

PHM Global call to action to protect health workers in the war-torn Tigray, Northern Ethiopia

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It is now almost two years since the [fighting](#) between Tigray regional forces and Allied Forces namely Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF), Eritrean Defence Forces and Amhara non-state actors broke out in Tigray, in early November 2020. Ethiopian government declared unilateral humanitarian ceasefires [on June, 28th 2021](#) and [on March 24th, 2022](#). Nevertheless, its forces together with their Eritrean allies still maintain the siege sealing off Tigray from rest of the world, and imposed "[a de facto humanitarian aid blockade](#)" as stated by the UN in July 2021. The Allied Forces used [food, health care, and gender based violence](#) as weapon of war in Tigray.

Health workers in Tigray are working in a collapsed health system. Tigray Regional health Bureau (TRHB) revealed that 78% of health posts, 72% of health centres, and 80% of hospitals were [destroyed](#) as of January 2022. Moreover, [85-90 percent of health centres](#) were partially or fully non-functional; and [90 percent](#) of ambulances were either destroyed or looted. Health workers and other employees in Tigray are now without salary since June 2021, and they cannot access their savings or receive remittance from family and friends abroad due to the bank closure. Thus, it was not surprising to learn the disperse of 22,000 of 25,000 health workers as reported by Dr Hagos Godefay, former head of the TRHB, in his [interview](#) with BBC Tigrigna on 4 November 2021. We have also learned the death of three [MSF health workers](#), 23 [UN aid workers](#), and 37 [Tigray health workers](#); and displacement of at least [2,000 health workers](#) in a single IDP centre.

PHM has raised the dire situation in Tigray in its previous [call](#), condemns the targeted attack of health workers and health facilities in the region, and call on all State and non-State parties to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. PHM is committed to the safety and security, health and human rights of health workers in conflicts and war situations and humanitarian settings.

Therefore, PHM global demands:

1. Immediate release of the health workers' salaries, access to bank to use their hard-earned savings, access to electricity, and access to health services, mobile network, and internet connections.
2. UN, WHO, UNICEF, and other organizations to provide aid to ensure access to food, medicines and basic health services to victims
3. State and non-state actors, and international, national, and multinational organizations to induce peaceful negotiations
4. Accountability to Ethiopian and Eritrean forces along with Amhara militia who performed targeted attacks to health facilities and personnel.



Health for All Now!
People's Health Movement

PHM has been committed to providing support, solidarity, and standing with the health workers who have been working in such difficult situations without salaries and lack of health services, and with the people of Tigray in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, amidst a worsening humanitarian situation.