



የኢትዮጵያ

ሰብዓዊ መብቶች ጉባዔ (ኢሰሜ)

ETHIOPIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (EHRCO)

---

## Press Release on the Right to Petition and Arbitrary Detention

December 8, 2022

### Introduction:

28 residents expressing the heavy attacks being committed from different parts of Wollega Zone, Oromia Region, and the fact that it is costing in dear life, forged their concern to the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) on December 3, 2022 i.e. to its Central District Office located in *Ledeta*, whereby 22 of the 28 people were taken whilst stepping out of the office and detained, December 3, 2022 onwards, in a police station located around Tekele Haimanot, thus, since their detention, in following-up with the concerned security officials on their whereabouts detained as well as status, EHRCO's experts are able to establish that their detention is linked to a security-related as well as exaggerated information that had prior reached the police.

As per the promise given *vis-à-vis* their prompt release during the discussion held on December 6, 2022, they were brought before the Addis Ababa City Administration First Instance *Arada* Court and each released on bail.

Be that as it may, while realizing that EHRCO is a legally-established and an independent organization to which petitioning parties should go to forge their petition freely and without embarrassment, EHRCO believes that, following the inquiry of the 28 petitioners' *vis-à-vis* their issues brought to our organization, the arrest of the 22 people is arbitrary. This illegal act, whilst imposing a security concern on petitioners and the fact that such an act has been observed during such a time is improper and will lead to legal accountability, EHRCO urges for such an act not to be repeated hereafter.

### Related Legal Obligations:

As clearly stated in article 30 (1) of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), "Everyone has the right to assemble and to demonstrate together with others peaceably and unarmed, and to petition."

On the other hand, article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

(ICCPR) establishes that “Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person.” It clearly stipulates that, “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.”

In the same vein, and as elucidated clearly on article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.”

### **EHRCO’s Call:**

- It is known that 22 of the 28 residents from different parts of Wollega, Oromia Region, who had come physically and expressed their concern that serious attacks are being committed and that it is costing in dear life, were detained following security-related and exaggerated information that the police claims had been prior received. And although, a few days later, they were released on bail, granted that such an act is the abuse of power by security forces that improperly limits citizen’s right against arbitrarily arrested, and to petition as well as their freedom of movement, EHRCO urges for such an act not be repeated hereafter,
- Granted that the commission of such an act is one that could lead other parts of community to fear bringing forth their petition to EHRCO or other concerned bodies as well as to lose trust in human rights organizations, EHRCO urges for security forces to refrain from such an act,
- EHRCO also calls for elders, religious fathers, social activists, media houses, civil society organizations (CSOs), and all other concerned members of the community, to contribute their part so as to curtail the gruesome attacks being committed against unarmed community members within the area as well as to prevent the rights of petitioners from being violated.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia