior
25 to the start of the war; and

1 WHEREAS, After the resignation of the former elected Prime Minister of Ethiopia,
2 Hailemariam Desalegn, Abiy Ahmed became the transitional Prime Minister of Ethiopia on
3 April 2, 2018; and

4 WHEREAS, On June 5, 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia agreed to sign
5 and implement the peace accord between Ethiopia and Eritrea as specified in the Algiers
6 Agreement; and

7 WHEREAS, In late 2019, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed denounced the ruling coalition of
8 Ethiopia, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front and created a new political
9 party, Prosperity Party, of which Tigray regional state was not a part; and

10 WHEREAS, In early 2020, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed postponed national elections to
11 unknown future date and the Tigray regional government rejected the postponement of
12 elections and considered the extension of the term of the Federal Government to be
13 unconstitutional; and

14 WHEREAS, Under the ruling of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopia has been troubled
15 by multiple human rights and humanitarian challenges, including targeted ethnic violence,
16 natural disasters, and political unrest, leading to the internal displacement of more than 1.8
17 million Ethiopians in 2020 alone; and

18 WHEREAS, In accordance with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
19 constitution, the Tigray region held an election on September 9, 2020, and 2.7 million
20 registered voters elected their regional state government and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed
21 subsequently deemed the Tigray region elections illegitimate and denied Tigray federal
22 budget subsidies totaling \$281 million unconstitutional; and

23 WHEREAS, On November 4, 2020, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed declared war on the
24 Tigray region and ordered military offensive by Ethiopian National Defense Force, military and
25 militia forces from regions of Ethiopia including Amhara and Afar regions, foreign forces

1 including Eritrean Defense Force and Somalian Army, and utilized precision guided drones
2 operated by United Arab Emirates; and

3 WHEREAS, On November 4, 2020, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed declared a 6-month
4 state of emergency in the region of Tigray and ordered a complete shutdown of travel to and
5 from Tigray, electricity, banking, internet, telephone service, waterline, food supply, and
6 journalists and independent external organizations have not been allowed to enter and report
7 from Tigray region; and

8 WHEREAS, Amnesty International confirmed that from November 9 - 10, 2020, brutal
9 massacres took place in a small town, Mai Kadra, on innocent civilians, “who appeared to be
10 day laborers in no way involved in the ongoing military offensive,” causing a mass civilian
11 migration to neighboring Sudan; and

12 WHEREAS, As of February 15, 2020, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
13 has recorded over 61,000 refugees at the border entry points in Eastern Sudan from Tigray,
14 Ethiopia and listed 31% as children, 64% as adults and 5% as elderly; and

15 WHEREAS, Despite the Ethiopian government declaring victory without any civilian
16 harm and complete control of Tigray region on November 28, 2020, the war continues, and
17 three Ethiopian opposition political parties have reported over 52,000 civilian death to date;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, According to the Tigray Emergency Coordination Center meeting held on
20 January 8, 2020, United Nations staff and local federally elected officials report nearly 4.5
21 million people, including 2.2 million internally displaced people need emergency food aid and
22 are endanger of extreme hunger and famine; and

23 WHEREAS, On December 2, 2020, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed reached an agreement
24 with the United Nations to allow unimpeded access for aid organizations in Tigray, however,
25 on December 8, 2020, AP News reported that “Ethiopian security forces shot at and detained

1 United Nations staffers as they tried to reach part of the embattled Tigray region” and the
2 Federal Government has continued to significantly constrained access to Tigray region since;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, The United States Agency for International Development Famine Early
5 Warning System Network has classified most of Tigray as in “crisis” and parts as in
6 “emergency” which is one step away from “famine” levels, due to limited access to food and
7 income; and

8 WHEREAS, The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Right report receiving
9 allegations concerning violations of international humanitarian law and human right law,
10 including artillery strikes on populated areas, the deliberate targeting of civilians, extrajudicial
11 killings and widespread looting; and

