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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Eritrean Political Forces' Concerns on the Military Conflict in Sudan**

April 20, 2023

We Eritrean Political Forces (EPF) are deeply saddened and gravely concerned by the start of an armed conflict in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Force (RSF). Since the start of the conflict five days ago, the heavy fighting in Khartoum and the surrounding areas has already inflicted heavy damage on the people of Sudan, including the death of over 300 people with over 3000 wounded. We urge the warring parties to stop the fighting immediately and resolve their political differences through dialogue. Sudan must not be immersed into a damaging war. War can never resolve differences, but dialogue and discussion can. War destabilizes a country destroying its people and its economy. The very honorable and peace-loving Sudanese people deserve to live in peace.

Sudan hosts one of the largest refugee populations in Africa. Among these refugees are hundreds of thousands of Eritreans who have long been forced to live in exile due to the 30-year war of independence and, after the 1991 independence, due to the intolerable situation under the brutal rule of the dictatorial regime in Eritrea.

The people of Sudan are the most kind and generous people and have been hosting and protecting Eritrean refugees for decades. Many Eritreans consider Sudan as their second home. Eritrean refugees are equally becoming victims of this senseless war as the Sudanese general population. Most often, refugees are the first victims of such senseless wars, as we have witnessed it in other conflicts. Because of their refugee status and economic conditions, they are highly vulnerable for and are subjected to harsh treatment, kidnaping, manipulation, scapegoating, deportation, smuggling and extortion. We have recently been voicing concerns of the ongoing harsh treatment and extortion schemes that have been targeted at Eritrean refugees by some Sudanese security and police officials. We also fear that the smuggling of Eritrean refugees in the region will now be exacerbated due to the security vacuum in Sudan. Thus, we humbly request the warring parties to immediately stop the fighting, allow the restoration of all public services, and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the Sudanese people, as well as the Eritrean and other refugees in the country.

The Eritrean Political Forces are also concerned of the possibility and potential political and military interference of the dictatorial regime of Eritrean in the internal affairs of Sudan. We would like to unequivocally state that, we strongly oppose and reject any interference or involvement of the Eritrean regime or military force in any shape or form in the internal affairs of Sudan.

The international community and many countries, including the UN, IGAD, US and EU, have been calling for immediate cessation of hostilities and for the parties to return to the negotiation table to advance the path to democracy and civilian rule in Sudan. We Eritrean Political Forces fully support this call and emphatically urge warring parties to unconditionally accept the international community's calls and take concrete measures to implement them. We also call upon the international community and concerned refugee agencies to give serious attention to the plight of all refugees and internally displaced persons in the Sudan.

*Eritrean Political Forces Diplomacy Coordination Committee*