

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Commission) has been following the developments in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, with concern. On 4 November 2020, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) attacked the Northern Command of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces. This was followed by a military counter attack by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia against the TPLF on the same day.

Following reports and information received regarding alleged human rights violations in the Tigray region, the Commission issued a Press Statement on 9 November 2020 condemning the situation and reiterated same in its ensuing press release of 26 November 2020. The Statement reminded the parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, whilst urging the parties to engage in dialogue with a view to finding lasting, peaceful and mutually acceptable solutions in the best interests of the population.

Noting that the situation continued to unfold without any signs of abating, during its 67th Ordinary Session held virtually from 13 November to 3 December 2020, the Commission adopted Resolution: *ACHPR/Res.469 (LXVII) 2020 on the Situation in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, condemning the use of force, and calling on the Government of Ethiopia to take actions to protect the human rights of the populations affected and take concrete steps to end the conflict.

On 9 March 2021, following a meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council, in which the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, His Excellency Mr. Abiy Ahmed expressed its willingness to engage the Commission to conduct investigations into the ongoing crisis in the Tigray Region, jointly with the Ethiopian National Human Rights Commission, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat invited the Commission to exercise its mandate to initiate a self-referral investigation.

During its 32nd Extra-Ordinary Session, held virtually on 12 May 2021, the Commission engaged in extensive deliberations and adopted Resolution: *ACHPR/Res. 482 (EXT.OS/XXXII) 2021 on the Fact-Finding Mission to the Tigray Region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, (see Website), and decided pursuant to Article 45(2) read together with Article 46 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, to establish a Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the situation in the Tigray Region, which was launched on 17 June 2021.