

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

Ref.: AL ETH 2/2023
(Please use this reference in your reply)

13 February 2023

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on minority issues; Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 43/8, 51/8, 45/3 and 44/5.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning **the alleged incident between Ethiopian governmental forces and the Karayu Oromo minority, leading to the abduction and subsequent enforced disappearance of 39 Karayu Oromo individuals, including several community leaders, and the killing of 14 of these individuals.**

According to the information received:

The Karayu Oromo people are a minority and one of the last remaining pastoralist communities in Ethiopia. They practice a traditional religion and actively exercise the Gadaa political system. This system is the traditional democratic socio-political system developed from the knowledge gained through the community experience over generations. The Abba Gada (Chief) and Abba Boku (Military Chief) are not only political positions among Karayu Oromo, but also sacred positions within the community.

It is reported that on 30 November 2021, in East Shewa zone, Fentale District, Oromia region, considered as non-international armed conflict zone, the Ethiopian police arrested 13 Karayu members, when members of the community allegedly refused to join the military to fight in the conflict in Northern Ethiopia.

On 1 December 2021, the governmental forces went to Karra/Motoma, Oromia region, allegedly in search of individuals who they suspected were supporters of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). At approximately 1 p.m., when they failed to find the individuals they were looking for, they reportedly burned down several houses, and then approached the location where the community leaders had gathered for a prayer ceremony. It is further reported that the governmental forces then told those gathered at the ceremony that they wished to talk to the community chief (Abba Gada) and others about the events of 30 November 2021. The governmental forces took 39 individuals away from the gathering, including the Abba Gada and several other community leaders. Two of the abducted individuals escaped later on the same day.

Also on the same day, 1 December 2021, approximately 10 km from the ceremony site, gunshots were heard, and in the morning of the next day, 2 December 2021, members of the local community found 14 bodies, including those of the chief (Abba Gada) and military chief (Abba Boku). Security forces refused to allow the Karayu to give the 14 persons who were killed a proper burial.

The remaining 23 Gadaa leaders were reportedly driven 55 km southwest to a military camp at Welenchiti, East Shewa zone, Oromia region, where they were detained for a week before being transferred to a secret detention place in Mojo, East Shewa zone, Oromia region. They were allegedly tortured while in detention (routinely beaten and starved, and some of their limbs broken). On 8 December 2021, one of the persons abducted reportedly died from injuries inflicted while in detention. On 31 December 2021, six of the detainees were released from detention. The others were released in March 2022.

On 3 February 2022, Oromia regional authorities launched an investigation into these killings. The Oromia Police Commissioner announced the arrest of two individuals suspected to be connected to the December 2021 attack. By 13 March 2022, nine individuals had been arrested in connection with the killings. Also, on 22 March 2022, the Oromia region's communication bureau announced that it was planning to hold a reconciliation process with the Karayu Oromo community in connection with the attack. Yet, the individuals involved in the killings remained to date unpunished.

We express very serious concern about what is reported as a targeted and grave violation of the right to life, right to liberty and security of person, right not to be subjected to enforced disappearances and to torture or other cruel, inhumane, or degrading punishment or ill-treatment, as well as other rights and freedoms of the Karayu Oromo minority. In particular, we are gravely concerned about the reported killing of the 14 Karayu Oromo individuals, including those of the chief (Abba Gada) and military chief (Abba Boku), which appears to be a violation of article 6, paragraphs 1 and 2, 7, 9, 16, 26 and 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) read alone and in conjunction with article 2(3). The right to life constitutes a norm of jus cogens and customary international law from which no derogation may be made under any circumstances. We are also concerned about the abduction of the 39 Karayu Oromo individuals, including the chief (Abba Gada) and several other community leaders, during the mentioned gathering on 1 December 2021, which appears to be a prima facie violation of the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of enforced disappearances which has attained the status of jus cogens. We draw your Excellency's Government's attention to the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, which establishes that no State shall practice, permit or tolerate enforced disappearances, in particular, article 2 which prohibits enforced disappearances and article 7 that stipulates that no circumstances whatsoever, whether a threat of war, a state of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked to justify enforced disappearances. Moreover, enforced disappearance is prohibited under customary international law (rule 98). We express further concern regarding the alleged arrest and detention of 13 members of the Karayu Oromo people on 30 November 2021 and 23 Gadaa leaders on 1 December 2021. We recall that the prohibition on arbitrary deprivation constitutes a peremptory norm from which no derogation is permitted.

We are further concerned that the attack on the Karayu Oromo people appears to violate article 4(2) of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977, ratified by Ethiopia on 8 April 1994, which includes (but is not limited to) the prohibition of violence against the well-being of people who are not participating directly in the conflict, as well as prohibits collective punishment.

We would like to express further serious concern regarding the specific targeting of leaders of an ethno-religious minority as described above, which appears to be a violation of article 27 of the ICCPR and article 1 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities which provides that States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.

We highlight the need for an impartial investigation into all suspected unlawful killings, through which information is constantly shared with the family members in line with international standards, particularly the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, adopted by Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/65, and the Revised United Nations Manual on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions (the *Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of a Potentially Unlawful Death (2016)*).¹ A failure to conduct a proper investigation, including identifying and sanctioning potential perpetrators, is regarded, in itself, as a violation of the right to life.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide clarifications on how the alleged events, if confirmed, are compatible with your Excellency's Government's obligations under the provisions cited in the annex below and how it plans to remediate any inconsistencies with international human rights and humanitarian standards.
3. Please indicate whether any investigations have been carried out in connection with the alleged enforced disappearance, torture and killing of 14 Karayu Oromo individuals, in accordance with international human rights standards, including the above-mentioned Minnesota Protocol, and provide further information on the identification and sanctioning of the possible perpetrators. In case there has not been any

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/MinnesotaProtocol.pdf>.

progress in these domains, please provide an explanation.

4. In particular, provide detailed clarifications on the reported abduction and subsequent enforced disappearance of the 39 Karayu Oromo individuals, including the Abba Gada and several other community leaders, during the mentioned gathering on 1 December 2021, and the further killing of the 14 Karayu Oromo individuals, including those of the chief and military chief.
5. Please provide the names of the above-mentioned individuals detained by your Excellency's Government, as well as the factual and legal basis for their arrest and detention. Please explain how those are compatible with the obligations of Ethiopia under international human rights law.
6. Please provide clarifications on how the alleged policies and actions of your Excellency's Government with regard to the attack on the Karayu Oromo people are consistent with the customary prohibition of enforced disappearance in international humanitarian law, and with article 4(2) of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977, ratified by Ethiopia on 8 April 1994, which includes (but is not limited to) the prohibition of violence against the well-being of people who are not participating directly in the conflict, as well as prohibits collective punishment.
7. Please provide clarifications on how the alleged actions of your Excellency's Government are consistent with article 3(1) and the accompanying articles of the Geneva Conventions which stipulate the right to humane treatment of individuals not actively participating in conflict, without distinction founded on race, religion or faith, or other similar criteria.
8. Please provide any information on how your Excellency's Government is ensuring the protection and promotion of the identity of the Karayu Oromo community in Ethiopia.
9. Please provide clarification on what constitutional, legislative and policy safeguards have been put in place by your Excellency's Government to protect against all forms of religious, ethnic, and cultural discrimination against the Karayu Oromo community in Ethiopia.
10. Please indicate which effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures have been taken by your Excellency's Government to ensure the prevention and termination of acts of enforced disappearance as required by article 3 of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

We would appreciate receiving a response within 60 days. Past this delay, this communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#). They will also

subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

Further, we would like to inform your Excellency's Government that after having transmitted the information contained in the present communication to the Government, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention may also transmit the case through its regular procedure in order to render an opinion on whether the deprivation of liberty was arbitrary or not. The present communication in no way prejudices any opinion the Working Group may render. The Government is required to respond separately to the allegation letter and the regular procedure.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Fernand de Varennes
Special Rapporteur on minority issues

Mumba Malila
Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

Aua Baldé
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

Morris Tidball-Binz
Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, we would like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to its legal obligations under the international treaties it has ratified.

We firstly recall that the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948, is a foundational standard-setting document of the United Nations system, and recognizes in article 1 that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". We also highlight article 3, which states that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person". We further recall article 5 which protects all people from "torture" or "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" and article 9, which declares that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile". Further, we remind your Excellency's Government of article 18, which protects the freedom of "thought, conscience and religion" and the freedom "either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance".

We would like to recall your Excellency's Government's obligation under the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, ratified by Ethiopia on 11 June 1993. **Article 6(1)** of the Covenant stipulates that every human being has the inherent right to life. As provided under this article this right shall be protected by law and no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life. As provided under **article 6(2)** of the Covenant, in the countries where the death penalty has not been abolished, the sentence of death can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court. **Article 7** of the Covenant provides that no one shall be subject to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. **Article 9(1)** of the Covenant provides everyone with a right to liberty and security. As provided under article **9(1)**, no one shall be arrested or detained arbitrarily, and the liberty of an individual shall be deprived only on such grounds and under such procedures as are established by law. Additionally, under **article 9(4)** of the Covenant, anyone who is arbitrarily detained or arrested shall be entitled to take proceedings before a court, so that the court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his or her detention and order his or her release if the detention is not lawful. **Article 10(1)** of the Covenant provides that any person who has been deprived of his liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person. Under **article 12** of the Covenant, everyone who is lawfully within the territory of a state has a right to move freely within that territory. Article 16 of the Covenant which states that everyone shall have the right to recognition everywhere a person before the law. **Article 18(1) and 18(4)** of the Covenant respectively stipulates that everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and **religion**. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. Under **article 20** of the Covenant, any propaganda to war or any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law. According to **article 26** of the Covenant, all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of

the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any grounds such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. **Article 27** of the Covenant provides that ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities existing in states party to the Covenant shall not be denied their right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own **religion**, or to use their own language. The above provisions shall be read and considered both along and in conjunction with the States obligations in article 2(3) to ensure the right to remedy of persons whose above mentioned rights are violated.

In relation to State obligations pursuant to article 27 of the ICCPR, we **recall CCPR general comment no. 23: article 27 (Rights of Minorities)**, adopted by the Human Rights Committee on 8 April 1994. In particular, we call attention to the Human Rights Committee's conclusion that article 27 "relates to rights whose protection imposes **specific obligations** on States parties" and that the "protection of these rights is directed to ensure the **survival and continued development** of the cultural, religious and social identity of the minorities concerned" (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.5, para 9). It is thus concluded that "**positive measures** by States may also be necessary to protect the identity of a minority and the rights of its members" (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.5, para 6.2).

In relation to State obligations pursuant to article 9 of the ICCPR, we recall **CCPR general comment no. 35: article 9 (Liberty and security of person)**, adopted by the Human Rights Committee in October 2014. In particular, we highlight the Human Rights Committee's conclusions as well as the jurisprudence of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention according to which arrest or detention as punishment for the legitimate exercise of the rights as guaranteed by the ICCPR is arbitrary, including freedom of opinion and expression (art. 19), freedom of assembly (art. 21), freedom of association (art. 22), freedom of religion (art. 18) and the right to privacy (art. 17). We also recall the conclusion that "enforced disappearances violate numerous substantive and procedural provisions of the Covenant and constitute a **particularly aggravated form of arbitrary detention**" (CCPR/C/GC/35, para 17). We further recall that in accordance with the jurisprudence of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, deprivation of liberty on the grounds of discrimination based on national, ethnic or social origin, language or religion is arbitrary.

We wish to further refer to Human Rights Committee, general comment no. 36 (2018). It notes that the right to life is the supreme right from which no derogation is permitted (paragraph 2). It is most precious for its own sake as a right that inheres in every human being, but it also constitutes a fundamental right, whose effective protection is the prerequisite for the enjoyment of all other human rights and whose content can be informed and infused by other human rights. In its paragraph 23, it states that "The duty to protect the right to life requires States parties to take special measures of protection towards persons in situation of vulnerability whose lives have been placed at particular risk because of specific threats or pre-existing patterns of violence", including members of ethnic minorities. The General Comments makes clear that the right to life must be respected and ensured without distinction of any kind.

Investigations and prosecutions of potentially unlawful deprivations of life should be undertaken in accordance with relevant international standards, including

the aforementioned Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions and the United Nations Revised Manual for the Effective Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions (The Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death (2016), and must be aimed at ensuring that those responsible are brought to justice, at promoting accountability and preventing impunity. Investigations should explore, *inter alia*, the legal responsibility of superior officials with regard to violations of the right to life committed by their subordinates. They must always be independent, impartial, prompt, thorough, effective, credible and transparent. In the event that a violation is found, full reparation must be provided, including adequate measures of compensation, rehabilitation and satisfaction. States parties are also under an obligation to take steps to prevent the occurrence of similar violations in the future.

We also refer to the report on Medico-legal Death Investigations (MLDIs) (A/HRC/50/34) by the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, indicating that the bereaved families and next of kin should be informed in a timely and appropriate manner about the investigation into the death of their loved one, its progress and its findings and that should be protected from any threat resulting from their participation in the investigation (paras. 92 and 94).

With regard to the alleged enforced disappearance, if confirmed, it would amount to violations of articles 6, 7, 9 and 16 of the ICCPR, read alone and in conjunction with article 2(3). In this respect, we also make reference to the aforementioned general comment no. 36 on article 6 of the ICCPR, which states, *inter alia*, that extreme forms of arbitrary detention that are themselves life-threatening, in particular enforced disappearances, violate the right to personal liberty and personal security and are incompatible with the right to life (para. 57), and that enforced disappearance constitutes a unique and integrated series of acts and omissions representing a grave threat to life, and States parties must take adequate measures to prevent the enforced disappearance of individuals and conduct an effective and speedy inquiry to establish the fate and whereabouts of persons who may have been subject to enforced disappearance (para. 58).

We draw your Excellency's Government's attention to the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, which establishes that no State shall practice, permit or tolerate enforced disappearances. The Declaration also proclaims that each State shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent and terminate acts of enforced disappearance in any territory under its jurisdiction. We further recall that the Declaration sets out the necessary guarantees to be offered by the State. In particular, articles 9, 10, 11 and 12 relate to the rights to a prompt and effective judicial remedy to determine the whereabouts of persons deprived of their liberty; to access of competent national authorities to all places of detention; to be held in an officially recognized place of detention, and to be brought before a judicial authority promptly after detention; to accurate information on the detention of persons and their place of detention being made available to their family, counsel or other persons with a legitimate interest; and to the maintenance in every place of detention of official up-to-date registers of all detained persons.

We would also like to refer to your Excellency's Government's obligation under the *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, ratified by Ethiopia on 14 March 1994. Under **article 2** of

the Convention, every state party is obliged to take effective legislative, administrative, judicial, or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction and no exceptional circumstances such as a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency may be invoked to justify the acts of torture.

Firstly, we would like to inform your Excellency's Government that the armed violence between the Ethiopian armed forces and OLA's troops has increased over the past two years and could amount to a non-international armed conflict as provided under **article 1** of the *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)*, 8 June 1977.

We would like to recall your Excellency's Government's obligation under the *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)*, 8 June 1977, ratified by Ethiopia on 8 April 1994. **Article 4(2)(a)** of the *Additional Protocol II* prohibits the parties of the conflict from committing murder or any kind of violence to the life, health and physical or mental well-being of people who are not participating directly or ceased to participate in the conflict. **Article 4(2)(b)** of the *Additional Protocol II* prohibits collective punishment. **Article 4(2)(c)** of the *Additional Protocol II* prohibits the parties to the conflict from taking people not participating directly or ceased to participate in the conflict as hostages. **Article 4(2)(d)** of the *Additional Protocol II* prohibits acts of terrorism. **Article 4(2)(e)** of the *Additional Protocol II* prohibits acts which are outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault.

Article 9 of the *Additional Protocol II* obliges the state parties to respect and protect the religious personnel and it prohibits the state parties from compelling the religious personnel to do tasks which are not compatible with their humanitarian mission. **Article 13** of the *Additional Protocol II* specifically provides that the civilian population shall not be the subject of any attack and it prohibits any act or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population.

Moreover, we would like to refer to your Excellency's Government's obligation under the *Geneva Conventions 1949*, ratified by Ethiopia on 2 October 1969. State parties under **Common article 3(1)** of the *Geneva Conventions*, are bound to treat those who are not participating actively in the conflict humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria. **Common article 3(1)(a)** of the *Geneva Conventions*, prohibits murder or any kind of violence to the life, cruel treatment or torture against individuals not participating actively in the hostilities. **Common article 3(1)(b)** of the *Geneva Conventions*, prohibits taking hostage those who are not participating actively in the hostilities. **Common article 3(1)(c)** of the *Geneva Conventions*, prohibits acts which are outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment. **Common article 3(1)(d)** of the *Geneva Conventions*, prohibits the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples.