12 WHEREAS, The United Nations Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect and
13 the Acting Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide have expressed deep concern over
14 “reports of incidents of ethnically and religiously motivated hate speech, incitement of violence
15 and serious human rights violations including arbitrary arrests, killings, displacement of
16 populations and destruction of property in various parts of the country,” stressing that the
17 ethnically motivated attacks and reported ethnic profiling of citizens constitute “a dangerous
18 trajectory” that heightens the risk of atrocity crimes; and

19 WHEREAS, According to international human rights organizations, Tigrayans living in
20 Ethiopia outside of Tigray have been suspended from their jobs and prevented from leaving
21 the country, and there are reports of surveillance and mass arrests of citizens of Ethiopia
22 based on their ethnicity; and

23 WHEREAS, The historic Al Nejashi Mosque, one of the world’s earliest and the first
24 mosque in Africa built in the fourth century by the companions of Prophet Mohammed, was
25 bombed and looted by Ethiopian Defense Force and Eritrean Defense Force; and

1 WHEREAS, Those who fled the town of Aksum to Mekelle, Tigray report the historic
2 cathedral complex where The Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion reputedly houses the Ark of
3 the Covenant, was the scene of a recent massacre of 750 people after Ethiopian Federal
4 troops and Amhara Region Militia approached The Church of Our lady Mary of Zion; and

5 WHEREAS, The majority of the population of Tigray has little access to running water
6 or electricity and in places like Adigrat, a city of 140,000 persons, there are only two wells left
7 out of 21; and

8 WHEREAS, According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of
9 Humanitarian Affairs, “the health system in Tigray is reportedly collapsing” and the Ethiopian
10 Health Minister Lia Tadesse confirmed “so many health facilities have been looted” and the
11 assessment carried out by international aid agencies report conclude out of “Tigray’s 40
12 hospitals, 11 were fully functional, 9 were partly functioning, 14 were not working at all, and 6
13 were not assessed” and only 30 out of 280 ambulances were available; and

14 WHEREAS, The United Nations Special Representative Pramila Patten expressed
15 great concern over the “serious allegations of sexual violence and accounts of individuals
16 being forced to rape family members or to have sex with members of the military in exchange
17 for basic goods” and doctors at Mekelle’s main hospital, Ayder Referral Hospital, report rape
18 survivors as young as 12 years old are turning up injured and in tears as they seek
19 counseling, treatment, and safety from Ethiopian and Eritrean troops and Amhara Region
20 militias; and

21 WHEREAS, On February 11, 2021, the International Crisis Group reports that west
22 Tigray is now patrolled by Amhara security forces, while some towns in both the west and
23 south are being run by Amhara administrators and Amhara nationalists claim these parts of
24 Tigray as rightly belonging to their region; and

1 WHEREAS, On December 8, 2020, Reuters reported that the “United States
2 government source and five regional diplomats” told them that the United States believes
3 Eritrean Soldiers have crossed into Ethiopia to help Prime minister Abiy Ahmed’s government
4 battle the Tigray Defense Force; and

5 WHEREAS, On January 7, 2021, Reuters report senior Ethiopian general confirmed
6 Eritrean troops had entered the country uninvited while the Ethiopian Defense Force were
7 battling the Tigray Defense Force in the northern region of Tigray; and

8 WHEREAS, The United States State Department received credible reports of Eritrean
9 forces launching artillery attacks, looting, sexual violence, and assaults in refugee camps and
10 other human rights abuses and has urged the Eritrean troops to leave Tigray immediately,
11 however, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Eritrean government have denied all
12 accusations and have refused to leave Tigray, Ethiopia; and

13 WHEREAS, According to the Joint Statement released on February 8, 2021, the
14 European Union joined the United States’ call for the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from
15 Ethiopia and expressed deep concerns for the tragic humanitarian crisis unfolding in Tigray,
16 Ethiopia; and

