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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

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.

[27 May 2024]

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



The Issue of Violence Towards Women and Girls, in the Amhara Genocide: A Serious Breach of Human Rights

The crisis unfolding in Ethiopia has had an impact on the Amhara community on women and girls who have been most affected by the atrocities. The organized violence directed at this group not violates fundamental human rights but also reveals a troubling aspect of genocide. As representatives gather for the Human Rights Council session it is crucial to address this matter and call for immediate measures to safeguard the well-being and honor of Amhara women and girls.

The official document portrays an image of the challenges faced by the Amhara community including reports of targeted killings, sexual assault, mutilation and other brutal acts. However particular focus should be placed on the violence against women and girls in this context as it signifies an effort to dismantle the values of Amhara society.

Ethnic Cleansing and Forced Sterilization

TPLF authorities forced Amhara women, to be sterilized to limit the growth of the Amhara population. Amhara women seeking sexual and reproductive health care were sterilized without their knowledge or without being given the opportunity to provide informed consent. In Oromia and Benshangul-Gumuz, Amhara pregnant women's bellies were cut open and their infant babies murdered together with the mothers, under the stance that no Amhara baby will be born in their region.

Utilization of Rape as a Tool in Warfare

One significant form of violence employed both by the TPLF and the Prosperity Government, against Amhara women and girls was the practice of using rape as a weapon during wartime. Sexual violence is used as a means to punish, terrorize, and destroy the Amhara community. Commanders of the TPLF army as well as the ENDF allowed their soldiers to rape Amhara women and children as a form of reward.

Numerous accounts have surfaced, shedding light on the ordeals faced by Amhara women as old as 80 years and girls as young as 8 years who have endured gang rapes, sexual mutilation and various forms of violence. Old nuns at monasteries were not even spared. These atrocities are not occurrences but a deliberate tactic aimed at causing severe psychological and physical harm to the Amhara community.

The suffering experienced by these victims goes beyond the acts of violence as they grapple with the lasting effects of their trauma. If their lives were spared after the attacks, many are left with injuries and unwanted pregnancies related to these rapes while others battle emotional and mental scars that may never fully fade. The repercussions of these crimes echo throughout communities shattering the sense of security and trust that every individual deserves.

Forced Displacement and Kidnapping of Amhara Children

In addition, to the violence inflicted upon them Amhara women and girls have also faced forced displacement and the abduction of their children. The reports describe instances where Amhara families have been forcibly evicted from their homes often witnessing the killing of their loved ones, and their children forcefully taken away and their whereabouts are still unknown. Women and children escape from the violence often taking precarious journeys by foot. For example, the whereabouts of the students (14 women and 4 men), mostly ethnic Amharas, who were fleeing ethnic violence and threats in the university that is located in Oromia region is still unknown.

These vulnerable individuals who are forcefully separated from their families undergo indoctrination and are compelled to work for their captors. This deprives these children of their youth. Also endangers the future of the Amhara community by disrupting the bonds passed down through generations that form the core of any society.

The Fate of Internally Displaced (IDP) Amhara Children and Women

Amhara women and children displaced due to violence and insecurity, in Horo Guduru, East, West, and Kellem Wellega zones in Oromia remain without humanitarian assistance. Amhara IDPs represent the most vulnerable as they often cannot access basic services, education, and health care, and they face barriers to stable housing and sustainable livelihoods. For instance, they do not receive adequate shelters and are housed in schools, warehouses and tents leaving them vulnerable to rains and floods. They are prevented from accessing humanitarian assistance provided by the host communities and volunteers who have mobilized funds for food and non-food item assistance. As a result, the children suffer from severe malnutrition and cholera.

Amhara IDPs are also targeted for forced return back to the areas they came from without being given adequate security measures and where their life, safety, is still at risk. In May 2024, close to 600 IDPs who were forcefully returned to Wellega, were ambushed at the border of Oromia and Amhara region by the Oromo rebels when the ENDF conveniently left them without escort. The rebels kidnapped most of the bus passengers after summarily executing 29 of the IDPs, mostly young children.

The Concept of Genocide

The brutalities inflicted on Amhara women and girls when seen in the context of violence, against the Amhara population clearly shows a systematic and intentional effort to wipe out this ethnic group. The detailed report outlining massacres targeted killings and destruction of Amhara religious sites unequivocally satisfies the criteria for genocide as outlined in the 1948 Convention, on Genocide Prevention and Punishment.

The deliberate imposition of conditions meant to lead to the annihilation of the Amhara people transferring Amhara children forcibly to groups and systematically targeting Amhara women and girls with sexual violence all indicate a coordinated campaign to eliminate this ethnic group from Ethiopian society altogether.

This situation is a breach of laws and a moral injustice that calls for an immediate and strong response, from the global community.

Suggestion: Utilizing the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Being a participant in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Ethiopia carries an ethical responsibility to safeguard its people from severe human rights violations. The acts of violence perpetrated against Amhara women and girls including the use of rape as a tool of warfare forced displacement of communities and abduction of children clearly fall under the purview of this treaty.

According to Article 2 of the Convention "Each State Party must implement administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any area under its control." Additionally Article 4 mandates that "Every State Party must ensure that all instances of torture are considered offenses under its system." The organized and widespread nature of the attacks, on Amhara women and girls outlined in the report showcases Ethiopia's failure to fulfil its responsibilities under this agreement. We urge the Human Rights Council to call on the government to;

stop all forms of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, against Amhara women and girls and ensure their protection from further harm.

Conduct a thorough unbiased investigation into reports of sexual violence forced displacement and abduction of Amhara children to hold the perpetrators accountable and provide full reparations to the victims.

Ensure that the Ethiopian legal system is capable of prosecuting and punishing those responsible for these crimes in line with international standards against torture and ill treatment.

Implement programs to offer psychological and social assistance to Amhara women and girls who have suffered sexual violence or trauma with a focus on addressing long term effects.

Establish effective measures to prevent such atrocities from happening again through rigorous training for security personnel reforming discriminatory laws promoting human rights respect and fostering dignity, for all individuals. The global community has a responsibility both morally and legally to promptly and decisively respond to the genocide targeting the Amhara people. The atrocities committed against Amhara women and girls not violate their rights but also aim to dismantle the very essence of this ethnic community. Failing to take effective steps will lead to prolonged suffering, for the Amhara population. Set a dangerous precedent undermining international law principles and universal human rights protection.

We urge members of the Human Rights Council to listen to the plea for justice and implement all necessary actions to ensure that the Ethiopian government upholds its obligations as stated in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The time for inaction is over; now is the time, for principled leadership.