We would further like to refer to your Excellency's Government's obligation under **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** acceded by Ethiopia on 11 June 1993. **Article 2(2)** of the Covenant provides that the States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, **religion**, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

In addition to the above cited international law, we would like to bring your Excellency's Government attention to other international standards, best practices, and recommendations which are relevant to the issues raised.

In relation to State obligations pursuant to article 27 of the ICCPR, we would like to remind your Excellency's Government of the international standards stemming from the **Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities** (hereinafter, "the Declaration"), adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on 18 December 1992 (A/RES/47/135). As it pertains to the rights of minorities, article 2.1 states that all persons belonging to minorities "have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination". Article 2.2 of the Declaration recognizes "the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life". Article 2.4 of the Declaration recognizes that "persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain their own associations". Article 3.1 recognizes that persons belonging to minorities can exercise their rights "individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without any discrimination". We further call attention to specific State duties with regards to the rights of minorities. In particular, we bring your Excellency's Government attention to article 1 of the Declaration, which calls on States to take "appropriate legislative or other measures" to protect and promote the existence of "national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories". We also recall article 4.1, which calls on States to "take measures where required to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law".

We would further like to call your Excellency's Government attention to the **2005 Working Group on Minorities' commentary on the application of the Declaration**. In particular, we recall the Working Group's conclusion that the "protection of the existence of minorities" protected in article 1 of the Declaration, "includes their **physical existence**, their continued existence on the territories on which they live and their continued **access to the material resources** required to continue their existence on those territories" (E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2005/2, para 24). We further recall their conclusion that, as it pertains to the State duty to take "appropriate legislative or other measures" to protect and promote the existence of minorities, this includes the adoption of legislative measures which are "intended to protect groups against **hatred and violence** on racial or ethnic grounds" (E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2005/2, para 32).

We further recall the **Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief**, adopted by consensus by the UNGA on 25 November 1981 (A/RES/36/55). We call your

Excellency's Government attention to article 1.2 which declares that no person "shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have a religion or belief of his choice". We further recall the specific right protected at article 6(g) to "to train, appoint, elect or designate by succession appropriate leaders called for by the requirements and standards of any religion or belief". We further highlight the State duty at article 4.1 to "take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief".

We remind your Excellency's Government of the outcome of Ethiopia's participation in the third cycle of the **UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review** (UPR) process in 2019. In particular, we recall the recommendations which were accepted by your Excellency's Government², such as the recommendations to "take further measures to promote tolerance and dialogue between ethnic and religious groups," to "continue to support dialogue on culture and religion for all ethnic groups in Ethiopia" and to "continue taking steps to promote religious dialogue and to prevent discrimination on religious grounds" (A/HRC/42/14, paras 163.210-163.211, 163.214). We also highlight the UPR recommendation to "continue to implement measures to eradicate all forms of discrimination through the promotion of interreligious dialogue and the prevention of discrimination on religious grounds" (A/HRC/42/14, para 163.215). We further recall several recommendations, accepted by your Excellency's Government, to "continue," "proceed with," "accelerate," "expedite," and "finalize" Ethiopia's accession to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (A/HRC/42/14, paras 163.26-163.30).

We also bring your Excellency's Government attention to the recommendations of the Forum on Minority Issues at its sixth session in November 2013, on **Guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities**. In particular, we highlight the recommendation that States "should take comprehensive measures against discrimination, intolerance, and — most notably — hostility or violence, torture and killings on the grounds of religion or belief" (A/HRC/25/66, para 58).

We further recall the recommendations of the Forum on Minority Issues at its seventh session in November 2014, on **Preventing and addressing violence and atrocity crimes targeted against minorities**. We highlight the recommendation that "particularly where historic tensions have existed, or violence has previously taken place, States should consider specific programmes and initiatives intended to prevent violence and intercommunal tensions" (A/HRC/28/77, para 21). We further recall the conclusion that "law enforcement personnel must be objective and professional, and act appropriately and without prejudice to protect minority communities" (A/HRC/28/77, para 51).

² A/HRC/42/14/Add.1, pp 6-7, 10.