

REFERENCE: CERD/91st/EWUAP/SW/ks

13 December 2016

Excellency,

I write to inform you that in the course of its 91st session, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has considered, under its early warning and urgent action procedures, allegations of the use of excessive force against peaceful protesters in the Oromia region of Ethiopia.

The information received by the Committee alleges that tens of thousands of arrests, mass killings, thousands of injuries and hundreds of enforced disappearances have been carried out by the country's security forces in the context of ethnic tension since November 2015. It is reported that this violence began during protests in the Oromia region in opposition to the Government's 'Addis Ababa Integrated Development Master Plan' and extended to the Amhara region in 2016. In addition, 55 people died on the 2 October 2016 at the Oromo's Irrechaa festival during a stampede that was allegedly provoked by state police forces which fired teargas and warning shots at the crowd. Subsequently, on the information available to the Committee, there appears to have been no investigation, prosecution or condemnation of those responsible for the excessive use of force and its consequences.

The Committee is concerned that these allegations, if verified, could hinder the full enjoyment of rights under the Convention in the State party, in particular the rights enshrined in article 5 b), d) vii, viii, ix and in article 6. In this regard, the Committee refers to its previous concluding observations of 2007 (CERD/C/ETH/CO/15 para. 19) and of 2009 (CERD/C/ETH/CO/7-17 para. 17) regarding the ethnic conflicts on its territory and the related human rights violations.

In accordance with article 9(1) of the Convention and article 65 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee requests that the State party submit information on all of the issues and concerns outlined above by 3rd April 2017.

In particular, it requests that the Government of Ethiopia provides information on:

- (a) Measures taken to end the alleged excessive use of force by police forces during peaceful protests;

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- (b) Measures taken to promptly investigate the aforementioned allegations, and to prosecute and punish those responsible; and
- (c) Measures taken and planned to be taken to restore peace in the Oromia and Amhara regions.

Furthermore, the Committee reminds the Government of Ethiopia to ensure full respect of its human rights obligations within the context of the state of emergency.

Allow me, Excellency, to reiterate the wish of the Committee to continue to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Government of Ethiopia, with a view to assisting it to implement the Convention effectively.

Yours sincerely,

Anastasia Crickley
Chair

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination