



## Statement of the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility

### GBV in Tigray

The Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) continues to be alarmed by reports of increasing violence against women and girls – including harrowing accounts of sexual violence– because of conflict and insecurity in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. Though we know gender-based violence (GBV) can be prevented, GBV continues to be present in every conflict, crisis and disaster because of gender inequalities that persist across the globe. That this pattern would repeat in Tigray is not a surprise, but is extremely worrisome.

The GBV AoR brings together non-governmental organisations, UN agencies, and others to prevent and respond to GBV. We have been working with local and international non-governmental organisations, including women-led organisations, and others to respond to GBV needs since the outset of conflict in the Tigray region in November 2020. The GBV AoR – in collaboration with partners - has and will continue to ensure responders have the most up-to-date information on the evolving humanitarian situation across Northern Ethiopia as it relates to GBV, while supporting partners on the ground to provide life-saving, expert, survivor-centered programming for both response to and prevention of GBV. To date, over 20 partners are either already responding to the needs of GBV survivors and women and girls at risk of GBV, or are planning response activities. Survivors of all forms of GBV deserve quality services for their immediate and long-term physical, psychological and mental health needs, as well as to recover in dignity and safety.

Our current analysis of the situation in Tigray is that **the response remains wholly inadequate to the scale of need**. The GBV AoR therefore **calls for increased resources – in the form of human resources, commodities, supplies and funding to support services – to programme-implementing organisations, including local organisations** who have been responding for months in often dangerous situations. **UN agencies and governments around the globe must prioritize GBV response and prevention in their own financial and diplomatic interventions**. The GBV AoR asks that **all governments and other clusters/areas of responsibility continue to work and thoroughly consult with the GBV AoR**. This will help maintain coordination across programming, ensure accurate data is used to prioritize programming around critical needs, and allow for responsibly sharing of up-to-date information, including in such critical areas as access and referral pathways as consolidated by the GBV AoR regional- and country-based teams.

We [echo the calls](#) for all parties to the conflict to **fulfil their obligations to protect and respect human rights under international humanitarian law**. We know that it is through protecting and respecting women's and girls' human rights that we can prevent GBV from occurring in the first place. We also echo **calls for the safety and protection of all humanitarian actors**, who should never become a target of conflict, and to **ensure that the risk of GBV is mitigated in activities across all sectors**.

The [GBV AoR](#) and our member organisations will continue to provide support to women and girls in Tigray and wherever humanitarian needs exist.

**For further information, please contact:** Dientje van Dongen, GBV AoR Coordinator (et.cp-gbv@humanitarianresponse.info)

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As of April 2021, the Child Protection/Gender Based Violence Sub-Clusters for Ethiopia and Global Protection Cluster for East and Southern Africa have prioritized the following as **Priority Needs** in Northern Ethiopia based on the latest situational analysis:

1. Facilitate safe access for GBV service providers;
2. Expand mental health and psychosocial support;
3. Increase access to health services;
4. Assess urgent GBV needs;
5. Mitigate GBV risks across sectors;
6. Scale-up capacity of INGOs and local organisations to provide case management services.

Priority needs will continue to be updated by the GBV Sub-Cluster and partners as the situation evolves.

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