17 WHEREAS, According to The New Humanitarian, the United Nations, the United
18 States, the European Union, and several other international organizations and human rights
19 groups have repeatedly called for unimpeded, unfettered, or unhindered access for aid
20 agencies to make assessments and deliver food and other humanitarian aid, however,
21 agreements with the Federal Government of Ethiopia have not delivered as hoped, leading to
22 a state of paralysis in the relief effort and access remains a challenge to more than 80 percent
23 of Tigray region; and

24
25

1 WHEREAS, Leaders from various nations, including Chancellor Angela Merkel from
2 Germany, President Emmanuel Macron from France, President Paul Kagame from Rwanda
3 have made statements condemning the violence in Tigray; and

4 WHEREAS, United States Congress members including Senator Elizabeth Warren,
5 Senator Michael Bennet, Senator Cory Booker, Congressman Jason Crow, Senator Ben
6 Cardin, Senator Ed Markey, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, Director of Domestic Policy
7 Council Susan Rice, Secretary of State Antony Blinken among others have all made
8 statements condemning the violence on the people of Tigray; and

9 WHEREAS, The European Union has suspended nearly \$110 million in budgetary aid
10 to Ethiopia due to concerns of the Federal Government of Ethiopia handling of the war in
11 Tigray, Ethiopia; and

12 WHEREAS, The Tigray humanitarian crisis has received relatively little attention from
13 the international community despite the extensive human suffering, sexual violence and
14 displacement; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors acknowledges and
16 expresses its grave concern for the human suffering, sexual violence, and displacement
17 impacting the people of Tigray; and, be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors condemns the
19 ongoing violence and human rights abuses in Tigray; and, be it

20 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors stands in
21 solidarity with the people of Tigray and with the Ethiopian immigrant and refugee community
22 around the world and in particular here in San Francisco; and, be it

23 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges the
24 Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front to cease all
25 hostilities, protect the human rights of all Ethiopians, and pursue a peaceful resolution of the

1 conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, and to immediately and fully restore electricity,
2 banking, telephone, and internet service in the Tigray region; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges the United
4 States Congress to introduce and pass a Resolution, similar to the now defunct S. Res. 798,
5 calling for peace and respect for human rights in Tigray; restoration of internet, phone and
6 other critical services to the region; and immediate diplomatic steps to prevent further mass
7 atrocities in Ethiopia; and, be it

8 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors calls upon the
9 United Nations to undertake a full and independent investigation into the atrocities in Tigray
10 and to employ all preventative and diplomatic efforts to protect civilians in the region and
11 address the humanitarian crisis; and, be it

12 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board is directed to transmit this
13 Resolution to the Office of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the Office of U.S Senator Diane Feinstein,
14 the Office of U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, and the United Nations special adviser on the
15 prevention of genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, and United Nations High Commissioner for
16 Refugees spokesperson Filippo Grandi.

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Introduction Form

By a Member of the Board of Supervisors or Mayor

Time stamp
or meeting date

I hereby submit the following item for introduction (select only one):

- 1. For reference to Committee. (An Ordinance, Resolution, Motion or Charter Amendment).
- 2. Request for next printed agenda Without Reference to Committee.
- 3. Request for hearing on a subject matter at Committee.
- 4. Request for letter beginning : "Supervisor inquiries"
- 5. City Attorney Request.
- 6. Call File No. from Committee.
- 7. Budget Analyst request (attached written motion).
- 8. Substitute Legislation File No.
- 9. Reactivate File No.
- 10. Topic submitted for Mayoral Appearance before the BOS on

Please check the appropriate boxes. The proposed legislation should be forwarded to the following:

- Small Business Commission
- Youth Commission
- Ethics Commission
- Planning Commission
- Building Inspection Commission

Note: For the Imperative Agenda (a resolution not on the printed agenda), use the Imperative Form.

Sponsor(s):

Subject:

The text is listed:

Signature of Sponsoring Supervisor: