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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-fifth session

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Agenda item 4

### Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

## **Written statement\* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, 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.

[20 August 2020]


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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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## The promotion of truth and reparation in Ethiopia

### Preamble

Maat for Peace, Development, and Human is deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Ethiopia, especially as the second quarter of 2018 unfolded. Ethiopia witnesses a tidal wave of violence and intimidation against the opposition, especially as the political and ethnic situation escalates. In this regard, Maat for Peace submits this written intervention to document the most striking human rights violations in Ethiopia over the last few years, and to bring the promotion of justice and reparation for victims to these violations to attention.

### Human Rights Violations in Ethiopia: Neither Justice nor Reparation

The human rights situation has been dramatically deteriorating in Ethiopia for the last few years. Since Abiy Ahmed, the new Ethiopian Prime Minister, came to power in April 2018, the state has witnessed a commendable breakthrough in the human rights situation. However, it did not last long and the Ethiopian government has resorted to the same old oppressive tools on various occasions. The government inaction and passive response to violent acts and offenses only contributed to the already critical situation, and called for similar violations and attacks, which are monitored as follows:

#### 1. Crackdown on peaceful protests

On 24 September 2018, at least 8 people were killed by security forces in Gambella town, western Ethiopia, during a peaceful demonstration. Several more were beaten and mass arrests were conducted.

On October 21, 2018, during a public demonstration in Alamata town, Northern Ethiopia, Tigray Region on October 21, 2018, thousands were demanding the identity question of the Raya people to be recognized as Amhara, local security forces shot and killed 9 individuals. Additionally, at least 50 people were injured with gunshot and after beaten by security forces who intervened to disperse the protestors.<sup>1</sup>

On 26 and 27 October 2018, the public demonstrations held in Semera town of the Afar Regional State, Northeastern of Ethiopia, were met with forceful dispersal by the regional police force, who beat, and injured many demonstrators. 50 were also arrested. They were protesting against the local administration and demanding democratic reform and respect for human rights.<sup>2</sup>

On 22 July 2019, at least 25 people have died in clashes between the Ethiopian security forces and activists in Sidama, south of Ethiopia, which was about to witness a referendum on autonomy.<sup>3</sup>

Few days after the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, awarded the Nobel Peace prize in October 2019, protests erupted in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, objecting the Ethiopian government's crackdown on Oromia Media Network and its Executive Director, Jawar Mohammed. These protests, that was attacked and suppressed by the police, claimed the lives of 86 people.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> News: Protesters Killed By Security Forces In Southern Tigray Region, Northern Ethiopia, addis standard / October 22, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2TT1pKJ>.

<sup>2</sup> "Scores killed across Ethiopia in recent demonstrations", AHRE, 2 November 2018, <http://bit.ly/3cMnByR>.

<sup>3</sup> "Ethiopia referendum: Dozens killed in Sidama clashes", BBC, 22 July 2019, <https://bbc.in/39CWtQM>.

<sup>4</sup> ، على الرابط التالي 2019 نوفمبر 04، 21 إثيوبيا تتوعد "دعاة الفوضى"، عربي .. بعد ارتفاع ضحايا الاحتجاجات " <http://bit.ly/39Buu4b>.

In June 29, 2020, the 34-year-old Oromo folk singer and political activist, Hashalu Hondisa, was killed in the capital by unknown gunmen.<sup>5</sup> One week before his assassination, Hondisa appeared on an opposition media network and during the interview, he criticized the performance of the current Ethiopian government.<sup>6</sup> Ethiopia was rocked by violent protests, after the killing of the folk singer, and around 166 people have lost their lives. Let alone, more than 2000 people were arrested.<sup>7,8</sup> Consequently, due to the protests and the unrest, the Ethiopian authorities have shut down the internet and social media platforms.<sup>9</sup>

## 2 The Violence committed by law-enforcement forces

Security forces' violations are steadily increasing as they never get held responsible neither does the government take action to stop such violations. Hence, security forces did as follows:

