
MESERET HADUSH SPEECH AT BREMEN SOLIDARITY AWARD

29TH SEPTEMBER 2025, BREMEN TOWN HALL

Mayor and President of the Senate, Dr Andreas Bovenschulte,
Laudatory Dr Monika Hauser,
Dr Asia Abdulkadir,
Members of the German Bundestag and Bremen Parliament,
Distinguished representatives of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen,
Honorable members of the Advisory Board of the Bremen Solidarity Award
Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends and guests,

All protocol observed,

On behalf of victims of weaponized sexual violence, Hiwyet Charity Organisation, and the hundreds of thousands of people of Tigray who continue to endure unimaginable hardship and pain—thousands who have been forcibly displaced, and the communities that have been fractured—I offer my deepest gratitude for this recognition and the platform you have given us tonight.

Hiwyet means “HEALING” in Tigrinya.

And whilst I stand before you carrying the heavy burden of the pain and suffering of Tigrayan women and girls, I also carry unshakable hope—for meaningful justice, a society free from violence, and deep healing for my community.

To receive this award for our work against systematic, weaponized, gender-based sexual and reproductive violence is a profound honor. It sends a powerful message to survivors: that their suffering is not and will not be ignored. Affirming their fight for dignity and justice is not limited by borders.

Hiwyet Tigray was born out of necessity—and of hope. During the war in Tigray, sexual violence was used deliberately and systematically as a weapon: to terrorize communities, to fracture families, to silence women and girls. Our response was not one of silence, but instead of resilience and solidarity.

This award is a symbol of our Collective Courage—

- Courage of survivors in Tigray who refuse to be silenced,
- Courage of communities who stand together,
- Courage of the young who have sacrificed their lives for freedom and dignity,
- And the courage of our allies who refuse to look away—some of whom are here with us tonight.

Let this recognition be a call to the Tigrayan community: to unite, to heal, and to move forward together. And let it be an invitation to people everywhere to join that solidarity.

Tonight's honor is not for Tigray alone.

It is for every woman, everywhere, who has endured such violations.

It is a bridge connecting Tigray's struggle to the struggles of women across the world—and a call to stand together until such violence ends.

To Mayor Dr Andreas Bovenschulte, distinguished representatives of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen and the people of Bremen, and the supporters of the Bremen Solidarity Award, I extend my heartfelt appreciation—for giving me this stage, for your unwavering commitment to human dignity, and for the honor you bestow upon Hiwyet Tigray today.

Thank you, and as we say in Tigrinya: ትግራይ ትሓዋ!

Meseret Hadush, awardee of the 19th Bremen Solidarity Award

Founder and CEO of Hiwyet Charity Association, Tigray / Ethiopia