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**IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251
OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED “HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL”**

**Written statement* submitted by the International Federation for the Protection of
the Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic & Other Minorities, a non-governmental
organization on the Roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 June 2006]

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

Statement on the Situation in Oromo, Ethiopia; Cabinda, Angola; and Khuzestan, Iran

Oromia, Ethiopia

IFPRERLOM wishes to express concern regarding reports of extrajudicial killings of Oromo Students in Oromia, Ethiopia.

Whereas the ruling coalition party led by the Tigrean Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) is alleged to be committing unparalleled human rights violations against the Oromo people, this statement deals mainly with the portion of extra-judicial killings of Oromo students that have been *reported*.

Ethiopia has been in a state of unrest since the May 2005 National Elections, and on 9 November 2005, a popular uprising of Oromo Students began at Ambo and spread all over Oromia.¹ These peaceful demonstrations, were held at regional and national levels against the New Education Policy, the Taxation and Agricultural Policy, the unfair and politically biased distribution of fertilizers, the banning of Oromo civic organisations (Human Rights League, Oromo Relief Association, Metcha-Tulama Self-Help Association), the transfer of the capital city of the regional state of Oromia from Finfinne (Addis Ababa) to Adama (Nazareth) and the systematic sidelining of genuine political organisations such as Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ogaden National Liberation Front, Sidama Liberation Front, Benishangul People Liberation Movement, among others by ruling party in May 2005 national election. They have continued to demand freedom of the press and the release of political prisoners.

The following is a list of alleged extra-judicial killings that have been reported:

On 9 November 2005 the police killed three Oromo students (Jaagamaa Badhaanee (from Ambo 06, grade 11 student); Kabbadaa Badhaasaa (from Tiukur Inchinnii, grade 11 student) and an unidentified female student) and wounded 17 in Ambo town. On 12 November 2005, a 10th grade student Lachiisaa Fullaasaa was killed at Muka Turii High School. On 16 November 2005, Dabalaa Oliiqaa Guutaa and Malaakuu Tarfaa Fayisaa, of Kofale High School in Arsi, were killed by TPLF/ Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) cadres. Eleni Kiteessa (female), student of grade 9 was severely wounded. On 28 November 2005, students Habtamuu Bayyataa Biqilaa and Figaaduu were killed in Jalduu town (W.Shewa), Katamaa Xaafaa and Nuuressaa Girmaa were severely wounded, and later died in Ambo Hospital. In December 2005 Alemayehu Gerba (Gemta Gerba), a handicapped Addis Ababa University student was shot dead in Akaki (Haqaaqii) prison, a small town just south of Finfinne (Addis Ababa). On 20 December 2005, the TPLF is reported to have killed three students in Qiltu Karaa, Western Oromia. Five more students were seriously injured and taken to Aayiraa Hospital, one of these was later reported to have died. On 24 January 2006, student Hayile Desta was killed by the state militia at Abbaya Chomman sub district, at the town of Finca'aa.

A recent report by *Human Rights Watch*, compiled after visits to Ethiopia, including Oromia, states that "the Ethiopian government is using intimidation, arbitrary detentions

¹ <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/06/15/ethiop11124.htm>

and excessive force in rural areas of Ethiopia to suppress post-election protests and all potential dissent.”²

IFPRERLOM is gravely concerned about current development in Oromia and calls upon the Ethiopian Government to respect the International Covenants and Conventions to which it is a signatory as well as its own constitution: *Article 15* ‘The Right of Life’; *Article 16* ‘The Right of the Security of a Person’; *Article 17* ‘Right of Liberty’; *Article 18* ‘Prohibition Against Inhuman Treatment’; and *Article 19* ‘Right of a Person Arrested’. IFPRERLOM calls upon the Human Rights Council to urge the Ethiopian government to adhere to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, (ICCPR), ratified by Ethiopia in 1993.

