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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[23 August 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Urgent Call to Address Escalating Human Rights Violations and Crisis in Amhara, Ethiopia

Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de conscience is deeply concerned about the escalating crisis and human rights violations that are devastating the Amhara region in Ethiopia.

The recent developments, as reported by esteemed sources including The Guardian, Al Jazeera, VOA, Reuters, Wion, The Reporter, The Washington Post, and others, underscore the immediate need for international intervention to address the dire situation and prevent further loss of life and suffering.

The international community's swift and resolute action is crucial to addressing the deteriorating Amhara genocide in Amhara Region of Ethiopia:

The atrocities being committed against the Amhara people in the Amhara region of Ethiopia are deeply concerning and require immediate attention. The following incidents provide a glimpse into the severity of the ongoing crisis:

- **Drone Attack on Civilians in Finote Selam:** A drone attack on civilians in Finote Selam resulted in the tragic loss of over 70 lives and left numerous others injured. The victims were innocent civilians who were preparing to travel, and witnesses on the ground reported a horrifying drone strike. This incident represents a grave escalation within the ongoing hostilities, further endangering the lives and well-being of innocent civilians. The Amhara people find themselves entrapped in a cycle of violence and targeted directly by the Ethiopian Government. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has rightfully expressed "grave concern" over the intensifying hostilities and the alarming violations of human rights occurring within the region.
- **Heavy Fighting in Debre Birhan:** Between August 6 and 7, 2023, heavy fighting in Debre Birhan led to civilian casualties, including individuals seeking refuge in a hospital, church, school, neighborhoods, and workplaces. The use of heavy artillery and crossfire resulted in the loss of innocent lives.
- **Shelling of Bahir Dar:** Ethiopian government forces indiscriminately shelled Bahir Dar, the capital city of the Amhara region, leading to the tragic deaths of hundreds of unarmed civilians. Among the victims was a man attending a church service, who was killed alongside his two sons on the streets.
- **Tragic Loss of Life in Wondy Plateau of Bure Town:** The shelling from Wondy plateau of Bure town resulted in a heart-wrenching incident where four members of the same family lost their lives in their own house on Saturday, 12 August.
- **Violence in Gondar and Surrounding Areas:** Gondar and its environs have been plagued by violence, resulting in the deaths of more than 20 individuals and causing injuries to over 200 innocent people.

Targeted Persecution and Forced Disappearances in Oromia and Addis Ababa:

- Individuals from various religious backgrounds, including Amara, Islam, and Orthodoxy, are reportedly targeted in Oromia and Addis Ababa.
- Government authorities instruct individuals to cease their activities and demand identification, subjecting them to dire consequences if identified as Amhara.
- Mobile phones are permitted, but specific images in the photo gallery trigger concerns, such as depictions of Amhara kings, flags without stars, and historical figures.
- Online presence is closely monitored by authorities, with scrutiny of social media accounts, including Facebook, Viber, Imo, and WhatsApp.
- Notably, individuals who follow Amhara activists, journalists, or intellectuals opposing the ongoing genocide are specifically targeted.

- The scrutiny of individuals' online connections and content suggests a deliberate effort to identify those opposing the Amhara genocide.
- This discriminatory ethnic profiling is evident, highlighting that authorities are targeting individuals based on their ethnicity, beliefs, and opposition to the ongoing genocide.
- According to our information, over 4000 people have been arrested, with reports indicating that approximately 300 of them have been executed.
- With prisons and schools now full, authorities are taking detainees out of Addis Ababa and relocating them to unknown places in Oromia.

The gravity of these incidents cannot be overstated. Furthermore, disturbing reports highlight a stark contrast between areas under the control of the Federal Defense Force and those controlled by Fano, a paramilitary force. In Federal Defense Force controlled areas, horrifying atrocities are being committed, including the rape of women, execution of families within their homes, and artificially inflated prices of essential food items. This has created an environment of fear and desperation among the Amhara population residing in these areas.

In stark contrast, areas under Fano control have demonstrated relative stability, with no reports of vandalism, crime, or bank robberies. Citizens in these areas are encouraged to assign individuals to replace government officials, and some are even compelled to flee to Addis Ababa in an effort to secure the safety and well-being of their communities.

These deeply troubling developments underscore the urgent need for international intervention and action. The international community must not remain silent in the face of such blatant violations of human rights and the targeted persecution of the Amhara people. It is imperative that the voices of the Amhara people are heard and their suffering is acknowledged. We urge the United Nations Human Rights Council to extend the mandate of its experts on Ethiopia during the upcoming session to ensure that justice is served and that the plight of the Amhara people is brought to the forefront of international attention. The Amhara people's concerns, grievances, and aspirations must not be defined by external agents, but by their own voices and experiences as they fight for their survival and dignity.

In the midst of this escalating crisis, we want to alert the Human Rights Council on the following recommendations :

1. **Listen to the Voices of the Amhara People:** It is imperative that the Amhara people's concerns, grievances, and aspirations are heard and acknowledged without the influence of any external agenda or vested interests, including those of powerful countries. The narrative surrounding their struggles should remain untainted by external agents, ensuring that neither the government, the media, nor any foreign entity shapes their experiences. The heart of the matter lies solely in the authentic words and lived realities of the Amhara people themselves, who are courageously fighting for their very survival amidst this crisis.
2. **Extension of UNHRC Experts' Mandate:** Recognising the gravity of the situation, I strongly urge the UNHRC to extend the mandate of its experts on Ethiopia during the upcoming session. This extension would provide a pivotal opportunity to ensure that the ongoing human rights violations, genocide, and forced disappearances are thoroughly investigated and justice is served.
3. **Conduct Independent Investigation:** Initiate an independent investigation into the recent attacks on the Amhara people and other incidents of violence to establish accountability and bring those responsible to justice.
4. **Immediate Ceasefire:** Call for an immediate ceasefire between conflicting parties to end the loss of innocent lives and alleviate the suffering of the Amhara people.
5. **Human Rights Monitoring:** Establish a robust human rights monitoring mechanism in the region to prevent further violations and ensure the safety and well-being of the affected population.
6. **Humanitarian Assistance:** Mobilize humanitarian aid to provide relief to those affected by the crisis, including medical care, shelter, and essential supplies.

7. To investigate the allegation that the Federal Defense Force is executing soldiers, mainly from southern regions, who have refused to fight against the Amhara people (due to recognising the unjust nature of the conflict).
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