



## **An Open Letter to**

**H.E. Filippo GRANDI**

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

**Case Postale 2500 CH-1211 Genève 2 Dépôt**

**SUISSE**

**Date: 12/10/2021**

**Excellency, Filippo GRANDI**

Red Sea Afar Human Rights Organisation along with the undersigned civil society organisations, are writing to express our grave and deep concern about the deteriorating security, humanitarian, and human rights situations, as well as the safety and well-being of Eritrean Afar Refugees living in Barahle district, zone 2 of the Afar Regional State, as a result of the ongoing armed conflict in Barahle. Since 1995, approximately 52,000 Red Sea Afar refugees have been residing in the districts of Barahle and Aysaita as refugees.

They have fled their home country because they are afraid of being persecuted, imprisoned, arbitrarily tortured, harassed, and unlawfully killed by the Eritrean dictatorial regime for politically and racially motivated reasons, such as systematic marginalisation, exclusion, gross human rights violations, and suspensions for being members or sympathisers of the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organisation (RSADO).

Those who have registered themselves with Ethiopia's Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are yet to be resettled to a third safe country.

In the last year since the conflict started November 2020, the Eritrean refugees residing in refugee camps in the Tigray Region were killed, tortured, and abused by the warring parties.

Both Human Rights Watch (16/09/21) and Al Jazeera (17/07/21) reported and documented these abuses and crimes, confirming that the "Eritrean government forces and Tigray Militias have committed killings, rape, and other grave abuses against Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia's Tigray Region".

As a result, the RSAHRO is highly concerned that the same forces fighting with local Afars could carry out the same horrendous massacres, human rights violations, and suffering against Red Sea Afar refugees residing in the district of Barahle due to their ethnic and nationality grounds.

The RSAHRO calls on the UNHCR, the international community, the Ethiopian federal government, and the Afar Regional State to provide emergency life-saving evacuation and security for these refugees, who are in grave danger of becoming victims of the ongoing deadly conflict in Barahle.

The RSAHRO demands that the UNHCR provide legal and physical protection to these refugees by resettling them in a third safe country where their human rights, fundamental freedoms, liberty, and dignity can be guaranteed and protected under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees.

Please accept, Your Excellency, our assurances of the highest consideration.

Red Sea Afar Human Rights Organisation

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## HyperLinks:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/16/ethiopia-eritrean-refugees-targeted-tigray>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/29/eritreans-refugees-rally-for-relocation-and-protection>

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/eth/160>

[https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/Afar\\_regional\\_report\\_20182019\\_refugee\\_and\\_host\\_community\\_context\\_analysis.pdf](https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/Afar_regional_report_20182019_refugee_and_host_community_context_analysis.pdf) (2018-2019)

<https://www.cangoafar.ca/projects/refugee-assistance/>

<https://hrc-eritrea.org/desperate-eritrean-refugees-in-tigray-and-afar-regions-need-safety-protection-and-urgent-humanitarian-supplies/>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/fighting-ethiopias-afar-forces-54000-people-flee-official-says-2021-07-22/>

## List of Organisations

Red Sea Afar Human Right Organisation (RSAHRO)

Eritrean Diaspora in East Africa (EDEA)

Eritrean Movement for Democracy & Human Rights (EMDHR)

Eritrea Focus (EF)

Bay Area Eritreans for Democratic Change

Dillibo insight

Atrocities Watch Africa

KACE

Foundation for Democracy & Accountable Governance  
(FODAG)

Foundation Human Rights for Eritreans

ERI-SAT

Reclaim Eritrea