



World Council of Churches

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To the World Council of Churches
member churches in Ethiopia

Geneva, February 2, 2021

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of
heaven.*

(Matthew 5:3-10)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, from the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva.

It is with profound sadness and dismay that we are hearing news of instability in the Tigray region, especially in rural areas where large numbers of people are believed to have fled from the recent conflict. The few humanitarian organisations that have reached the affected zones are reporting rising hunger, severe child malnutrition and a looming famine, in the midst of a new desert locust infestation, as well as cases of sexual violence and abuse. It is also our understanding that communications are still shut down in several parts of the region, making coordination of humanitarian response and communication among family and community members more difficult.

We pray with you for the safety of all the people in the region, and particularly for a swift and sustainable return to normalcy in Tigray.

We have also received the troubling news of deadly attacks perpetrated in Beninshangul-Gumuz region, and particularly in the Metekel area, against scores of Amharas, as well as members of Oromo, Shinasha and Agew ethnic communities. Reports from the Ethiopian Human Rights Council as well as from Amnesty International are reporting that more than 500 people, including scores of women and children, have perished during the last five months due to indiscriminate killings and arson attacks. According to survivors of the massacres, the attacks were carefully designed and specifically targeted non-native residents of the region. Amnesty

International reports that the “armed assailants refer to the non-Gumuz ethnic minority communities as ‘Qey’ (literally translated as ‘red’), in apparent reference to their fair skin colour”. More than 100,000 people are reported to have been displaced within the region as a result of these developments.

The ecumenical family stands by your side during these trying and challenging times, and we strongly and unequivocally condemn and deplore such barbaric acts of violence. The WCC conveys its solidarity and support to the churches and people of Ethiopia as they seek to fulfil their essential ministry for justice, peace and human dignity and rights at this difficult and dangerous moment in the life of the nation. We pray that you may experience the presence and the love of God even in the midst of these challenges.

I have written a letter of concern to His Excellency Dr Abiy Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. In my letter, I urged him to bring to justice the perpetrators of these atrocious massacres, to ensure that human rights are restored and respected, and to ensure the safety of communities throughout the country.

We extend to the families of the victims our sincere condolences, and express our solidarity with all those who are suffering and still undergoing traumatic experiences. We shall continue to pray for peace and reconciliation among the people and communities of your troubled country.

May God Almighty continue to strengthen you to "seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14).

Yours in Christ's love,



Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca
Interim General Secretary
World Council of Churches