On the 10th of March, 2018, 9 people were shot dead and 15 were wounded by military officers in Showa. As a result, thousands of the residents of Oromo departed to Kenya for fear of such destiny.<sup>10</sup> On the 8th of July, 2018, the special counter-terrorism forces attacked 3 regions (Kobo, Olanola, and Alenso) in Chinaksen, Oromia Region; such attack resulted in the killing of 3 people.<sup>11</sup>

On the 10th and 11th of January, 2019, both security forces and community groups attacked Qemant Settlement in Metema with grenades and rifles, which lead to the death of 58 in 24 hours. Also on the 29th of September, 2019, 43 Qemants were killed and 12 were injured.<sup>12</sup>

On the 10th of January, 2020, security forces started shooting the protesting students in Bule Hora University; as a result, a student was killed and tens were injured.<sup>13</sup> Another incident in February, 2020, just hours after the date for Ethiopia's parliamentary elections was announced, the Oromia Liyu police raided the inauguration of an Oromia Liberation Front (OLF) office in Welenchiti, firing live bullets and tear gas, killing one OLF supporter who was a clothes vendor.<sup>14</sup>

On August 9, 2020, at least ten people were killed in Ethiopia and dozens were injured, in clashes between protesters and security forces in the southern region. The initial information that Maat received was that the security forces had cracked down on peaceful civilians and shot them with live bullets in the head, stomach and chest, claiming the lives of 10 people, including a child so far, and injuring more than 30 others. These protests erupted in the wake of arresting local officials, activists, and members of political parties, who seek to establish a new independent region for their ethnic group (Wolaita).

## Recommendations

Eventually, Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights recommends the following:

- 5 : ، الرابط 2020 يوليو 2 الفنان الإثيوبي القتل الذي غنى للحرية، : بي بي سي - عربي، هاشالو هونديسا  
https://bbc.in/3iqFFjR.
- 6 : ، الرابط 2020 يوليو 1 لماذا تصارع "الأورومو" رئيس الوزراء؟، .سكاي نيوز بالعربية، إثيوبيا والعرقيات  
https://bit.ly/2DBpYYz.
- 7 United Nations news , Ethiopia urged to allow peaceful demonstrations, investigate protestor deaths, 20 July 2020, link : https://bit.ly/3a8VwRn.
- 8 : ، الرابط 2020 يوليو 5 قتيلا على الأقل في احتجاجات "عرقية" بعد اغتيال مغن مشهور، 166 :، إثيوبيا 24 فرانس  
https://bit.ly/30GIQPH.
- 9 : ، الرابط 2020 يوليو 5، ومقتل .العربية، اغتيال مطرب مشهور في إثيوبيا يشعل الغضب  
https://bit.ly/3gHqG4P.
- 10 OPED Kenya must protect refugees who fled brutal military attacks in Ethiopia, Amnesty International, access from 17 June 2020, access from: https://bit.ly/30TuWJe.
- 11 Ethiopia: Abusive police unit must be stopped, Amnesty International, access date 15 June 2020, access from: https://bit.ly/30NUxDA.
- 12 Ethiopia: Rape, extrajudicial executions, homes set alight in security operations in Amhara and Oromia, Amnesty International, access date 16 June 2020 , access from: https://bit.ly/2YGOXAa.
- 13 ، متاح 2020-6-14 وقف شبكة الاتصالات يتسبب في خسائر فادحة، تقرير خاص لووكالة شهادة الإخبارية، تاريخ الدخول :إثيوبيا  
https://shahadanews.com/?p=7102. على الرابط التالي
- 14 Ethiopia: Vendor killed, musician injured after police attack opposition supporters in Oromia, Amnesty International, access date 15 June 2020, access from: https://bit.ly/2zGha1u.

- Calls the Ethiopian authorities to immediately stop violating human rights, to provide reparation, and to hold accountable individuals responsible for violations.
  - Ensuring accountability, fair trials, provide victims with adequate remedies, and promote recovery and reconciliation for them, in the cases covered in this intervention.
  - Establishing a new independent supervisory body to monitor the state's security system and prioritize the values of accountability, transparency, impartiality, and speedy justice over law enforcement agencies.
  - Calls the Ethiopian government to take all the necessary measures to guarantee the political and civil rights of citizens, and to take into consideration arbitrary practices and extrajudicial killings.
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