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ETHIOPIAN HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION

**Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (Affiliation No.
18)**

AGENDA ITEM 10

**Activity Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of
Women in Africa**

***Update on the Human Rights Situation of Women and Girls in
Ethiopia***

Commissioner Meskerem Geset Techane of EHRC

**73rd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and
Peoples' Rights**

20 October – 09 November 2022

Banjul, The Gambia

Honourable Chairperson,

Honourable Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa,

Honourable Commissioners,

Distinguished State delegates, representatives of NHRIs and NGOs,

All protocols duly observed,

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission's (EHRC's), Commissioner for Women's and Children's Rights, is pleased to address the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Commission) on the human rights situation of women and girls in Ethiopia during the reporting period.

Honourable Commissioners,

There have been some **concerning developments** in the past few months.

Conflict and insecurity

The renewal of hostilities in Northern Ethiopia since August 2022 poses a serious concern on the protection of civilians, disproportionately affecting women and girls in conflict affected areas. Additionally, limited progress has been made to ensure accountability of perpetrators, to ensure the protection of and rehabilitation of victims/survivors of gender based violence, preparedness and emergency response system, and effective and timely post conflict recovery measures.

Other forms of crisis such as drought, food insecurity, and risk of famine have worsened the situation of women and girls in various parts of the country.

The gendered risk of conflict and violence continues to exacerbate the precarious situation of women and girls in crisis. EHRC is alarmed by ethnic based attacks perpetuated by armed groups on civilians in West Wellega and the abduction of women and other residents in Benishangul Gumuz region.

In June 2022, EHRC monitored the situation of women in IDP sites located in Northern Ethiopia. EHRC is concerned by the findings which revealed the lack of gender and age

sensitive services; lack of adequate food, water, and health care; the vulnerability to violence and exploitation in the IDP sites; and restrictions on the free movement of IDPs.

Political participation

Women's adequate representation and meaningful participation in key political institutions and processes remains weak including in the preparations for the national dialogue process, local elections, and in peace building efforts. A recent assessment of the 6th General Elections by the National Election Board of Ethiopia echoed the deep-rooted stereotypes and negative attitudes among political parties on gender inclusion which pushes women away from the political and public space.

The marginalization of women from major public decision-making processes has also been reflected in the Federal Government's recent appointment of an all-men peace negotiation team to resolve the conflict in the Northern Ethiopia.¹

Honourable Commissioners,

We also wish to welcome some **positive developments** during the reporting period.

Political participation

The establishment of a coalition of CSOs advocating for women's equal and meaningful participation in the national dialogue process² and the National Dialogue Commission (NDC)'s engagement with this group is a positive step. EHRC has also been engaging women leaders and human rights defenders, and reinforcing the work of CSOs to amplify women's participation in national dialogue.

Right to safe working environment

Regarding the rights of women working in industrial parks, EHRC continues to monitor and engage with relevant federal and regional authorities, administrators of industrial parks, employers, and employees' union. Despite some positive measures to improve the working environment, minimum labour standards have not been met. Major concerns include the risk

¹ <https://addisstandard.com/newsalert-ethiopia-announces-names-of-seven-member-peace-negotiation-team-appointed-by-federal-govt/>

² [Ethiopia passes law to start national dialogue commission | CGTN Africa](#)

of hazardous work for women, weak safeguards for pregnant and nursing mothers, poor pay for long working hours, and lack of a strong oversight and accountability mechanism.

Honourable Commissioners,

In light of the above-mentioned concerns, EHRC makes the following recommendations:

For the **African Commission** and **Special Rapporteur** to urge the Government of Ethiopia to:

- Ensure a holistic approach to justice, accountability, and redress to address the full range of human rights violations suffered by women and girls;
- Take concrete and timely measures to prevent the recurrence of systemic violations including SGBV and strengthen emergency response for women and girls in conflict prone areas;
- Monitor and report progress on measures taken to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of SGBV, on redress and recovery mechanisms for survivors/victims, and on the reconstruction of essential services for women and girls;
- Introduce an enabling legal framework and other measures to ensure the equal and meaningful participation of women in public discourse and in decision-making including in relation to peace and consensus-building, and conflict recovery processes;
- Accelerate interventions to rebuild the lives of women and girls in situations of distress and crisis i.e., those affected by conflict, drought, famine, and displacement.
- Establish a robust oversight and accountability framework to ensure the protection of women working in industrial parks;

We further call on the **African Commission** and **Special Rapporteur** to provide the necessary technical support to the Government of Ethiopia to:

- Adopt a framework on women, peace and security to ensure the meaningful and equal participation of women and girls at all stages of peacebuilding, post-conflict recovery, and national dialogue processes;
- Strengthen mechanisms to ensure the security of women and girls, and address and redress conflict-related gender-based violations.

Thank you!