

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



HRCO stands for democracy, the rule of law and the respect of human rights

PRESS RELEASE

**ETHNIC BASED DISPLACEMENT,
MISTREATMENT, DESTROYING PROPERTIES
AND DISPLACING PEOPLE IN THE NAME OF
DEVELOPMENT MUST STOP IMMEDIATELY!**

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INTRODUCTION

The Human Rights Council, formerly known as the “Ethiopian Human Rights Council” (EHRCO) was established on oct.9 1991. It is the first independent, membership based, non political, and not for profit human rights group in Ethiopia. EHRCO was established under article 1(A) of the transitional government of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian civil code no.404-482.

The human rights council is a legal institution registered as “Ethiopian charity” according to charities and societies proclamation No. 621/2009. The human rights council is non partisan, non profit making and impartial human rights defending organization. The human rights council stands for democracy, rule of law and the respect of human rights. Over the past 24 years HRC has strived and is still striving to help improve the human rights situation in Ethiopia while difficulties are worsening more.

Of its many program activities the most outstanding or flag ship program is monitoring, investigating and reporting of human rights violations in Ethiopia. Through its regular and special reports HRC has called upon all concerned parties to bring an end to impunity, to get lesson from every case, to bring human rights violators to justice, and to give justice and compensation to the victims. In its 24 years existence HRC issued 36 regular reports, 139 special reports and numerous press releases.

In accordance with this spirit HRC will be giving a press conference on Thursday, Nov 26/2015. The main objective of the press conference is to highlight two selected very serious human rights violation cases and to call upon, to put pressure and to encourage the Ethiopian government to give attention to the violations. We would like to ask the different concerned bodies by standing with us in this Endeavor to fulfill their professional, moral and citizens’ duty.



Included in this press conference are:

1. Human rights violations in the regional state of Oromia

The first case which will be raised on the press conference is the human rights violations that have committed in the regional state of oromia, western shewa zone NONO ALO district. As a result of this human rights violation one person has been killed, 10 people sustained small and severe physical injuries, 99 huts have been burned down and reduced to ashes, 25 tin roofed houses burned. The estimated total worth of the destroyed properties is 30 million birr.

HRC sent its experts to the area and after conducting the necessary investigation, in Aug. 2015 issued 136th special report titled “ethnic based displacement and mistreatment must stop immediately!” Even though we have sent the special report to the concerned government bodies, the violation never came to an end. After the release of the special report, Ato Abi Teklemariam who was a dweller in NANO QONDALA district has been killed on September 3/2015 at 12:30a.m at the time of his death Ato Abi was on duty with other people patrolling his village armed with a licensed rifle. After his body was autopsied at Menelik II hospital on September 4/2015, it was laid to rest on September 5/2015 at Saint Gabriel church of “NONO” district.



Ato Abi Teklemariam
Killed on September 3/2015

Moreover, the victims have reported that the local officials who burned down their houses are threatening them by saying “you go around and file complaints but to no avail. If you don’t sit tight we will take extra measures”



Article 11 (1) of the INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON ECONOMIC SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ICESCR) which Ethiopia has ratified demands every person and his families to be entitled to the right to food, the right to shelter, and the right to clothing. It also requires the signing states to guaranty these rights. Article 32 (1) of the FDRE states “any Ethiopian or foreign national lawfully in Ethiopia has, with in the national territory, as well as the freedom to leave the country at any time he wishes to.” Nevertheless, contrary to these constitutional and international declarations human rights violations are being committed.

2. Human rights violations in the regional state of Afar

Based on the complaints of semi pastoralists from the regional state of Afar whose date tree farm lands had been demolished, the human rights council has issued its 138th special report titled “DISPLACING PEOPLE AND DESTROYING PROPERTIES IN THE NAME OF DEVELOPMENT MUST STOP IMMEDIATELY!” after conducting investigation into the matter. Though HRC has sent its 138th special report to different concerned government bodies, the victims have filed complaints to HRC that they haven’t got any solution.

As per the article 40 of the FDRE constitution every Ethiopian citizen has the right to the ownership of private property and is entitled to get commensurate compensation. In addition to this, the INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON ECONOMIC SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ICESCR) which Ethiopia is a member state demands every person and his families to be entitled to the right to food, the right to shelter, and the right to clothing. It also requires the signing states to guaranty these rights.

Conclusion

While citizens’ freedom of movement and the right to property is enshrined under the FDRE constitution on the other hand these rights and freedoms are being violated by local government officials and police officers. These local officials who claim the victims to be “nonnative aliens to the area” are destroying peoples’ properties and persecuting their preys with impunity. HRC believes this violation contradicts with the land’s laws and international conventions.



This kind of human rights violation is not peculiar to NANO province and NONO QONDALA district; it is possible to see from HRC's previous reports that such violations were and are still being committed by local government officials and law enforcement bodies throughout the country.

The victims of the above mentioned human rights violation who lost their houses and other properties did not receive any help from the government. The heart breaking fact that the suffering of children, the elderly, and the weak did not get any attention from the government is against humanity and legal principles. The Human Rights Council calls upon the government to give due attention to the matter and bring the perpetrators to justice immediately.

Ethiopia has ratified and made part and parcel to its national laws the UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR) and AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHT (ACHPR). The FDRE constitution article 40(4&7) states that every Ethiopian citizen has the right to the ownership of private property and is entitled to get commensurate compensation. In addition to this article 25 of the UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR) demands the government to respect and protect any people's right to use their natural resources.

However, there are serious problems on the side of the Ethiopian government regarding respecting, protecting, and fulfilling rights in accordance with international conventions and constitutional declarations. So, by taking into consideration the ethnic based displacement and the human rights violations that are committed in the name of development HRC strongly demands the government to compensate the ones who lost their properties, to create conducive living condition for semi pastoralists, and especially to bring the ones who demolished illegally the date tree farm lands to justice immediately.

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