

Madame President,

I am delivering this cross regional joint statement on behalf of over 40 countries.

While recognizing the engagement of the Ethiopian Government during recent visits by senior UN officials, we remain very concerned by allegations of serious human rights violations and abuses, the humanitarian crisis in Tigray and its regional implications. Four months into the conflict, the limitations in accessing Tigray that still exist prevent the sufficient provision of humanitarian assistance to address the needs of people in Tigray, avert the risk of famine and prevent further loss of life. These limitations impede independent and transparent investigations into alleged human rights violations and abuses as well as alleged IHL violations.

We call on Ethiopia to grant unhindered humanitarian access and assistance to the people in need in the conflict region. Access of media and civil society organizations to Tigray should be granted and journalists protected.

We are increasingly concerned about the protection of civilians, including refugees and IDPs, in Tigray and condemn in the strongest terms the reported killings of civilians and acts of sexual violence. The human rights of all people affected by the conflict must be protected, including from abuses involving stigmatization or ethnic profiling and in particular, Eritrean refugees must be protected from refoulement. We call on Ethiopia to hold perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses to account.

We acknowledge and support the important work of the independent Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. We urge Ethiopia to endorse its recommendations and fully implement the independent investigations and judicial proceedings announced to ensure accountability.

We call on Ethiopia to facilitate OHCHR full and unhindered access to Tigray and call on the High Commissioner to keep the council informed.

Finally, we call for the withdrawal of all Eritrean troops from Ethiopia.

We encourage the Government anew to continue its course of political opening and dialogue, also with a view to the upcoming elections. Ethiopia needs peace, as peace in Ethiopia is a cornerstone for peace in the region.

Thank you Madame President.