OPEN LETTER · ICAI-LTR-2026-001

# Open letter to the Human Rights Council: a special session on Ethiopia must cover the conflict in Amhara

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The Board endorses the call by 36 organizations for a special session and an expert mechanism, and asks that its mandate expressly cover Amhara since August 2023 and the conduct of all parties.

To: The President of the Human Rights Council, and the member states of the Council Copied to: The Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union; the Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights From: The Board of Global Amhara Knowledge Hub Excellencies, We endorse the call made on 8 October 2026 by 36 human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, for a special session on Ethiopia and a panel of three independent experts [1]. We ask that the mechanism's mandate expressly include the armed conflict in the Amhara region. Global Amhara Knowledge Hub is an independent organization of Amhara scholars and professionals in Ethiopia and the diaspora, founded in 2026. We support the aims of no armed group. Our concern is the protection of civilians, whoever harms them. Why the Council should act now On 9 October the Secretary-General said he was "gravely concerned by the renewed fighting in the Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions" and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities [2]. On 25 September the High Commissioner reported that a mortar strike on 23 September in Kobo, in Amhara, "reportedly by the ENDF" had caused civilian deaths [3]. Around Alamata, in Raya (administered as part of Southern Tigray and claimed by Amhara), at least 52 civilians were reported killed in three days of fighting from 26 to 28 September, according to hospital sources cited by the BBC. Residents could not say who carried out the attacks, and responsibility has not been independently established [4]. UN News reported on 10 October that a government-led effort to help displaced people return from Kobo to their home areas had been suspended after security deteriorated [20]. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission's annual report, presented on 9 October, found that unlawful detentions "have persisted" in conflict-affected parts of Amhara, with a "widespread practice" of detaining people accused of being "Fano cells", and documented complaints of enforced disappearance in Amhara, South Ethiopia and Oromia [5]. The Council's 63rd session closed on 7 October with no resolution on Ethiopia [6], although 41 states had voiced concern about developments "in Oromia and in particular Amhara regions" [7] and the High Commissioner had said that "civilians are bearing the brunt of attacks in Amhara and Oromia" [8]. Why the mandate must reach back to August 2023 The 36 organizations propose a panel examining violations since August 2026 [1]. For Amhara, that would leave out three years. Unrest in the region began in April 2023 and became armed conflict between federal forces and Fano militias in August 2023 [9][10]. OHCHR recorded 740 civilian deaths in Amhara in 2023, most of them attributed to government security forces, including 248 people killed in 18 drone strikes between 4 August and 31 December 2023. It also reported killings of civilians and attacks on medical personnel by Fano [10]. The International Commission of Human Rights



