



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Distr.: General
27 October 2022

Original: English

Human Rights Committee

136th session

Summary record of the 3929th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 17 October 2022, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Pazartzis

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant
(continued)

Second periodic report of Ethiopia

* No summary record was issued for the 3928th meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant
(continued)

*Second periodic report of Ethiopia (CCPR/C/ETH/2; CCPR/C/ETH/Q/2;
CCPR/C/ETH/RQ/2)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Ethiopia joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Agidew** (Ethiopia), introducing his country's report (CCPR/C/ETH/2), said that, despite the extremely challenging situation in Ethiopia, the Government had reinvigorated the sweeping reform process that had begun in April 2018. That process had significantly advanced the enjoyment and protection of civil and political rights in the country.
3. Four years earlier, the newly elected Government had not only acknowledged and apologized for the grave human rights violations perpetrated by security forces but had also pardoned or amnestied thousands of detainees, in particular those detained under the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation No. 652/2009. Previously banned opposition groups that had been designated terrorist organizations under the Proclamation had been legalized, allowing their leaders and other members to return to Ethiopia after decades of forced exile. Other exiles, including journalists, had also been able to return. Bans on blogs, websites and satellite television stations had been lifted, secret places of detention had been identified and permanently closed, and charges had been brought against the officials suspected of overseeing and perpetrating some of the worst human rights violations in the country's recent history.
4. Those measures were accompanied by extensive reforms focusing on the security sector, democratic institutions and the judiciary. For instance, the Government had repealed the Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009, which had been used by the previous Administration to interfere with the enjoyment of freedom of association by civil society organizations. An overhaul of the country's media law was under way, and a proclamation to prevent the spread of hate speech and disinformation had been adopted in 2020.
5. Although the sweeping reforms that had been adopted would ensure that democratic norms took root, the ongoing transformation had not been without its difficulties. The Tigray People's Liberation Front, a former ruling party now designated a terrorist group, had been at the origin of vicious fighting in northern Ethiopia. Ethnically motivated armed violence, including extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, torture and degrading treatment, and mass destruction of property and livelihoods, was affecting whole swathes of the country and displacing large numbers of people.
6. The ongoing conflict was having a profound impact on the Government's efforts to ensure respect for civil and political rights. The Tigray People's Liberation Front had imposed authoritarian rule for three decades. After losing power, it had withdrawn to Tigray, a regional State in northern Ethiopia from which it had begun to undermine the Government's reform initiatives.
7. The Government had always been willing to resolve outstanding issues with the Tigray People's Liberation Front in a peaceful manner. It had explored all possible means of avoiding unnecessary conflict. Its efforts, however, had been rebuffed. An attack by Tigrayan forces and allied militias on federal forces in early November 2020 had initiated a full-scale armed conflict. The fighting, which, according to the report on the investigation conducted jointly by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), had been started by Tigrayan forces, had caused heavy losses. After the attack, the Government had had no choice but to take measures to restore order. In late June 2021, federal forces, having come under incessant fire from rebels who hid among the civilian population, had declared a unilateral ceasefire and withdrawn from Tigray in order to allow farmers to till their land in peace during the rainy season. The Tigray People's Liberation Front, however, had not reciprocated; instead, it had drawn Afar and Amhara, two other regional States, into the conflict. Before they had been pushed back into Tigray by a federal counteroffensive, the Tigrayan forces had laid waste to the parts of Afar and Amhara that they had occupied. The Government was committed to

holding to account the perpetrators of the widespread and well-documented rights violations committed by the occupying forces.

8. The joint investigation team composed of representatives of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and OHCHR had been established in March 2021 to examine all allegations of rights violations committed in Tigray. In its report on the investigation, the team had concluded that the belligerents had varying levels of responsibility for the conflict, but it had not found evidence of genocide or the use of starvation as a means of warfare. The report emphasized that international investigation or other mechanisms were complementary to national mechanisms. In response to the report, the Government had pledged to undertake a comprehensive and impartial investigation into all alleged violations of civil and political rights. To that end, it had established an interministerial task force on accountability and redress, which, since October 2021, had been conducting a comprehensive investigation of all allegations of serious violations of national law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict in Tigray, Afar and Amhara.

9. Track I of the criminal investigation, which had concluded in September 2022, had shown that Tigrayan forces had committed heinous crimes in the conflict in Tigray, Afar and Amhara. The Government rejected all forms of impunity, regardless of the actors involved. Tracks II and III of the investigation would therefore involve looking into the serious rights violations allegedly committed by the forces of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the federal forces and the federal Government's allied forces.

10. Remedial measures complementary to the three tracks of the criminal investigation had also been taken. The Government and the World Bank Group, for example, were working together on a national reconstruction and recovery programme. Emergency medical and psychosocial assistance, as well as other forms of support, were being provided to victims of sexual and gender-based violence, which had been used as a weapon of war.

11. Other measures taken to ensure accountability had included the Government's investigations of the most tragic rights violations committed, including by members of its own agencies, in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and Binshangul Gumuz regional States. The investigations, including into the Mai-Kadra massacres of November 2021 and the extrajudicial killings committed by security personnel in Binshangul Gumuz in March and November 2021, were nearing completion. Those and other investigations, as well as a number of relevant prosecutions and convictions, showed that national mechanisms, including the Military Tribunal, were capable of holding the perpetrators of rights violations to account. International investigation mechanisms, such as the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, established by the Human Rights Council, were thus unnecessary.

12. As criminal prosecution alone was unlikely to deliver justice and lasting peace, the Government had produced a paper on policy options for transitional justice. The paper, which contained proposals for a range of institutional arrangements and recommendations, would soon be circulated for nationwide consultations.

13. The Government had engaged in many mediation efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict. In addition to its unilateral ceasefire, it had declared an indefinite humanitarian truce intended to facilitate aid flows. In September 2022, even as the conflict was raging anew, the Government had renewed its commitment to the peace process led by the African Union.

14. In recent years, Ethiopia had, despite the conflict, made rights-related improvements, including with regard to women's empowerment and gender equality. Forty-two per cent of the country's federal lawmakers, for instance, were women. Comprehensive guidelines on gender-based legal drafting and analysis had been developed in 2021, and relevant capacity-development training had been offered to staff members engaged in legislative drafting. The guidelines included a step-by-step method for analysing the gender impact of laws and bills.

15. The general election originally scheduled for June 2020 that had been postponed because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had ultimately been held in June 2021. A new Government had been formed in which leaders of major opposition parties had been appointed to ministerial and cabinet positions.

16. The Government was committed to developing a comprehensive policy framework to respond adequately to the internal population displacement crisis caused by the conflict. One crucial step in that direction – the deposit of the instrument of ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) – had already been taken, and others were planned.

17. Refugees continued to benefit from the Government's generous policies. They had access to education and public health facilities. Thousands of refugees had been moved from conflict-prone areas to safer parts of the country, including Alem Wach in Gondar. Some 19,000 refugees had been given out-of-camp privileges since the outbreak of the conflict, and 50,000 asylum applications had been processed in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict and drought. Individual refugee status determination procedures were compatible with international and regional refugee laws.

18. No one stood to gain from the continuation of the senseless conflict wracking his country. Although the people of Ethiopia were suffering the consequences of the conflict, which was not of their own making, they did not wish to be defined by it or by the attendant human rights violations. They were the people of a country that was proud of its record of fighting for human dignity and human rights.

19. **Mr. Bulkan**, noting that several regional State constitutions excluded minority groups from protection under equality provisions, said that he would like to know how such exclusion could be reconciled with article 25 of the Federal Constitution, which guaranteed equality and took precedence over the regional State constitutions. It would also be helpful to learn what action the Government would take to eliminate formal discrimination at the regional level and what could be done to strengthen national mechanisms to ensure that regional State constitutions were aligned with the Federal Constitution and the Covenant.

20. While there were isolated provisions in the Civil and Criminal Codes under which victims of human rights violations could obtain compensation, there was apparently no culture of invoking those provisions. He therefore wondered whether the State party would consider undertaking legal and institutional reforms to ensure that there was a comprehensive mechanism for providing redress to victims.

21. He wished to know how the membership of the National Monitoring, Reporting and Follow-up Mechanism was determined and whether the Mechanism operated in an inclusive manner, for example by consulting with civil society, different agencies and private actors in the preparation of national treaty reports. He would also like to know whether civil society was able to participate in the policy work of the National Coordination Board.

22. He invited the delegation to provide an update on efforts to translate the Covenant into local languages and disseminate it nationwide, along with examples of cases in which it had been invoked and applied in domestic courts, of any capacity-building initiatives undertaken with relevant actors, including members of the judiciary, and of efforts to raise awareness of it among the general population. The delegation might also elaborate on the State party's pledge to consider the adoption of the Optional Protocol with all stakeholders and indicate the timeline for doing so.

