



World Council of Churches

General Secretariat

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Geneva, February 2, 2021

H.E. Dr Abiy Ahmed Ali
Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
(Matthew 5:9)*

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the World Council of Churches, I am writing to express our concern regarding alarming reports of the conflict in the Tigray region, as well as outbreaks of deadly violence and reports of massacres and other human rights abuses in the Beninshangul-Gumuz Region over the last months.

The few humanitarian organisations that have managed to reach conflict-affected areas in the Tigray region are reporting a dire situation in which millions are at risk of hunger, severe child malnutrition and a looming famine, in the midst of a new desert locust infestation. They are also indicating large displacement of populations, especially in the rural areas, as well as reports of sexual violence and abuses of women and girls. It is also our understanding that communications are still shut down in several parts of the region, which makes an effective response to the suffering of the people even more difficult.

We acknowledge and commend what your government has done during the last months to bring relief to these conflict-affected areas. However, we urge you to allow humanitarian corridors to other international aid agencies to access the population in urgent need of food, medicines and other necessities.

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 (EHRC) as well as from Amnesty International indicate that more than 500 people, and particularly women and children, have perished during the last five months due to indiscriminate killings and arson attacks. EHRC also reports that more than 100,000 people have been displaced within the region as a result of these atrocities.

We commend your visit to the region in December 2020, and urge you to ensure justice for the victims and accountability for the perpetrators of these attacks, that human rights are restored and respected, and the safety of ethnic minorities in those regions.

We are particularly concerned that these tragic developments in both Tigray and Beninshangul-Gumuz are happening during the current global pandemic. With so many people displaced in both regions as a result of the conflict and the massacres, the risk of massive community transmission of Covid-19 is heightened, with almost no access to health facilities for the affected populations.

The ecumenical family prays for Ethiopia during these particularly trying and challenging times that the country is facing. We unequivocally condemn and deplore all barbaric acts of violence. We pray that an end to the conflict, displacement, regional tensions and instability in the country will enable the democratic and economic reforms that you have put in place since you took office three years ago to reach their full potential.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ioan Saucă". The signature is written in a cursive style with a vertical line at the beginning of the first name.

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