



East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network General Meeting
Meeting on 28-30TH March 2011 Kampala Uganda

Resolutions in relation to human rights defenders facing state sanctioned recrimination and persecution

RESOLUTION ON THE ETHIOPIAN CHARITIES AND SOCIETIES PROCLAMATION

We, members of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net), participating at the General assembly meeting in Kampala, Uganda, resolve as follows:

Recalling the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which provides that human rights defenders have the right “to solicit, receive and utilize resources for the express purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms through peaceful means”;

Condemns the restrictive provisions of the Ethiopian Charities and Societies Proclamation (No 621/2009) that has significantly hampered the legitimate work of human rights defenders and stalled the development of civil society in that country;

Notes that certain provisions of the Proclamation are in violation of international human rights law and standards, including the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders aforementioned;

Further condemns the retroactive application of the Proclamation in freezing the bank accounts of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) and the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), without any official explanation;

Calls on the Ethiopian government to:

- a) Amend the provisions of the Charities and Societies Proclamation to bring them in line with international standards in order to allow Ethiopian human rights defenders to perform their essential work, free from bureaucratic and legal restrictions, intimidation and harassment;
- b) Immediately release the funds of EHRCO and EWLA.

Urges the Ethiopian government, with its capital as the seat of the African Union, to set an example to the continent in respecting the basic rights and freedoms of human rights defenders, rather than actively creating one of the most restrictive environments for the work of human rights defenders in Africa.

Resolved on this 30th Day of March 2011 in Kampala Uganda