23. He would welcome information on the resources allocated to the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, in particular an indication of whether the body was adequately funded to carry out its functions effectively and independently. In that connection, he was interested in knowing the status of implementation of the Commission's recommendations and whether there was a timeline and process for implementation, including the assignment of designated personnel to manage the recommendations and provide oversight.

24. **Ms. Tigroudja** said that she would appreciate an explanation of whether the restrictions on the exercise of rights protected under the Covenant that had been imposed in connection with the states of emergency declared in October 2016, February 2018 and April 2020 had been necessary and proportionate. She would also like to know whether judicial or quasi-judicial safeguards had been in place during those states of emergency and what concrete steps had been taken by the State of Emergency Inquiry Board to strike a balance between the State's right to take measures in response to a threat to the life of the nation, on the one hand, and respect for human rights, on the other. It would be helpful to receive

information on the scope of the state of emergency, whether de jure or de facto, that had been in effect during the period since the outbreak of the conflict in Tigray in November 2020, on whether the State party planned to inform the other States parties that it was availing itself of the right of derogation, as it was required to do under article 4 (3) of the Covenant, on the concrete and effective measures that had been put in place to prevent violations of non-derogable rights and on the role currently being played by the Board.

25. Noting that the Committee had received numerous worrying reports of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, she invited the delegation to comment on the status of discussions about the decriminalization of sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex, as well as on the status of the “gradual processes” mentioned in paragraph 27 of the State party’s replies to the list of issues (CCPR/C/ETH/RQ/2). She would also like to know more about the concrete measures that the State party intended to take to combat stereotypes and hate speech against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and to educate people about the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons had effective access to justice; and to prevent the stigmatization and marginalization of persons living with HIV.

26. It would be useful to receive detailed information on the situation in the State party with regard to polygamy and on the steps taken to ensure that the prohibition of the practice was properly enforced. Furthermore, she wished to receive an update on national discussions concerning marital rape and on the concrete measures that were being taken to eradicate female genital mutilation.

27. She would like to receive information on the measures taken by the Government to remind all parties to the conflict in Tigray of the need to protect civilian populations from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence; investigate possible crimes against humanity and war crimes and punish any perpetrators; enable victims, including persons deliberately infected with HIV, to access the health care they required; prevent the social stigmatization and consequent revictimization of victims of rape and forced pregnancy; and provide victims with full redress, including rehabilitation measures, particularly to address the long-term consequences of sexual and gender-based violence.

28. **Mr. Zyberi** said that he would like to know more about inter-institutional coordination in the fight against corruption, recent progress made in combating corruption at the federal and regional levels and concrete steps taken to prevent the solicitation of bribes by police officers and members of the judiciary. In that connection, he asked how many trials against individuals accused of grand corruption had been completed, how much money had been recovered, how many of the persons prosecuted on corruption charges were members or former members of the ruling party, what measures aside from those detailed in paragraph 21 of the replies to the list of issues were foreseen to prevent corruptive practices and what criminal and administrative punishments were imposed for corruption.

29. He would be grateful for details of whether the State party’s authorities were able to protect the lives of cooperative witnesses and whistle-blowers, whether there had been cases in which they had failed in that respect and, if so, whether lessons had been learned and translated into the practices of the law enforcement agencies. An indication of whether domestic legislation provided for the protection of whistle-blowers who reported violations to bodies other than the police or public prosecutors’ offices would also be welcome.

30. He wished to know whether the State party intended to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, what concrete steps were being taken to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities and address discrimination in general, what was being done, especially by the Office of the Attorney General, to ensure that individuals were not targeted based on their ethnic identity, how the State party guaranteed the practical application of its international anti-discrimination obligations and whether there were statistics on cases of discrimination brought before the domestic courts.

31. He invited the delegation to describe the steps that the State party planned to take to prevent the arbitrary arrest and detention of political opponents and their supporters, protesters and dissenting journalists and to ensure that dissenters already arrested were released and compensated for any violations to which they had been subjected. It would be

helpful to receive information, including statistics for the reporting period, on the measures taken to ensure that all allegations of arbitrary arrest and detention were promptly and effectively investigated and that perpetrators were brought to justice. On a related note, he asked what steps were being or would be taken to prevent enforced disappearance, whether the International Committee of the Red Cross and other organizations had full, unsupervised access to places of detention in the country, including in the areas in which the Tigray conflict was ongoing, whether the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission had the capacity to conduct such visits, how many local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dealing with prisoners' rights had conducted prison visits and whether they had access to information on conditions of detention.

