



**ACERWC**

African Committee of  
Experts on the Rights  
and Welfare of the Child

**CAEDBE**

Comité Africain d'Experts  
sur les Droits et le Bien-  
être de l'Enfant

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## **Statement of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child on the situation in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

*Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22 November 2020.*

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC/The Committee), an Organ of the **African Union** with a **mandate to monitor the implementation of the African Children's Charter on the continent**, is deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict and its devastating impact on the rights and welfare of children in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The Committee learned that tens of thousands of children and their families are forced to leave their homes to seek safety within national and across international borders. As has been reported by United National Refugee Agency (UNHCR), as at 17 November 2020, there have been more than **27,000 men, women and children who have fled into the neighbouring Sudan, and the number of refugees is increasing as 4,000 per day are crossing border since 10 November**. The Committee expresses its trepidation at the impending humanitarian crisis as people flee ongoing violence in Tigray Region. We are also alarmed by the reported killings of civilians, including children, which the Committee condemns in strongest terms. The Committee expresses its condolences to all those who have lost family members in the violent clashes and those who have been injured.

The Committee reaffirms **the right to life survival and development for all children** as encapsulated in **the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which Ethiopia has ratified**. The Committee further avers the non-derogability of this right for all children in the country, including under current circumstances as in the Country. It should be borne that for durability of peace in Ethiopia, the safety and protection of children should be the primary consideration.

Reiterating the provisions of the African Children Charter and the ACERWC's **General Comment on Article 22 of the Charter concerning children in situations of conflict**, the Committee notes that:

- i. The Government of Ethiopia shall bear the primary responsibility to uphold the rights of children, and ensure humanitarian access to all children in need without any adverse distinction founded on ethnicity, religion, sex, or any other similar ground;
- ii. The Government of Ethiopia shall ensure continuity of services to children in affected areas including immunization programs and services that provide adequate food and nutrition; and
- iii. Each party must refrain from deliberately impeding the delivery of relief supplies to children and their families in need in areas under its control.

As such, the Committee:

- Urges all parties in the conflict to ensure full respect of children's rights to all children in line with the best interests of the child principle;
- Calls on the Ethiopian authorities to expeditiously, thoroughly, impartially and effectively investigate this flagrant attack on civilians, as well as children, and bring those responsible to justice in fair trials; and
- Calls on the responsible national authorities, both at federal and regional level, to expeditiously install and implement a targeted national child protection system with a view to protect children from the impact of the ongoing conflict; such measures shall include protection of children from abuse, exploitation and violence (including sexual violence and exploitation), killing and maiming.

The Committee renews its commitment to supporting the Government of Ethiopia in its efforts to create an Ethiopia fit for children.

***Hon. Joseph NDAYISENGA***

***Chairperson,***

***African Committee of Experts on  
the Rights and Welfare of the Child***

***Hon. Hermine Kembo  
Takam Gatsing***

***Country Rapporteur for Ethiopia,***

***African Committee of Experts on  
the Rights and Welfare of the Child***