



# Ethiopia: Local CSOs Call for Peace as Country Marks New Year

By Ethiopian CSOs



Our country Ethiopia is facing a multifaceted crisis in Tigray, Amhara, South and West Oromia, Somali, Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People of Ethiopia due to the conflicts that are rapidly expanding. Because of the unfolding conflicts, many unarmed civilians were killed; a hundred thousand are displaced. In many parts of the country, civilians are at the mercy of lifesaving humanitarian aid.

Our children, our women, and the elderly continue to be particularly affected including being subjected to gender-based violence and other rights violations. Our economy is also affected as a result of the conflicts and we have witnessed widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure in many parts of the country. Our efforts to use traditional mediation processes have also not been futile. On top of this, the crisis has also been undermining our social fabric, impacting not only our current relationship as a society but also our shared future.

We the undersigned local CSOs come together to write this letter of call for peace and cessation of hostilities for the following reasons;

1. The root causes that gave rise to the conflict initially will not be sustainably resolved through war and violence. Even when one believes otherwise, doing so will cost the general public a

lot.

2. The situation of unarmed civilians is so imminent that it cannot wait. The conflict has principally affected vulnerable groups of society such as women, and girls, children, and the elderly.
3. The huge impact the conflicts have and will continue to have on young people in Ethiopia is multifaceted including but not limited to violation of internationally recognized human rights. The ongoing conflict will also have a negative impact on achieving sustainable development goals which the country is set to achieve. The conflicts will contribute to the backsliding of efforts already made by governments and other stakeholders in the country.
4. The conflicts are currently expanding to different places and unless they are ended and peace talk efforts are initiated soon, they might lead to worsened crises.
5. The conflicts could easily turn into a regional conflict and expand to other countries in the Horn of Africa. In addition, due to the ongoing crisis, the country witnessed huge destruction of civilian infrastructure. This in effect is diverting existing resources to rebuilding such infrastructures. Such investment if advanced to other sectors could easily alleviate the country's poverty. The conflicts are exacerbating already existing conditions in the country particularly in the financial sector.
6. The conflict has the potential to damage our existing social fabrics and values and needs to come to an end in view of protecting such values for current and future generations.
7. It has been challenging to end the ongoing conflict in the country. Given the existence of homegrown and customary peacebuilding, and reconciliation mechanisms/tools/ structures, we strongly believe such homegrown platforms need to be given a chance to resolve the current crisis in the country. It is also timely for political actors to give these homegrown initiatives a chance.
8. Given the '2020 silencing the gun campaign of the African Union Commission,' the conflict is against all objectives set under the campaign and runs counterproductive.
9. Local human rights CSOs are faced with challenges related to documenting, and monitoring human rights violations in different parts of the country because of the destruction of civilian infrastructures and security concerns.

For the aforementioned reasons, we, the undersigned local Civil Society Organizations, call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and call on all civil society organizations in our country to focus on activities of transforming conflicts as well as engaging in comprehensive peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

In order for our call for peace to succeed, we call upon all parties involved in the conflicts in all parts of Ethiopia for a cessation of hostilities, deescalate conflicts and war propaganda, and agree for peace talks and protect the safety and unity of the masses, the peace and sovereignty of our country.

The undersigned local CSOs promise to contribute to the aforementioned efforts to resolve ongoing conflicts peacefully and to actively participate in an overall peacebuilding and reconciliation process.

Signatories of this open call for peace:

1. Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organizations (CEHRO)
2. Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD)
3. East African Initiative for Change (I4C)
4. Lawyers for Human Rights
5. Setaweeet Movement
6. Editors Guild of Ethiopia
7. Association of Human Rights in Ethiopia
8. Initiative Africa

9. Family Service Association
  10. International Revival Movement
  11. Center for National & Regional Integration Studies (CeNRIS)
  12. Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA)
  13. Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Center
  14. TIMRAN
  15. Center for Justice
  16. Center of Concern
  17. Good Governance for Africa - Eastern Africa
  18. Network of Ethiopian Women Associations (NEWA)
  19. Interafrica Group
  20. Gate for Opportunity
  21. New Millennium
  22. Inclusive Vision for Democratic Ethiopia
  23. Ethiopian Initiative for Human Rights
  24. Ethiopian Media Women's Association
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