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AAA and CHR filed a Complaint against the Ethiopian Government before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

On February 6, 2023, Amhara Association of America (AAA) and Human Rights Centre of Pretoria University (CHR) submitted a complaint to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights against the Ethiopian Government. The complaint is made on behalf of ethnic Amhara residents in West Wollega, East Wollega, Horo Guduru Wollega, Qelem Wollega and West Shewa Zones of the Oromia Region who faced mass atrocities at the hand of state and non-state armed forces and militias. The complaint argues that the Ethiopian state bears responsibility for human rights violations committed by its agents, including the Oromia Special Forces (OSF), such as extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, property destruction, communication blackouts, violent dispersal of peaceful protests, and displacement. It is also submitted that the lack of adequate efforts on the part of the state to halt the atrocities and human rights violations committed by the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) or punish those responsible for violating the obligation of states to ensure the rights and freedoms of all individuals within its jurisdictions is not respected, thereby depriving the Amhara residents of several substantive rights in the African Charter.

While most of the international community's attention over the past two years has been focused on the civil war in Northern Ethiopia, the slaughter of Amharas, one of the largest ethnic groups in Ethiopia, has exploded in other parts of the country, particularly in the Oromia Regional State - where innocent Amharas, including children, pregnant women, disabled people, elderly and bedridden people, are killed every day in unprecedented numbers by the OLA and its allies, and at times by government security forces including the OSF. These atrocities against ethnic Amhara civilians are the result and continuation of decades of institutionalized discrimination and systematic persecution. Their plight is linked to the very narrative of Ethiopia's current federalism, which is based on ethnic arrangements, and the unwavering desire of ultranationalist forces, both within and outside of government structures, to downgrade/demonize Amharic language speakers. A dramatic upsurge in mass killings and displacement of Amharas and burning of villages began in 2018 after Abiy Ahmed Ali, an ethnic Oromo, was selected as Prime Minister of Ethiopia.

The Communication is submitted in line with the principle that allows individuals and non-governmental organizations to submit Communications to the African Commission in the public interest to vindicate the rights of vulnerable individuals and groups who are victims of human

rights violations. The Amhara Association of America (AAA) and the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria (CHR) hope that this complaint draws attention to the plight of Amharas in Oromia and other regions of Ethiopia and serves as a vehicle for accountability for crimes committed against Amharas.

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) is a non-profit civic organization that investigates and documents human rights atrocities and repression against regional minorities, including Amhara civilians in different parts of Ethiopia. AAA works with relevant governments and international institutions to advocate on behalf of the Amhara people to end the ongoing Amhara Genocide and hold perpetrators accountable.

The Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria (CHR), a hybrid institution that functions as an academic department of the Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, and a non-governmental organisation (NGO), was established in 1986 in Pretoria. The Centre works towards human rights education in Africa and the realization of the rights of women, children, people living with HIV, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other disadvantaged groups. The Centre was granted observer status before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission) in 1993.

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