

Ogaden Welfare Association on Item IV

I am a member of the Ogaden Welfare Association I live in Norway but I come from Ogaden. The Ogaden territory known as the Somalian region in Ethiopia makes up one third of the state of Ethiopia. It is home to the Ogaden people, an ethnic Somali population. The Ogaden population is an estimated 5 to 6 million.

The human rights situation in Ogaden have caught the international human rights organisations at the beginning of this decade, but little has been done by Ethiopia. Also the Ethiopian constitution properly protects the rights of minorities, the territory has been famished by war and famine. It is the least developed territory in Ethiopia even though it is the richest in natural resources. The people in the Ogaden live a virtually stone-age existence and they are denied their basic human rights.

Trade and aid is prevented to enter the Ogaden territory in violation of the rights of people in the Somali Ogaden territory. Hundreds of thousands of civilians suffers the effects of armed conflicts and under-restricted access of humanitarian aid. Sexual violence against women remains, human rights abuse by the people continue to effect the whole humanitarian work. Civilian property and arbitrary arrest, extradition killings and over hundreds of thousands of newly displaced people.

These [instances] are widespread among women, young girls, and men have been arrested fraudulently because of their fundamental human right of public areas.

Ethiopian Muslims have been denied in this past eight months to exercise freely their religion and to elect their religious leaders. We call on the Forum on Minorities to remain sighted on the situation throughout Ogaden while giving an a particular attention to cross-violation of international human rights and the humanitarian laws taking place in that area by requesting an Independent Expert on the human rights in Ethiopia to present a report on the human rights and the humanitarian situation in Ogaden.

We call the Forum to promote a resolution to the joint statement. We call active work as follow up on key concerns raised by the Forum in previous recommendation neglected by the Ethiopian Government. We call the Forum to raise the Ethiopian rejection of the recommendations made in the review on the need to review the 2009 NGO Law on Charity Association Proclamation adopted January 2009, signed to restrictively control civil society in an atmosphere of intolerance of the human rights defenders and the civil society organisations.

Thank you very much.