32. **Mr. Muhumuza** said that he would appreciate information on the status and outcomes of criminal investigations into human rights violations committed by the law enforcement and security forces in the Somali regional State, specifically at Jigjiga Central Prison. That information should include an indication of whether all the perpetrators had been prosecuted and punished and whether their victims had been provided with compensation and rehabilitation services. An update on the status of the trial mentioned in paragraph 38 of the replies to the list of issues would also be welcome.

33. He invited the delegation to comment on continued reports of extrajudicial killings by law enforcement personnel, especially in the Amhara and Oromia regional States. He wished to know whether any perpetrators had been arrested and what was being done to prevent such killings. With regard to the deaths caused by the security forces at the 2016 Irreecha festival, he asked whether the perpetrators had been arrested and tried, and whether the victims or their families had been compensated.

34. It would be interesting to receive statistical information on the number of cases of prolonged detention that had been investigated and tried, and to hear a description of any progress made in preventing such detention. In particular, he wondered what measures the State party was taking to ensure that investigations were conducted expeditiously and that cases were tried in a timely manner.

35. Lastly, he would be grateful for data on the number of defendants who had benefited from free legal aid since 2020, along with information on the measures taken by the Office of Public Defenders to increase the number of defendants that it represented and facilitate the provision of such aid.

36. **Mr. Furuya** said that he would like to know, in light of the State party's prolonged de facto moratorium on the death penalty, whether any formal discussions had taken place with respect to the abolition of the death penalty and accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. He would welcome data on the current number of persons on death row, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity and the offence committed, and information on sentencing guidelines, including criteria for imposing the death penalty.

37. He would appreciate updated information on the current legislative framework on the use of force by law enforcement and security forces, as well as on the status of the bill aimed at combating the excessive use of force, as referred to in the list of issues (para. 10). Referring to eight cases reportedly involving the excessive use of force, including the killing of Hachalu Hundessa in June 2020, he asked what actions had been taken by the State party to ensure that allegations of excessive force by the authorities were investigated effectively, fairly, impartially and transparently in order to ensure accountability and fulfil its obligations under the Covenant. In view of allegations that the State party took a piecemeal approach to compensating victims of excessive use of force, he would like to know what measures were in place to provide such compensation, how many victims had actually been compensated and what the corresponding budgetary allocations were.

38. It would be interesting to know more about the concrete outcomes of the measures taken by the Government since it had assumed power in 2018, including the closure of detention centres used for torture, the introduction of regular visits by public prosecutors to detention centres and the granting of access to the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission to all places of detention. What procedure was in place to receive complaints directly from victims of torture undergoing interrogation and in detention?

39. A response to reports that the security forces had resumed the systematic use of torture in conflict regions would be welcome. Additional information about the number of persons, including high-ranking officers, that had been investigated, prosecuted and convicted for torture during the reporting period would also be useful, as would details about any steps taken to provide effective remedies and support to victims of torture.

40. Lastly, the Committee would appreciate a response to reports that objections to the admissibility of forced confessions as evidence had mostly been dismissed during trials. What concrete measures had been taken to ensure that evidence obtained illegally by torture was excluded?

The meeting was suspended at 4.30 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.

41. **A representative of Ethiopia** said that private actors and civil society were involved in the treaty reporting process. Regrettably, civil society was not represented in the work of either the National Monitoring, Reporting and Follow-up Mechanism or the National Coordination Board. Although there had been some initiatives to translate the Covenant in Ethiopian university and research communities, it was not yet easily accessible to all Ethiopians. The Government would consider making changes in both those areas in the future.

42. Recent legislation showed the Government's commitment to ensuring that the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission was adequately funded to carry out its functions effectively and independently. Its recommendations on human rights issues and compliance with the Covenant were always given serious consideration by the Government. Recently adopted legislation provided for the protection of witnesses and whistle-blowers, but it was as yet too early to draw lessons from its implementation.

43. Journalists and politicians were never arrested for practising their profession. If they were detained by the authorities, it was rather in response to their expressing ideas that instigated violence.

