

**CALL FOR DE-ESCALATION OF CONFLICT AND  
PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS  
November 2020**

**We, the undersigned civil society organizations and associations working on human rights issues, gender and women's rights,** acknowledge our unique position and collective power in advancing gender equality and protecting the human rights.

**Condemn-** the prevalence and continued occurrence of violence that has grown into social and economic crisis that has hitherto taken place in different regions of Ethiopia. These ongoing incidents of identity-based killings, displacement and destruction of property are direct violations of the right to life, movement, and personal security, rendering widespread insecurity for all.

**Deeply concerned-** about the recent developments that occurred with regards to military confrontation in the Tigray region, as result in the loss of human life and leave long term effects in the communities and both the short and long term impacts that are likely to spillover beyond the current areas of the conflict as they influence social, economic and political fabric of the polity.

**Recognize-** The geopolitical significance of stability in Ethiopia considering its core status in the Horn of Africa. Though the hostility in Tigray and neighboring areas is a tragedy in itself, we believe that looking at the situation from the variegated impacts of conflicts on men and women, boys and girls, and persons with disability and taking actions accordingly will help reduce harm.

**Acknowledge-** the occurrence of all natural or human-made disasters, conflicts, crises, or wars is detrimental to all humankind. Particularly in conflict areas, women often bear the effects as they are left behind to look after children at home, lose economic means, and the right to live in safe and stable environment and find it difficult to escape and survive in the event of incidents around their areas.

**Witness:** the report by to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), up to 9 million people is at risk of displacement in Tigray and neighboring



areas. The region is home to about 600,000 people waiting for food aid and about 1 million people receiving safety net support, as well as about 100,000 refugees.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the suspension of transportation to the region and the closure of communication options have made it difficult to carry out urgent and timely relief work. As in many parts of the world, where the weakening of social ties due to conflict renders women more vulnerable to sexual and other forms of gender-based violence. In general, women's vulnerability increases during conflict.

Accordingly, we the **undersigned CSOs**:

**Call on all actors involved** for immediate halt of violent confrontation, de-escalation and peaceful resolution of the situation: and play their role in preventing violence, upholding the rule of law, and protection of civilians during conflict and the state of emergency. In terms of human rights, we urge the actors to the conflict to ensure safe access to humanitarian aid including food, health services, communication and transport channels to civilians in the Tigray region, and to continue its commitment to uphold the international conventions signed by our country on the protection of human rights, particularly the rights of women and children. We call on the Government to uphold international conventions signed that defend and protect human rights, humanitarian law principles, including humane treatment of innocent civilians, without any adverse distinction founded on race, color, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria, prohibiting violence to life and person<sup>2</sup>. In line with this, we urge that special attention be given to women, children, the elderly and people living with disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Ethiopia: Situation update [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ethiopia\\_situation\\_report\\_no.1\\_tigray\\_humanitarian\\_update\\_7\\_november\\_2020.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ethiopia_situation_report_no.1_tigray_humanitarian_update_7_november_2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949. CONFLICTS NOT OF AN INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER, ARTICLE 3



**Call on Civil Society Organizations and UN agencies** to partake in facilitating conflict prevention, resolution, and reconstruction and recall the role of civil societies in the prevention of violence; as well as rendering humanitarian aid to civilians that are the victims of violence.

**Call on the media** to remain non-partisan, independent, conduct responsible reporting that refrains from escalating tensions and conflict between political entities to become conflict between ethnicities, thereby harming innocent civilians.

Signed:

1. CARE Ethiopia
2. Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organizations – (CEHRO)
3. Family Service Association (FSA)
4. Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE - Ethiopia)
5. Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA)
6. New Millennium Hope Development Organization (NMHDO)
7. PACT Ethiopia
8. Rohi Weddu Pastoral Women Development Organization
9. Setaweet Movement

