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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by ArabEuropean Forum for Dialogue and Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



The crime of ethnic cleansing in Tigray

During the years 2020 and 2021, Ethiopia witnessed serious violations and violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law during the conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The conflict between the Tigray Liberation Front and the Ethiopian government has led to large-scale massacres, violence against civilians, and indiscriminate attacks throughout Tigray. That targeting is supporting the Ethiopian government's approach to getting rid of the Tigray ethnicity and committing the crime of ethnic cleansing against the members of that ethnicity.

In its initial report on the situation, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that all warring parties had committed violations amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Since November 2020 and until the withdrawal of the Ethiopian army, the Tigray region witnessed large-scale killing operations that reached, according to many estimates, the killing of 50,000 people on an ethnic basis. The region also witnessed a massive killing on the part of the Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers, whom the Ethiopian government facilitated their entry into the country to participate in those massacres. The international media reported scenes of mass murder and rape in defiance of the media blackout that the Ethiopian authorities tried to impose by cutting off the internet and preventing entry to the media to hide the crimes of ethnic cleansing and genocide.

According to the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the responsibility for these crimes is on the Ethiopian government.

Human rights reports have monitored a video clip documenting war crimes committed by Ethiopian army soldiers against civilians in separate areas of Tigray region.

The video clip showed scenes of extrajudicial executions carried out by Ethiopian soldiers against 40 civilians by killing them and then throwing their bodies from the top of a cliff in the "Debri Abay" area in the east of the region.

The Ethiopian air forces also launched an air attack on a market crowded with civilians in the town of Togoba caused the killing of 43 civilians, including women and children.

Soldiers from the Ethiopian army prevented ambulances from reaching the place, while the Ethiopian government did not respond to the strike, and human rights reports accused members of the Ethiopian army of kidnapping the dead and injured from "Togoba" hospitals. The Ethiopian army also refused to allow human rights organizations to reach the site of the accident until they could be excluded. They have to hide the traces of their crime against civilians, according to eyewitnesses.

The United Nations missions monitored the use of "rape" weapons by Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers against the women of the Tigray region as a systematic policy, so that some doctors' testimonies during the treatment of the victims, and the Ethiopian soldiers lost their humanity and forced the fathers and grandfathers to practice mass rape against their daughters.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflicts has repeatedly expressed her deep concern about the widespread and systematic perpetration of rape and sexual violence in Tigray. She also stated on April 21st that women and girls in Tigray are subjected to sexual violence with "unbearable cruelty," including gang rape by men in uniform, as well as sexual assaults on young girls and pregnant women, and forcing family members to witness these horrific abuses. The Special Representative also stated that these reports, corroborated by assessments made by health-care providers in the area, indicate that sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war.

Several international reports documented the vanishing of entire villages, in which homes were looted, burned and demolished. The residents of these houses fled to the bush, in the largest forced displacement that the continent witnessed. The inhabitants of those villages were illegally moved to the border with Sudan, while the rest remained besieged or forced to flee from their homes to other areas.

The historic Aksum Church witnessed the slaughter of a thousand worshipers and their dismemberment with tiles and knives, and 48 priests were killed in a place called “Edja Arbi” in the center of the Tigray region.

The residents of the region are exposed to difficult living conditions, by destroying their homes, villages and harvested crops, while the Eritrean forces burned crops, looted and destroyed factories, higher education institutes and pharmaceutical industries, while the Ethiopian Air Force bombed Makelele University, which was later looted by the Eritrean forces. In addition to the destruction of an food oil factory and a church, the Eritrean heavy artillery bombarded the Damo monastery in the western Tigray region, which is a UNESCO heritage site.

The United Nations announced that the people of the Tigray region in Ethiopia are suffering from a real humanitarian catastrophe, as almost all of them are in need of food assistance, calling for the collection of 203 million dollars to increase its assistance.

A WFP spokesperson said that the UN program has distributed emergency food aid to more than a million people since the distributions began in March in northwestern and southern Tigray regions, where 91% of Tigray's population is in need of emergency food assistance due to the conflict.

While large numbers of Ethiopian refugees flocked to the State of Sudan due to the deterioration of the security, political and humanitarian conditions due to the escalation of armed conflicts between the Tigray Liberation Front and the forces of the Ethiopian government. The total number of Ethiopian refugees in Sudan is about 90,000, most of whom are women and children.

Although Ethiopia refused to ratify the Rome Statute, the crimes that the region was subjected to crimes that can be considered by the International Criminal Court in the event of a referral from the United Nations Security Council, which is reinforced by the United States of America sanctions imposed on men in the Abi Ahmed authorities for committing war crimes in Tigray, as well as The court can use its jurisdiction of regional jurisdiction, which has been applied in the case of Myanmar. In addition, the Ethiopian legal framework does not contradict the International Criminal Court. Crimes against humanity are crimes that cannot be pardoned under the Ethiopian constitution.

Moving to resolve this worsening tragedy has become the duty of the United Nations Human Rights Council and join efforts to push the Ethiopian government and “free Tigray” organization to stop the fighting and open the way for humanitarian aid to enter the region and save the lives of millions of innocent people trapped due to the outbreak of the civil war inside Ethiopia.

Arab Network for Digital Media and Human Rights, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.