44. The Government's position on accession to the Second Optional Protocol remained the same. The death penalty would continue to apply, even though executions would not be carried out on a routine basis.

45. The Government condemned extrajudicial killings, regardless of the perpetrator. All the parties to the conflict in the Tigray, Afar and Amhara regional States had committed violations, and the recommendations of the interministerial task force on accountability and redress were being followed. Investigations had been conducted into the excesses committed by the Tigray People's Liberation Front and were now under way into the extrajudicial killings and other crimes committed by members of the National Defence Force and affiliated forces. Serious violations of international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law would also be investigated.

46. **A representative of Ethiopia** said that the Government had been taking steps to end harmful traditional practices including early and forced marriages, marriage by abduction, female genital mutilation and polygamy. It had established a National Alliance to End Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation and a Committee for the Eradication of Harmful Traditional Practices, the latter of which was implementing a National Action Plan to Eliminate Polygamy and Female Genital Mutilation. A National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children had been shared with all stakeholders, and public awareness of the illegality and negative effects of female genital mutilation and polygamy was being raised via television, radio, community dialogue and experience-sharing forums. The Government's national road map to end child marriage and female genital mutilation and cutting, which was to run until 2024, targeted families, communities and service providers, in order to bring about real change. The State's long-term strategy had helped gradually to shape public attitudes, and community leaders now openly denounced female genital mutilation and polygamy in some circumstances. The situation was being monitored for violations which, when discovered, were duly punished; perpetrators had been brought to justice in several regional States. As a result of the State's efforts, the percentage of women who had been subjected to female genital mutilation had fallen from 70 per cent in 2005 to 65 per cent in 2016. If progress were to continue at the rate

of the past 15 years, it was expected that that figure would drop below 30 per cent by 2030. Polygamy had also become less common, although efforts to eliminate it were still needed.

47. Ethiopia was committed to improving protection against discrimination for persons with disabilities. Public awareness and training programmes on the rights of persons with disabilities had been developed and delivered. A guide had been published for teachers on how to deal appropriately with children with intellectual disabilities, and a road map developed in 2018 for special needs education was now being implemented. A comprehensive disability law was being enacted that would establish complaint procedures and remedies for cases of discrimination.

48. The Government had initiated a study with a view to putting in place a comprehensive legal framework covering gender-based violence. Marital rape was considered an exception to the crime of rape due to the obligation of consummation in marriage. Another national study covering that issue and others was under way with the participation of civil society.

49. With respect to the minimum age of criminal responsibility, in Ethiopian society, a 9-year-old child was deemed to be morally and psychologically capable of committing a crime and of understanding the consequences of his or her actions.

50. **A representative of Ethiopia** said that the inter-ethnic violence in northern Ethiopia presented a major challenge, but the Government was determined to ensure that perpetrators of the heinous crimes of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances were held accountable. The Ministry of Justice and the Federal Police Commission were investigating all allegations of extrajudicial killings, bodily injuries, property damage and displacement of people due to violence.

51. For example, as a result of attacks launched by members of the Shene terrorist group on civilians in Guliso, 36 persons had died, 20 persons had been injured and some 1,000 residents had been displaced. The investigations into the attacks had led to the identification of 35 perpetrators, who had been charged with aggravated robbery, armed resistance and incitement to violence. Seven suspects had been apprehended and were being prosecuted. Attacks by armed groups in Binshangul Gumuz had claimed the lives of many people, and the ensuing investigations had made it possible to identify 1,678 perpetrators, of whom 358 had been arrested. The courts had to date handed down guilty verdicts in 78 per cent of the cases and sentenced the accused to terms of imprisonment ranging from 8 months to 22 years.

52. The death of the singer Hachalu Hundessa had led to public unrest and violent attacks in Oromia and Addis Ababa. As a result of the investigations into those incidents, 3,560 persons had been charged with aggravated homicide, infliction of grave and wilful injuries, aggravated robbery and theft. A total of 1,416 persons had been found guilty of the charges and sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 24 months to 4 years.

53. The Constitution of Ethiopia prohibited cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Article 19 stipulated that arrested persons should be informed promptly of the grounds for their arrest and article 17 prohibited arbitrary arrest. Police officers were required to bring arrested persons before a court of law within 48 hours. Public prosecutors paid regular visits to detention centres in order to deter illegal detention.

