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Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa, 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.

[29 May 2016]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Ethiopia- Gross Human Rights Violations

(HRLHA) – Ever since November of 2015 and still going on are serious human rights violations in Oromia Regional State of Ethiopia. Peaceful protestors against the so-called "Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan" came to the streets in Oromia in November to express their grievances about the "Addis Ababa Integrated Master plan" and were met with brutal crackdowns. An estimated 500 plus Oromos have been killed by the Ethiopian Government force. The Ethiopian Government deployed its military and applied excessive force against the unarmed civilians to quell the dissent. The Oromo nation protested against the "Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan" because:

- It is a plan which did not consult the stakeholders and aimed to annex 36 small towns in Oromia to the capital city to expand it by 20 fold, thereby evicting over two million farmers
- In the past 15 years, over 15,000 Oromo farmers from suburban towns of Addis Ababa have been forcefully evicted from their livelihoods and their land has been sold to investors for a low price, and given to the government authorities for free. Landowners have become beggars on the street.
- Many farmers in Oromia Regional Zones have been forcefully removed from their ancestral lands and their lands sold cheaply to investors for flower plantations.

The recent deadly violence against Oromo peaceful demonstrators staged against the so called "Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan"- violence that has already claimed over 500 lives, including children and senior citizens along with more than 20,000 - 30,000 imprisoned and more disappeared- has also attracted the attention of many donor countries such as the USA whose Department of State has condemned the excessive military force against the peaceful demonstrators, (see in table 1). Various organizations, including government agencies (EU parliament, UN Experts), international, regional and domestic human rights organizations (HW, AI, HRLHA) and international mass media such as BBC, CNN, France 24 have reported on the recent violations in Oromia Regional State of Ethiopia, (see in Table 2).

Table 1: Government Agency's Report

Reporter	Report Description	Report Date	Link
The White House Office of the Press Secretary	Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Ned Price on the Arrest of Journalists in Ethiopia	December 30, 2015	https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/30/statement-national-security-council-spokesperson-ned-price-arrest
US Department of State	The United States Concerned By Clashes in Oromia, Ethiopia	December 15, 2015	http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/12/250778.htm
EU Parliament	European Parliament resolution on the situation in Ethiopia	January 21, 2016	http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bMOTION%2bP8-RC-2016-0082%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN
UN Experts	UN Experts Urge Ethiopia to halt violent crackdown --	January 21, 2016	http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16977&LangID=E

Table 2: Human Rights Organizations' Report

Reporter Organization	Report Description	Reported Date	Link
HRW	Using Courts to Crush Dissent in Ethiopia	May 9, 2016	https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/09/dispatches-using-courts-crush-dissent-ethiopia
HRW	Deafening Silence from Ethiopia	April 12, 2016	https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/12/deafening-silence-ethiopia
HRW	Ethiopia's Invisible Crisis	January 22, 2016	https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/22/ethiopia-invisible-crisis
	Government Backs Down, But Will Protests End in Ethiopia?	January 15, 2016	https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/15/dispatches-government-backs-down-will-protests-end-ethiopia
HRW	Ethiopia: Lethal Force Against Protesters, Military Deployment, Terrorism Rhetoric Risk Escalating Violence	December 18, 2015	https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/18/ethiopia-lethal-force-against-protesters
HRW	Yet Again, a Bloody Crackdown on Protesters in Ethiopia	December 5, 2015	https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/05/dispatches-yet-again-bloody-crackdown-protesters-ethiopia
AI	Ethiopia: Anti-terror rhetoric will escalate brutal crackdown against Oromo protesters	December 16, 2015	http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/press-releases/ethiopia-anti-terror-rhetoric-will-escalate-brutal-crackdown-against-oromo-protesters
AI	Ethiopia: Ethnic Oromos arrested, tortured and killed by the state in relentless repression of dissent	October 16, 2014	http://www.amnesty.ca/news/news-releases/ethiopia-ethnic-oromos-arrested-tortured-and-killed-by-the-state-in-relentless-re
HRLHA	Ethiopia: Oromia Regional State Under Siege	December 15, 2015	http://www.humanrightsleague.org/?p=15690
HRLHA	Ethiopia: Extreme Cruelties Against Oromo Children and Youths	December 8, 2015	http://www.humanrightsleague.org/?p=15674
HRLHA	Oromia/Ethiopia: Region-Wide, Heavy-Handed Crackdown on Peaceful Protesters	December 5, 2015	http://www.humanrightsleague.org/?p=15667
BBC	Ethiopia says Oromia protests crackdown claims are 'lies'	February 22, 2016	http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35630254

BBC	(BBC video) Ethiopian Government Criticized Over Oromo Protests	November 2015	http://www.madote.com/2016/01/bbc-video-ethiopia-government.html
BBC	BBC World News reports on Oromo Protest against Addis Ababa Master Plan	May 2, 2014	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCWguJFORFM
CNN	Ethiopia crackdown on student protests taints higher education success	May 22, 2014	http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-1135619
France 24	Video: Anger among Ethiopia's Oromo ethnic group boils over	March 30, 2016	http://www.france24.com/en/20160329-focus-ethiopia-oromo-protests-crackdown-land-development

Recommendation:

Recalling that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the right to life, liberty and security of person, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful demonstration and assembly,

Recalling further that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, arbitrary arrest and detention,

The HRLHA urges the United Nations Human Rights Council to raise concerns about the serious human rights abuses presently taking place in Oromia.

The HRLHA also calls upon the UN Human Rights Council:

- To create an international commission of inquiry to investigate the recent serious violations of international customary law and international human rights law by the Ethiopian Government
- To use its mandate to put pressure on the Ethiopian Government:
 - To immediately bring to justice those military members who cold-bloodedly attacked the peaceful demonstrators
 - To unconditionally free all Oromo prisoners of conscience and others arbitrarily detained, including those held before for no reason and during the peaceful protests of April-March 2014 and November - December 2015 against the " Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan "
 - To refrain from reprisals against aromos who have taken part in peaceful demonstrations