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**Problems and difficulties encountered in the practical implementation of the Declaration.**

African Rights Monitor-ARM is a non-profit and non-political organisation for the protection of human rights that monitors humanitarian and security situations in countries in the Horn of Africa.

I am speaking at this Forum to shed light on the worsening situation of the Ogaden minority, a Somali group in eastern Ethiopia. This group has been marginalised and their basic rights violated. This includes the right to self-determination, despite it being enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution.

Behind closed doors, the Ogaden province has become a battleground where the army has the final word and civilians are paying a heavy price. What's more, the authorities are refusing to allow the international community access to this province. The United Nations and NGOs are not able to do their work properly, the delivery of food packages and medication is hampered and does not reach those in need.

In 2008, the International Committee for the Red Cross as well as the Swiss MSF were forced out of the region and since then, despite numerous requests to return, have not been granted re-entry by the government. Instead of facilitating the implementation of the Forum declaration, the government has done the opposite by imposing a number of controversial laws such as the law against terrorism, applicable to anyone not adhering to government policy. It has also imposed a law placing any NGO receiving over 10% of their budget from abroad in the 'foreign organization' category, prohibiting them from working in the human rights field.

The severity of the security and humanitarian situation in this eastern Ethiopian province and the particular attention it requires, means that the declarations from this Forum have until now been ineffective. We ask the Ethiopian State to lift the siege imposed in and around Ogaden so that the civilian population may exercise their rights. We also call for the mobilisation of the members of the United Nations and their organisations, including this Forum, to end the suffering of this group and ensure the respect of their most basic human rights, and the implementation of the declarations from this Forum.

Thank you for your attention.

