



# DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 46<sup>th</sup> regular session

Item 2: General Debate

Oral statement

*Delivered by: Nicolas Agostini*

Madam President, Madam High Commissioner,

We are deeply troubled by the situation in **Ethiopia's** Tigray region. While the political dispute between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and its allies is a domestic matter, its implications are not. Violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses associated with armed operations are matters for multilateral discussion.

Since November 2020, a range of actors, including your Office, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, have expressed deep concern over the situation. In other areas, violence has been reported, as in Benishangul-Gumuz.

We urge the government and all those exercising control over parts of the Ethiopian territory to allow unhindered humanitarian access, protect civilians, and allow or launch impartial investigations with a view to ensuring accountability. All parties should refrain from inflammatory remarks and incitement to commit crimes under international law.

We urge the Ethiopian government to engage, rather than dismiss the concerns expressed by UN actors, special procedures, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), states, and NGOs.

Madam President,

Regarding **Tanzania**, we reiterate the concerns a range of actors have expressed over what is becoming a human rights and political crisis. We encourage OHCHR and special procedures to monitor and report on developments, and states to engage the Tanzanian government both bilaterally and publicly, including here at the Council.

Thank you.