

June 21, 2016

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNOG-OHCHR
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Dear High Commissioner:

We, members of the Ethiopian Advocacy Network (EAN), are writing to implore the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to open an investigation into the massive human rights violations against peaceful protesters committed by the current Ethiopian regime. **Specifically, we strongly advocate the appointment of a Special Rapporteur to investigate the ongoing egregious human rights violations in Ethiopia**, similar to the inquiry conducted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Arbitrary or Summary Executions in Kenya following the post-election violence in December 2007 and January 2008.

While the abuses and flagrant human rights violations committed by the Ethiopian government have been well documented by independent and respected human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Committee to Protect Journalists, there has been no concerted international action to hold the regime accountable for the systematic and widespread extrajudicial killings and politically motivated arrests and imprisonments undertaken on a regular basis by the Ethiopian security forces. Some of these actions are widely considered crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

The following evidences reiterate some of the few government sanctioned killings:

- 100 Sidamos were massacred in 2001; ¹
- 200 Mazengers were killed in Gambella in July 2002;²

¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alemayehu-g-mariam/ethiopia-the-anuaks-forgo_b_795330.html

² ibid

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- 424 Anukas in Gambella were massacred in December 2003³;
- 193 Ethiopians ranging in age from 14-75 were brutally killed during civil demonstrations and 30,000 civilians were arrested between June & November 2005, according to the final report of the independent Inquiry Commission set by the Ethiopian Parliament;⁴
- Thousands of ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia have been killed by Ethiopian security forces and the Liyu Police, a rogue group, similar to the Sudanese Janjaweed militia.⁵

On June 15, 2016 Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a 60 page report on the recent protests in the Oromia region of Ethiopia. The report meticulously describes how state security forces have used excessive and lethal force to respond to the roughly 500 protests, killing an estimated 400 people and injuring thousands, many of them young students. Security forces have also arrested tens of thousands of people, some for short periods.⁶

The Ethiopian regime continues to act with impunity because it rightly believes that it faces no accountability from both its repressed citizens and the international community. It is our opinion that the intervention of a highly regarded and influential office such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is critical towards ensuring that the causes of justice and respect for international human rights laws are not disregarded when it comes to Ethiopia.

We understand that the Special Rapporteur on The Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, Maina Kiai has sent request letters to Ethiopia in 2011 and 2013.⁷ We are also cognizant of the fact that the government refuses to extend an official invitation for obvious reasons.

In light of the facts detailed in the report from HRW, we are requesting an immediate investigation into the gross and persistent violence against citizens committed by the Ethiopian government. We urge you to take up this matter with the utmost seriousness

³ http://inthesetimes.com/article/390/ethiopian_genocide

⁴ <https://votesmart.org/public-statement/221403/press-release-smith-ethiopian-regimes-silence-on-report-speaks-volumes#.V2MAM9QrKHs>

⁵ http://www.ogadenrights.org/OGADEN_ETHIOPIAN_FORCES_MASSACRE.pdf

⁶ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/15/such-brutal-crackdown/killings-and-arrests-response-ethiopia-romo-protests>

⁷ <http://freeassembly.net/country-info/country-invitation-status/>

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and urgency that it deserves and act on our request to appoint a Special Rapporteur to investigate the deliberate and reckless use of citizen abuse as an institutionalized method of governance.

At the Opening of the 4th Human Rights Council Session on March 12, 2007 Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General noted, **“All victims of human rights abuses should be able to look to the Human Rights Council as a forum and a springboard for action.”**

It is time for the global community to respond with a formal investigation on behalf of these victims and their families.

We thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent matter.

Cc: Members of the Human Rights Committee:

Mr. Yadh BEN ACHOUR Tunisia

Mr. Lazhari BOUZID Algeria

Ms. Sarah CLEVELAND United States

Mr. Olivier de FROUVILLE France

Mr. Ahmad Amin FATHALLA Egypt

Mr. Yuji IWASAWA (Vice-Chairperson) Japan

Ms. Ivana JELIC Montenegro

Mr. Duncan Laki MUHUMUZA Uganda

Ms Photini PAZARTZIS Greece

Mr. Mauro POLIT Italy

Sir Nigel RODLEY United Kingdom

Mr. Victor Manuel RODRÍGUEZ RESCIA Costa Rica

Mr. Fabián Omar SALVIOLI (Chairperson) Argentina

Mr. Dheerujlall .B. SEETULSINGH (Vice Chairperson) Mauritius

Ms. Anja SEIBERT-FOHR (Vice-Chairperson) Germany

Mr. Yuval SHANY Israel

Mr. Konstantine VARDZELASHVILI (Rapporteur) Georgia

Ms. Margo WATERVAL Suriname

Mr. Tom Malinowski Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights,
and Labor

Amnesty International

Article 19

Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia (AHRE)

Civil Rights Defenders

Defend Defenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Right Defenders Project)

Ethiopia Human Rights Project (EHRP)

Front Line Defenders

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Ethiopian Advocacy Network is a grassroots organization that was formed in January 2015 by Ethiopian-Americans, Ethiopian activists and community organizers to promote democracy, human rights, and justice in Ethiopia through advocacy, civic education and grass roots mobilization. EAN has a global presence with members in the USA, Africa, Canada and Europe.