



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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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 Elizka Relief Foundation, 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.

[21 August 2022]

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



## **Impact of Armed Conflicts on the Right to Development and Related Human Rights**

### **Background**

Countries are built on an interplay of long-assumed binaries; development or no development, war or peace, or respect for human rights or violation thereof, etc. These dichotomies are closely interrelated, there is no development without respect for human rights. Therefore, Elizka Relief Foundation presents this intervention in the context of its participation in the activities of the 51st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), to shed light on the right of development in three countries suffering from unstable economic conditions; namely Ethiopia, Mali and Nigeria, and the impact of the security condition on them.

### **First: Impact of the security condition on development in Mali**

Mali has been witnessing a state of instability and conflict since 2012, as a result of the ongoing military coups and the subsequent Covid-19 crisis in 2020, which pushed the financial economy into recession.(1) Despite the interplay of various counter-terrorism forces and internationally supported military operations, violent attacks and revenge killings have dramatically surged across Mali during the last period. (2)

As for the impact of the security condition on the agricultural sector, farmers were unable to cultivate their lands because the militants closed all paths leading to the farms. For example, Dogon farmers cannot work, because every time they go to the fields, they are killed by armed groups hiding around the villages. This caused a severe decline in food supplies and forced people to flee the area. Thus, they were displaced due to the security crisis. The security conditions coupled with climate change are the leading reasons behind people's displacement. Mainly, it is the security conditions that provoke displacements. At the same time, the absence of cultivation and letting agricultural areas regreen deteriorates the ecological conditions of the fields and this makes it harder for people to return. Today indeed, we are talking about five to six hundred thousand displaced in Mali. (3)

The deteriorating security condition has also impacted the educational situation. About 320 schools were shut down in 2021, affecting nearly 100,000 students. Overall, the number of schools closed due to insecurity has increased significantly from 1,344 in January 2021 with 403,000 students affected to 1,664 schools in December 2021 with 499,200 students affected.

In addition, school closures have reportedly contributed to an increase in early marriages and the rural exodus of girls, a phenomenon that increased the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse for these girls.

### **Second: Impact of the security condition on development in Ethiopia**

Near two years of conflict in Ethiopia has left thousands dead, forced more than two million people from their homes and pushed parts of the country into famine-like conditions. The government-imposed blockade slashed the influx of aid. There have been stark restrictions on humanitarian aid flowing to the region since the start of the conflict, including government suspensions of aid operations, blockade of aid routes, deliberate destruction of healthcare systems, and communications blackouts that hamper needs assessments (4)

The conflict in Ethiopia has also resulted in the displacement of thousands of people across the country and exacerbated cases of gender-based violence, with widespread reports of physical and sexual violence, particularly against women and girls.

Survivors of gender-based violence suffer devastating effects on their physical and mental health. In conflict-affected areas, they cannot get the support they need to recover from trauma and be able to move forward. This project will help improve access to health, psychosocial support and legal services for survivors of gender-based violence in conflict-

affected areas where high-quality response services are limited,” said Ousmane Dione, a Senegalese national, the Country Director for Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan and the Sudan.(5)

As for the economic and social effects of the conflict in Ethiopia, after twenty months of conflict in Ethiopia, Tigray is in ruins. Almost every aspect of the region's social, cultural, economic and infrastructure has been affected. The roads leading to Tigray through the Amhara were cut off.

Addis Pharmaceutical Factory, which previously covered 70% of the national demand, was looted and destroyed, and the Eritrean and Ethiopian forces responsible for the looting killed 16 civilians who tried to stop them from destroying the factory. The Almeida textile factory was looted and destroyed on 26 December by Eritrean soldiers. Within several months, almost all the factories in central and eastern Tigray were destroyed and rendered useless.

The education sector also suffered extensive looting and destruction. Axum and Adigrat Universities were reportedly raided and vandalised by Eritrean forces, while Mekelle University suffered partial looting. Destroyed institutions also included privately owned colleges and high schools, including primary and secondary schools in Raya, Selekhekha, and Sheraro. In addition, over the course of several months, 70% of health care facilities were destroyed, and 30% were damaged. Hospitals in Adwa and Abiy Addi were destroyed, while those in Axum, Adigrat, Fasti, Freweyni, and Hawzen were raided. The long list of destroyed and vandalised health facilities includes Fredashum Health Post, Jira Health Care Unit, and Adiftaw Health Post. In addition, almost all ambulances found in eastern, central, and north-western zones were taken to Eritrea or Amhara.(6)

### **Third: Impact of the security condition on development in Nigeria**

Nigeria's import of arms and ammunition decreased by 86.8% during the first quarter of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021. Nigeria over the years has been embattled with various insurgencies including Boko Haram terrorism, banditry, armed robbery, land border smuggling, and outright killings, amongst others. These attacks have reduced agricultural production and trade, restricted access to food and threatened many families who depend on agriculture for income. Over 100 thousand Nigerians have been displaced from their homes, often meaning the loss of livelihoods, assets, and critical support systems. This has also led to huge migration, causing overcrowding in some areas of the country that is perceived as safe. The impact that this insecurity in the country has on foreign investment can also not be overemphasized, with foreign direct investment dragging at record lows, directly affecting the economic conditions of citizens. (7)

### **Recommendations and Suggestions**

- 1 We recommend the Malian government to speed up the process of the peaceful transition of power, in a manner that preserves the human rights situation in the country, especially the right to development;
- 2 We call on the Ethiopian government to adopt a comprehensive national dialogue that preserves the rights of different ethnicities and guarantees their right to participate in economic, social, political and cultural development;
- 3 We call on the Ethiopian government to abide by the rules of international humanitarian law during the conflict period, and to neutralize civil institutions, such as universities and health facilities, from the conflict;
- 4 We call on the relevant UN mechanisms to strengthen all means of technical support for African countries in the context of combating armed and terrorist organizations.

- 1- World bank, Mali Overview <https://bit.ly/2KOxNLv>
- 2- CFR, Instability in Mali <https://on.cfr.org/3AjUBw9>
- DIIS, Interview: Climate change and conflict in Mali <https://bit.ly/3Qm0wq7>
- 3- Reliefweb, Mali: Improvement in security situation but civic space and democratic debate shrinking – UN expert <https://bit.ly/3PoTzmW>
- 4- Global Conflict Tracker, War in Ethiopia <https://on.cfr.org/3SLZipM>
- 5- World Bank, World Bank Supports Ethiopia’s Conflict-Affected Communities, Targets Over Five Million People <https://bit.ly/3dxvpsU>
- 6- The Africa report, Ethiopia: Tigray’s economy destroyed by civil war <https://bit.ly/3bRj8PU>
- 7- Nairametrics, Nigeria’s weapon import falls to N4.9 billion in Q1 2022 despite rising insecurity <https://bit.ly/3PobhqH>