

URGENT APPEAL TO STOP WAR IN ETHIOPIA



9 November 2020

- 1.0 As the Horn of Africa Civil Society Forum (HoA Forum), we have grave concerns as to the situation in Ethiopia.
- 2.0 The HoA Forum is a regional network of civil society organisations, working to monitor and expand civic space in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.
- 3.0 In 2018 and 2019, we welcomed Prime Minister Abiy's reforms to open up the civic space within Ethiopia. We are now deeply concerned at the rapid escalation into an armed conflict between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the State of Tigray that will create a humanitarian catastrophe, claim the lives of many Ethiopians, and cause massive displacements.
- 4.0 We are concerned that the violence may spread to other parts of Ethiopia, many of which are already experiencing intercommunal conflict and insecurity.
- 5.0 We are concerned that the violence may expand beyond Ethiopia into the region and cause destabilisation within the region.
- 6.0 We are concerned that the citizen's freedom of speech and access to independent information is constrained. Because, of the blockage of internet, mobile and land-lines communications, information is scarce undermining transparency.
- 7.0 **We believe that this war:**

- a. will only cause death, destruction and suffering to the people of Ethiopia and the people of the Horn of Africa;
- b. can be avoided by de-escalation and diplomatic efforts.

8.0 We urge the AU, IGAD, other regional Institutions; as well as the EU, the USA and UN to:

- a. Speak with one voice to stop military hostilities and to de-escalate the situation;
- b. Encourage the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the State Government of Tigray to step up diplomacy, stop all military and political provocations and engage in dialogue to resolve any differences by peaceful means;
- c. Encourage all parties concerned to refrain from inflammatory and hate speech;
- d. Encourage and support Civil Society and Faith-Based organisation to contribute to the peaceful resolution of the dispute;
- e. Encourage free press, reporting and access to phone, internet and other communication in Ethiopia, including Tigray;
- f. Encourage immediate de-escalation and include all of the governments in the regions in the efforts to ensure that the conflict does not spread within and beyond Ethiopia;
- g. Warn against any involvement of external parties in escalating the situation which is an internal issue to the Federal Government of Ethiopia;
- h. Remind all parties of their obligations under international and humanitarian law and that they will be held accountable for escalation to war and for any human rights and war crimes committed.

SIGNED



Dr Albaqir Mukhtar

Chair Horn of Africa Civil Society Forum