

It is past time for all parties to put the Ethiopian people first

Thank you Mr President, I would like to thank High Representative Obasanjo and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their important briefings. I also thank the A3+1 and Ireland for calling today's meeting and for their work on Friday's statement by this Council.

The UK shares the serious concerns already expressed today about the situation in Ethiopia including by the African Union Peace and Security Council.

The introduction of a State of Emergency by the Government of Ethiopia must not be used as an excuse to ignore human rights and international humanitarian law.

Violations and abuses of human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law are already taking place as a result of this conflict. The report released last week by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission documented these in detail, including the widespread use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, torture, attacks on civilians and forced displacement.

All parties should act to implement the recommendations contained in that joint report, ensure accountability and prevent further suffering. Indeed addressing the humanitarian and human impact of this tragic conflict should be our immediate focus. And when it is over, we must come together and help Ethiopia heal.

Therefore it is vital that all parties stop fighting and start talking. Tigrayan forces need to stop their advances and return to Tigray. The humanitarian blockade needs to be lifted. Hate speech and ethnic profiling must end: it serves only to set Ethiopian against Ethiopian and deepens divisions which will make recovery from this crisis even harder.

The United Kingdom gives its full support to the Secretary-General and His Excellency African Union Special Envoy Obasanjo and urges all parties to make use of their good offices. We stand ready to provide any support that is required.

In the last year, this conflict has brought only destruction, suffering and despair. It is past time for all parties to put the Ethiopian people first.

Thank you.