

Joint statement: €5bn European ‘Peace’ Facility risks fuelling conflict and human rights violations around the world

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The European Union risks fuelling conflict and human rights abuses around the world if it adopts the European Peace Facility (EPF) in its current form, warned 40 civil society organisations with expertise on peace, human rights and the protection of civilians.

Today, EU Member States’ ambassadors meet to discuss a new funding instrument that presents a fundamental shift towards a more military approach in EU foreign policy, and risks causing large-scale civilian harm around the world.

If passed in its current form, the €5 billion EPF would fund EU-branded initiatives to train and equip foreign military and security forces, including the possibility of providing them with lethal weapons. This would feed into the very dynamics that the EPF seeks to address.

By strengthening security forces and providing them with military equipment in conflict areas, the European Peace Facility’s funding will risk increasing human rights abuses and contribute to further violence and arms proliferation, rather than to protect civilians and search for political solutions.

“The proposed European Peace Facility not only fails to address the root causes of conflict, it also risks harming civilians and fuelling violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law”, said Drissa Traoré, Coordinator of the Joint Office of FIDH and AMDH (Association Malienne des Droits de l’Homme) in Mali.

If EU Member States insist on adopting the EPF, they must urgently address the risks that EPF-funded assistance will do harm. 40 civil society organisations call on EU Member States to

- 1) strengthen conflict prevention and civilian harm prevention and mitigation,
- 2) exclude the transfer of lethal weapons from the proposal, and
- 3) adopt a due diligence framework to ensure the facility’s activities are conducted in accordance with international law.

“The EPF contains all the seeds of destabilisation if it provides additional weapons in the Sahel”, said Olivier Guiryman, Executive Director of BUCOFOR in Chad. “It is paramount that the EU and its member states ensure that EPF-funded programmes do not escalate conflict but rather contribute to long-term peace.”

Link to full statement: https://bit.ly/epf_ngo_statement_2020

Interviews available on request. Please contact:

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Notes to editors

The joint statement has been signed by 40 civil society organisations including AMDH (Association Malienne des Droits de l’Homme), Bucofore, Concordis, FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), Netherlands Helsinki Committee, OSEPI (Open Society European Policy Institute), Oxfam, PAX, Pax Christi Flanders, Pax Christi International, and Saferworld.