



# DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

## UN Human Rights Council – 49<sup>th</sup> regular session

### Item 2: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia

#### Oral statement

*Delivered by: Nicolas Agostini*

Mr. President, Madam High Commissioner,

We welcome your oral update, which shows that the situation in Tigray remains dire. We also [welcome](#) the holding of a special session, on 17 December 2021, and the establishment of an investigative mechanism to address the conflict in Ethiopia in a holistic human rights perspective. The International Commission of Human Rights Experts will shed light on violations committed by all parties in a neutral and objective manner.

We welcome recent positive steps, including the lifting of the state of emergency and the formation of a national dialogue commission. We stress that the national dialogue commission should be inclusive and fully independent. We also underline the need for peace talks.

Mr. President, Madam High Commissioner,

Violations of international law, some of which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, remain widespread. We urge all parties to end the targeting of civilians and to facilitate humanitarian access to bring the current humanitarian crisis to an end.

We urge all parties to protect refugees, including Eritrean refugees in Tigray and Afar, as reports of the latter being targeted by Tigrayan forces have emerged.

Perpetrators of unlawful attacks must be held to account. Civilians, aid workers, and human rights defenders must be protected at all times. Allegations of bias made against humanitarian and human rights organisations, which have a chilling effect and signal that targeting non-combatants is legitimate, must stop.

Lastly, all parties should recognise the findings of the joint OHCHR/Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) [investigation](#) and implement its recommendations, including on accountability.

Thank you for your attention.