
Joint Statement by Tigrayan Women Human Rights Defenders, Women-Led Civil Society Organizations, Women's Movements, and Community Groups on the African Women's Day

31 July 2026

Today, on the African Women's Day, we stand in solidarity with women and girls across Africa and the global African diaspora. We celebrate our resilience, leadership, knowledge, and contributions to building more just, peaceful, and inclusive societies. At the same time, we draw urgent attention to the ongoing plights faced by Tigrayan women and girls, whose rights, dignity, and futures continue to be threatened by the enduring consequences and continued threats of war, forced displacement, and structural discrimination.

The experiences of African women and girls are diverse, yet many are united by shared struggles against racism, exclusion, war, poverty, gender-based violence, and unequal access to opportunities. For Tigrayan women and girls, these challenges have been compounded by one of the most devastating genocidal wars in recent African history.

Millions of Tigrayan women and girls have survived systematic conflict-related sexual violence, forced displacement, family separation, and the deliberate destruction of livelihoods. Many continue to face severe restrictions to accessing healthcare, psychosocial support, justice, education, and economic opportunities. Survivors have shown extraordinary courage, yet too many remain without adequate support or meaningful accountability for the egregious violations committed against us.

The future of Tigrayan girls also remains uncertain. The deliberate destruction of schools during the genocidal war, continuing blockade by the Ethiopian government, widespread poverty, forced displacement, and continued instability have disrupted education for an entire generation. Every girl denied education is denied the opportunity to fully participate in rebuilding her community and shaping her future.

Despite these immense challenges, Tigrayan women continue to lead. Women have organized humanitarian responses, supported survivors, rebuilt communities, defended human rights, promoted peace, sustained households, and preserved social cohesion under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Our leadership deserves recognition, protection, and investment—not marginalization.

On African Women's Day, we call for:

- Safe, voluntary, dignified, informed return of the displaced to their rightful and historical lands.
- Lifting of the blockade by the Ethiopian government.
- Meaningful participation of Tigrayan women in all peacebuilding, governance, recovery, and political decision-making processes.
- Comprehensive support for survivors of systematic conflict-related sexual violence, including accessible healthcare, psychosocial services, legal assistance, and sustainable livelihoods.

- Independent, impartial, and survivor-centered accountability for grave human rights violations committed during the genocidal war.
- Accelerated investment in rebuilding schools, expanding educational opportunities, and ensuring safe, inclusive learning environments for girls.
- Increased financial and technical support for women-led organizations and movements as well as grassroots initiatives that continue to serve communities despite limited resources and extraordinarily difficult circumstances.
- Stronger protection of women human rights defenders, journalists, peacebuilders, and civil society actors working to advance peace, justice and human rights.
- Long-term investments in economic empowerment, digital inclusion, climate resilience, and leadership opportunities for women and girls.

African Women's Day reminds us that recognition must be accompanied by action. True equality requires confronting the intersecting forms of discrimination and violence that continue to affect millions of African women and girls, including those in Tigray.

We reaffirm that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without justice. Recovery cannot be inclusive without women. Development cannot be sustainable while girls remain excluded from education, protection, and opportunity.

Today, we honor the strength, dignity, and determination of African women and girls. We recognize their contributions not merely as survivors of wars and poverty, but as leaders, educators, caregivers, entrepreneurs, human rights defenders, and architects of peace.

**Our voices matter.
Our rights matter.
Our leadership matters.**

On this African Women's Day, we renew our commitment to working alongside women and girls across Africa to build societies founded on equality, justice, dignity, and lasting peace.

Signed:

Organizations and Movements:

- Gender Empowerment Movement Tigray
- MEQ'UH Tigray - A Platform for Women By Women
- Omna Tigray
- Tinsae Humanitarian Organization (THCO)
- Yikhono: A Movement to End Gender Based Violence

Individuals:

- Batseba Seifu
- Genet Tekle
- Jerusalem Barnabas
- Rita Kahsay
- Toyba Yimam