54. Civilians were never targeted by the Government on the ground of their ethnic identity. In 1991, however, the Government of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front had introduced ethnic-based federalism, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front had sought to spread hatred between ethnic groups. Although its membership was based on Tigrayan ethnic identity, arrests by the authorities were based on criminal acts perpetrated by its members and were unrelated to their ethnic origin.

55. The Government was committed to improving detention conditions in prisons and police stations. With that end in view, it had ordered the building of new detention facilities and the expansion of old facilities at the federal and regional levels, amended the Federal Prison Proclamation in order to afford better protection for the rights of detainees, including provision of accessible complaint procedures, and allocated a larger daily budget for detainees, thereby ensuring better access to health care and other essential services. Nonetheless, resource scarcity remained a challenge. The amended Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Establishment Proclamation empowered the Commission to conduct

unannounced inspections of prisons and detention centres. Access was also granted to international organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. Training courses on the human rights of detainees were organized for prison personnel, and officers who violated their rights were prosecuted.

56. Investigations conducted by the Ministry of Justice in the regional States of Binshangul Gumuz, Amhara and Oromia had resulted in the detection of offenders, including from the governmental apparatus. The Ministry of Defence had also conducted investigations in response to allegations of human rights violations in the context of the Tigray conflict and had found that 60 criminal offences had been committed. A military court had convicted 25 perpetrators, had issued one life sentence and had sentenced others to terms of imprisonment of up to 25 years. In addition, proceedings concerning 33 cases of rape and 16 cases of extrajudicial killings and injuries were pending.

57. The action plan of the interministerial task force on accountability and redress provided for the delivery of a public apology for past human rights violations. Investigations had identified six perpetrators involved in extrajudicial killings committed by the security forces, including members of the National Defence Force.

58. The Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism Crimes Proclamation No. 1176/2020 provided for the establishment of a fund to cover the medical expenses of victims of terrorist attacks. The Government had undertaken to establish a similar fund pursuant to the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178/2020. The Protection of Witnesses and Whistle-blowers of Criminal Offences Proclamation No. 699/2010 provided for protection and counselling services and medical treatment free of charge. In the event of death as a result of retaliatory action, pecuniary compensation was paid to the victim's family.

59. **A representative of Ethiopia** said that states of emergency had been declared in 2016 and 2018 to prevent and control the widespread breakdown of law and order in different parts of the country. A third state of emergency had been declared to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The State of Emergency Proclamation No. 5/2021 had been necessitated by the serious threat to the sovereignty of the State posed by the offensive conducted by the Tigray People's Liberation Front and its allies. However, the Government investigated any claims of arbitrary arrests or other infringements perpetrated during such emergencies. In addition, non-derogable rights continued to be respected.

60. The Government was taking steps to expand access to free legal aid for detainees. Access to such aid was mandatory for persons accused of serious crimes. A free legal aid strategy had been presented for approval by the Council of Ministers in the near future. In addition, pro bono services were provided by lawyers, universities and civil society organizations.

61. **A representative of Ethiopia** said that the Constitution expressly prohibited all forms of discrimination, and its recognition of the right of self-determination guaranteed the fair local and regional distribution of power. However, violence based on ethnicity and, in a few rare cases, on religious beliefs had occurred in some parts of the country, resulting in hundreds of deaths and the destruction of property. Legal proceedings were being conducted to ensure the accountability of perpetrators. Evidence had shown, for example, that atrocities had been committed against the Amhara ethnic group in the Oromia region by the Shene terrorist group.

62. The Ministry of Peace was working closely with NGOs to promote interreligious dialogue and to prevent discrimination on religious grounds. The Government had established the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission in January 2022 to address outbreaks of violence and cases involving discord between different groups on fundamental national issues, including minority rights, through a broad-based dialogue. The ultimate goal was to build a national consensus on those issues and to bolster a culture of trust.

63. **Mr. Furuya** said it was his understanding that extrajudicial killings in conflict regions were not isolated incidents attributable to individual members of the security forces but were perpetrated systematically by the military. He therefore wished to know what concrete

measures were being taken to prevent the recurrence of such violent acts against civilians by the security forces and other bodies.

64. **Mr. Muhumuza** said that he would appreciate disaggregated data on trials concerning extrajudicial killings, including the number of convictions and the compensation provided to victims' families.

65. **Mr. Zyberi** said that he wished to know how many persons had been detained for disturbances of public order or related acts during the reporting period, how many remained in detention and what measures were taken to process their cases in a timely manner or to release them.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.