

**UN Human Rights Council, 33rd Special Session, 17 December 2021:  
The grave human rights situation in Ethiopia**

**Statement delivered by Denmark, on behalf of also Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia,  
Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden**

**By H.E. Mr Jeppe Kofod, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark**

*[Check against delivery]*

Madame President,

I speak on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries.

We are deeply alarmed by the critical human rights situation in Ethiopia and by the gravity of the violations and abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence, ethnic profiling and hate speech, committed by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces, Tigray People's Liberation Front, and other parties to the conflict.

The primary responsibility for upholding human rights obligations and international humanitarian law, and for addressing violations rests with the State. We welcome the Ethiopian Government's commitment to accountability, including by setting up an Inter-Ministerial Taskforce to oversee efforts to bring perpetrators to justice.

However, we are concerned that investigations conducted by its institutions may not match the scope and breadth of the violations identified by the Joint Investigation Team. We share the concerns that such investigations may not sufficiently comply with international standards.

In order to ensure accountability and to prevent further violations, additional independent, international investigations are necessary. This is essential to ensure the timely gathering of evidence of violations and abuses committed and for justice to be served.

There is an urgent need for dialogue to resolve the conflict. We welcome and support the mediation efforts by the African Union's High Representative for the Horn of Africa. We urge the parties to end hostilities, find a negotiated solution, ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access, and bring peace and security to the millions of Ethiopians held hostage by this conflict.

These efforts should go hand in hand with those to ensure accountability, ending impunity and providing redress for the victims of the conflict. We stand with the Ethiopian people and urge the HRC to establish an independent international investigative mechanism.

I thank you.