Cabinda, Angola

The human rights situation in Cabinda is characterised by a heavy army presence, following the earlier military offensives launched by the Government. The army presence is extended to all localities and is largely interpreted as having the intent to control and intimidate the population. The Angolan Government has failed to acknowledge the resulting human rights violations, documented and compiled in several reports produced by the civil society association Mpalabanda.³ The February 2005 report of Hina Jilani, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, states that representatives of state prosecution and judiciary in Cabinda claimed they had not received any cases of human rights abuses and merely alluded to instances of “overzealous” action by the police. The report concludes that either the judiciary does not receive the cases or chooses not to address them.⁴

Harassment and intimidation in the territory continue on a daily basis. A strong contingent of “anti-riot” police is present in the capital and has been used to prevent civil society meetings and initiatives. A march for peace programmed for the 29 January 2006, to commemorate anniversary of the Treaty of Simulambuco was banned. The houses of the main Mpalabanda activists were surrounded by police and riot police were stationed throughout the capital. Two days earlier, on 27 January, Angolan soldiers opened fire on a truck, killing Elisée Khonde Muanda, who was eight months pregnant and wounding another youth, Paulo Conde. This act was preceded on 2 January by the killing of Francisco Banheva (40) from Mbucu-Chivava, who was working on his land in Mbata-Missinga when he was surprised by a group of Angolan soldiers who beat him to death. He had been working on a Monday; whilst a curfew imposed in the area restricted people to work in the fields only on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Since mid-2005, there has been a marked popular opposition to and protest over the Catholic Church’s naming of an “Angolan” bishop to preside over Cabinda, resulting in tense relations between the Vatican and the local population and Catholic priests.⁵ In 2005 the Angolan Catholic Church suspended two popular Cabindan priests, including Father Raul Tati, and shut down the Immaculate Conception Church in Cabinda.⁶ Following the

² <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/12/ethiop12417.htm>

³ Mpalabanda – Civic Association of Cabinda (MACC); a local human rights NGO

⁴ <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/110/96/PDF/G0511096.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵ <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/18/angola12306.htm>

⁶ Voice of America, www.voanews.com

arrest of twenty-eight human rights activists outside the Sé Cathedral, during an investiture ceremony for the new Bishop, the Provincial Government demanded on 11 June 2006 as a condition for the release of the detained activists, that Augustinho Chicaia, president of Mpalabanda, sign a document in which he committed the organization not to use the “Church sanctua ry” for meetings of Mpalabanda.

Concerned at recent development in Cabinda and Oromia, and alarmed by rising levels of violence and arbitrary arrests, IFPRERLOM calls upon the Human Rights Council

to condemn the use of lethal force by security forces of the government;

to ensure that all extra-judicial acts of killings be investigated thoroughly and impartially by an independent international body in accordance with international standards;

to put pressure on the governments of Ethiopia and Angola to end repression against human rights activists and peaceful agents of civil society; and

to request standing invitations of the Council’s thematic mandates to visit the regions in question.

Khuzestan, Iran

Finally, IFPRERLOM wishes to highlight the situation for the indigenous Ahwazi Arabs in the province of Khuzestan in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The UN Special Rapporteur (SR) on Adequate Housing, Mr. Miloon Kothari, in his report following the mission to visit Iran from 19 to 31 July 2005, identified as a key concern that there is “disproportionably adverse housing and living conditions of ethnic and religious minorities (Kurds, Bahais, Arabs and Laks) and groups like the Nomads.” The SR recommends that the Government of Iran focus especially on historically marginalized provinces such as Khuzestan and Sistan-Baluchestan and reinforces, expand and implement policies aimed ethnic and religious minorities in vulnerable situations, including the Kurds and the Arabs.⁷

At the end of his mission, Mr. Kothari spoke to IRIN in Tehran on 9 Aug 2005 about his preliminary findings: “When you visit Ahwaz there are thousands of people living with open sewers, no sanitation, no regular access to water, electricity and no gas connections”⁸ Mr. Kothari further stated; “[I]n Khuzestan [...] we visited the areas where large development projects are coming up, sugar cane plantations and other projects along the river, and the estimate we received is that between 200,000 - 250,000 Arab people are being displaced from their villages because of these projects.” The SR also noted that in Khuzestan “large development projects, like petrochemical plants, are being built leading to the displacement of entire villages - with thousands of people not consulted on the projects, informed of the impending displacement, nor offered adequate resettlement and compensation,” and added “[...] the compensation being offered to the Arab villagers who

⁷ <http://www.unhcr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/C5FDB550512C6025C1257057004F873A?opendocument>

⁸ www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=48518

were being displaced is sometimes one fortieth of the market value - and there is nothing they can do about it. It's a fait accompli.”⁹

IFPRERLOM appeals to the Human Rights Council to urge the government of Iran

to follow up on the recommendation made by the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing Rights; and

to provide adequate compensation, support and consultancy with indigenous populations affected by development projects, whilst promoting and protecting the rights of minorities in Iran.

⁹ www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=48518