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Experts on Ethiopia, whose mandate ended in 2023, made its findings on the 2020–22 war [11]. No international mechanism has since been mandated to investigate the conflict in Amhara. What we ask of the Council That the Council convene the special session, and that the resolution establishing the mechanism: Expressly include the conflict in Amhara from August 2023, alongside Tigray, Afar and Oromia. Cover the conduct of all parties: federal forces, Fano forces including the Amhara Fano National Movement, Tigrayan forces on both sides of the current fighting, the Oromo Liberation Army, Eritrean forces, regional forces and militias. Examine mass arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, including detention without judicial review under the 2023–24 state of emergency, which expired in June 2024, and the arrests that continued after it lapsed [5][10][12]. Examine attacks on schools and health care. OHCHR reported government airstrikes hitting five schools in Tigray on 22 September [3]; ACLED sources reported schools and a hospital among the targets of drone strikes on Alamata that day [13]. Human Rights Watch found that the Ethiopian military's attacks on medical care in the Amhara conflict "may amount to war crimes" [14], and OHCHR reported Fano military use of schools in some locations [10]. Examine obstruction of humanitarian access and communications. The UN reported that operations "particularly in parts of Amhara, are already facing significant constraints" [15]. Armed groups seized at least ten humanitarian vehicles in 2025–26 [16]. Amnesty International warns that communications disruptions in Tigray and parts of Afar and Amhara risk violations occurring "hidden from independent monitoring" [17]. Report before 31 January 2027, as the 36 organizations propose [1], and again to the 64th session, with access to Amhara and to places of detention. To the Peace and Security Council: please place Ethiopia, including Amhara, on your agenda. Your provisional programme of work for October 2026 lists no session on Ethiopia [18]. To the African Commission: we welcome the Commission's statement of 6 October on renewed hostilities in northern Ethiopia, which notes their spread into Amhara [19], and ask the Commission to seek a country visit and share its findings with any Council mechanism. Respectfully, The Board Sources HRW, 'Ethiopia: Call for a Special Session to Prevent Further Atrocities' (joint letter of 36 organizations, 8 Oct 2026; page 9 Oct). Evidence: Confirmed. UN Secretary-General, statement attributable to the Spokesperson on Ethiopia, New York, 9 Oct 2026 (posted on ethiopia.un.org 10 Oct). Evidence: Confirmed. OHCHR, High Commissioner Türk press release, 25 Sep 2026 (Kobo mortar strike; school strikes in Tigray); live page returns 403, read via archive.org snapshot of 8 Oct 2026: http://web.archive.org/web/20261008174453/https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/09/ethiopia-turk-alarmed-ci Evidence: Confirmed. Ethiopia Observer, 'More than 50 civilians reportedly killed in around Alamata', 30 Sep 2026 (BBC hospital sources); also BBC report syndicated by The Star (Kenya), 30 Sep 2026, 'at least 52', fighting 'between Saturday and Monday' (26–28 Sep): https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/africa/2026-09-30-medic-ethiopia-fighting-escalates-in-tigray-killing-52-civilians. Evidence: Confirmed (deaths) / Contested (perpetrator). EHRC, Executive Summary: Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report, June 2025 to June 2026 (English; released 9 Oct 2026; PDF via the download button). Press coverage: The Reporter, 10 Oct 2026, https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/53373/. Evidence: Confirmed. UN Geneva, 'Human Rights Council Concludes Sixty-Third Regular Session after Adopting 34 Resolutions, Two Decisions and One President's Statement', 7 Oct 2026 (no Ethiopia text). Evidence: Confirmed. EEAS, HRC63 Item 2 joint statement on Ethiopia on behalf of 41 countries, 8 Sep 2026. Evidence: Confirmed. OHCHR, High Commissioner's global update to HRC63, 7 Sep 2026. Evidence: Confirmed. ACLED, Fact sheet: crisis in Ethiopia's Amhara region (unrest from April 2023). Evidence: Confirmed. OHCHR, Update on the Human Rights Situation in Ethiopia in 2023 (June 2024). Evidence: Confirmed. ICHREE, report A/HRC/54/55 (2023). Evidence: Confirmed. HRW, World Report 2025: Ethiopia (state of emergency expired June 2024; mass arrests persisted). Evidence: Confirmed. ACLED situation update via



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martinplaut.com, 28 Sep 2026 (Alamata drone strikes, 22 Sep). Evidence: Fair. HRW, 'If the Soldier Dies, It's on You': Attacks on Medical Care in Ethiopia's Amhara Conflict, 3 Jul 2024. Evidence: Confirmed. UN noon briefing, 25 Sep 2026. Evidence: Confirmed. UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (Ozonnia Ojielo), statement on the northern Ethiopia situation, 30 Sep 2026 (at least 10 humanitarian vehicles seized by armed groups in 2025–26). Evidence: Confirmed. Amnesty International, 'Ethiopia: African Union must convene emergency session on Ethiopia as new conflict expands', 2 Oct 2026 (amnesty.org returns 403; read via archive.org snapshot 20261013210711 and the APO mirror). Press coverage: The Reporter, 3 Oct 2026, https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/53164/. Evidence: Confirmed. Amani Africa, Provisional Programme of Work of the PSC for the Month of October 2026 (no Ethiopia session listed). Evidence: Confirmed. ACHPR, 'Statement on the renewed tensions in Northern Ethiopia', signed Banjul 6 Oct 2026 by Country Rapporteur Mudford Zachariah Mwandenga, posted 8 Oct 2026. Evidence: Confirmed. UN News, 'UN chief gravely concerned by renewed fighting in northern Ethiopia, warns against escalation', 10 Oct 2026 (Kobo returns suspended). Evidence: Confirmed.



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