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Reg. No. 1146

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**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

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

March 28, 2011

**URGENT APPEAL**  
**Protect the Rights of Displaced Citizens!**

In search of a more fertile farmland, persons originally residing in Northern Ethiopia, particularly from the Amhara Regional State, have migrated to the Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Regional State (SNNPRS) of Ethiopia. Beginning around from the year 1990 these people have originally settled specifically in *Gura Farda Woreda* in the *Bench Maji Zone* of the SNNPRS. With the acquiescence of the regional administration, these individuals were permitted to form a distinct community with numerous families establishing sustenance and commercial farms. At the time of reporting, the number of Northern migrants residing in *Gura Farda Woreda* is now estimated to be in tens of thousands.

At the request of the Bench Maji Zone administration, which claimed that these settlers have caused inconvenience to the indigenous societies of the area, the Office of the President of the SNNPRS passed a decision on June 18, 2009, stating that in accordance with the sequence of their arrival in the area, the settlers must be provided with legal tenure of a specified area or face eviction.

However, despite significant investments of time and resources, the individuals discussed above were evicted from their place of residence and farms without the opportunity to properly transfer their properties beginning from March 2012. With no alternative explored to avoid their displacement or precautions taken to prevent its adverse effects, these individuals are now found scattered across different parts of the country without shelter and access to secure health or other essential facilities. Approximately seventy children, women, and elderly people have taken refuge in Addis Ababa with no humanitarian assistance provided and with no means to mitigate their vulnerable conditions as displaced persons. They are in need of immediate assistance.

Thus the Human Rights Council calls on all concerned national and international governmental and nongovernmental organizations to protect the rights of these people in accordance with international standards of the rights of displaced persons, at the same time recommending;

- That all concerned parties urge the government of Ethiopia to ensure the repatriation of the displaced persons to their habitual place of residence and property.

- That all the displaced persons taking shelter in Addis Ababa and elsewhere be provided with immediate humanitarian assistance and access to basic shelter, medical services, etc.
- That the decision to evacuate these people be reviewed in a way that involves the affected communities and in keeping with international legal and humanitarian standards.
- That ongoing resettlement of these people is conducted with full-fledged free and informed consent and prior involvement of the people, providing for a sustainable plan and strategy.
- That the directly concerned parties, the Federal government of Ethiopia and the SNNPRS take urgent actions to correct the aforementioned human rights violations on citizens.

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HRCO has an observer status in the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, is a member of World Organization Against Torture and is also a corresponding member of the International Federation of Human Rights.

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