



**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL
SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**THE ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL IN
PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA SINCE 2018**

BY: MARITU BEHONEGN

DECEMBER, 2024

ADDISABABA, ETHIOPIA

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Board of Approval

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declared that this thesis entitled, ‘The Role of United Nations Human Rights Council in Promoting Human Rights in Ethiopia Since 2018’, is my original work and had not been presented for a degree or any other purpose in any institution and all the sources that I used, had been acknowledged through far-reaching references.

Maritu Behongen

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This thesis was submitted for examination with my approval as an advisor.

Bayuligne Z. Bahru (Ph.D)

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Date _____

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List of Acronyms

CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
EDF	Eritrean Defense Forces
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defense Forces
FFM	Fact-Finding Mission
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICHREE	International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ILO	International Labor Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of High Commissions Human Rights
OLA	Oromo Liberation Army
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNEOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USDOS	United State Department of State
WFP	World Food Program

Abstract

This study has examined the Role of United Nations Human Rights Council in Promoting Human Rights in Ethiopia Since 2018. This study employed a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research collects the experiences, opinions, and actions of individuals. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to gather data for the qualitative study, which was then interpreted using thematic analysis and intentional and snowball sampling procedures. The study revealed, since 2018, there have been several human rights violations. Through the creation of fact-finding missions and investigations, joint investigative mechanisms, resolutions, and advocacy, the UNHRC steps in to address human rights concerns in Ethiopia. Additionally, advocacy, diplomatic initiatives, and international community mobilization are UNHRC domains that support human rights in Ethiopia. In addition, the Ethiopian government's lack of collaboration, enforcement mechanisms' shortcomings, disappointment, and dissatisfaction are obstacles the UNHRC faces in its efforts to advance human rights. The UNHRC's report on promoting human rights in Ethiopia highlights many problems, including political bias and influence, a lack of international coordination and pressure, a lack of enforcement mechanisms, inconsistent and delayed responses, an excessive reliance on diplomatic engagement and dialogue, and a failure to address systemic issues and root causes. One idea that is overlooked in the research is the promotion of human rights. It is essential to conduct additional research on this matter. As a result, this study creates a chance for additional research.

Keywords: Council, Ethiopia, Human Rights, Violations, United Nation

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Human rights abuses have long been a global issue, threatening stability, peace, and human dignity. Violations continue to occur all around the world even after the creation of several international organizations and conventions, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). From institutionalized discrimination and political repression to armed conflicts that result in crimes like war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, these abuses take many forms (United Nations, 1948). In reaction, international organizations such as the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) have been established to tackle these issues by means of lobbying, enforcement, and monitoring systems. However, there is also much to learn and discuss regarding how well these organizations handle violations of human rights, especially in politically delicate areas (Alston and Goodman, 2013).

The United Nations Human Rights Council, founded in 2006, is entrusted with enhancing worldwide human rights promotion. It provides a forum for nations and civil society to confront transgressions and provide solutions to ensure accountability (Megert and Alston, (2020). These issues are especially acute in regions where state sovereignty, political sensitivities, and current wars impede the Council's effectiveness.

Essentially, some of the most urgent human rights situations have been promoted in large part by the UNHRC. Its investigations into the Syrian civil war and the Rohingya horrors in Myanmar, for example, have drawn worldwide attention to widespread violations of human rights that could otherwise go unpunished (Megert and Alston, 2020). The council's interventions, however, have frequently been criticized for being politicized, selective, and having little enforcement authority, all of which have made it more difficult for the council to completely carry out its recommendations and guarantee accountability. These difficulties highlight how difficult it is for the UNHRC to carry out its role in addressing human rights abuses, especially in nations with contentious political systems and a strong claim to state

sovereignty (Freedman, 2011).

In addition, the main purpose of the UNHRC is to safeguard and promote human rights worldwide. One of its key responsibilities is to investigate instances where human rights have been violated. The UNHRC also advises governments on how they can enhance their human rights records and raises awareness about various human rights concerns. According to Human Rights Watch's 2021 world reports, the UNHRC has played a crucial role in documenting human rights abuses, advocating for justice, and providing support to victims on an international scale. It has facilitated the establishment of commissions and mechanisms aimed at investigating and prosecuting human rights violations in countries like Syria, Myanmar, and Venezuela (OHCHR, 2011).

Political instability, autocratic governments, and deadly conflicts are just a few of the ongoing human rights issues that Africa has experienced throughout its complicated post-colonial past. Significant human rights violations, such as forced relocation, extrajudicial killings, and ethnic cleansing, persist on the African continent even after the adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1981, which enshrines the promotion and protection of human rights within the African context (Hazarika, 2010). Widespread abuses in nations like Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan have drawn worldwide attention. In order to remedy abuses and advance accountability, these circumstances have led to international intervention, including by the UNHRC (Ankumah, 1996).

Regretfully, some of the worst human rights disasters in recent decades have occurred in East Africa, a subregion of the continent. Political persecution, systematic violations of human rights, and internal wars have afflicted nations like Ethiopia, South Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia. Eritrea has come under fire for its oppressive government, which is marked by indefinite conscription and a lack of political liberties, while South Sudan has experienced horrors like ethnic violence and the enlistment of child soldiers as a result of its 2013 civil conflict (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The intricacy of these problems has frequently overloaded regional agencies like the African Union, forcing the engagement of international organizations like the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Ethiopia, one of East Africa's most populous and geopolitically crucial countries, has experienced growing human rights concerns since 2018. Following the emergence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopia appeared to be on the route to political reform and democratization. Abiy's early reforms, which included the freeing of political prisoners and the forging of a peace pact with Eritrea, garnered him international recognition and the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 (BBC News, 2019). However, as historical grievances, ethnic rivalries, and unsolved political tensions quickly descended into violence, Ethiopia's political situation rapidly worsened.

Additionally, a significant turning point in Ethiopia's human rights condition occurred in November 2020 with the start of the Tigray War. Numerous atrocities, such as mass murders, sexual assaults, forced relocation, and the willful destruction of infrastructure, have been committed during the battle between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian federal government (Amnesty International, 2021). All sides of the conflict—federal forces, Tigrayan forces, and affiliated militias—have perpetrated flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, according to reports by Human Rights Watch (2021) and the UNHRC (2021). In addition to wreaking havoc in the Tigray region, these atrocities have exacerbated instability throughout Ethiopia, with comparable patterns of violence showing up in other areas like Oromia and Amhara.

As a result, the purpose of this study is to assess the UNHRC's role in advancing human rights in Ethiopia since 2018, with a focus on its interventions, obstacles, and efficacy in addressing ongoing abuses. The study intends to provide a comprehensive perspective of the UNHRC's function, strengths, and limits in conflict-affected states by putting Ethiopia's human rights issue within the broader framework of the organization's worldwide mandate. Such an examination is crucial for determining the effectiveness of international human rights instruments in ensuring accountability and promoting justice in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has seen substantial political upheaval since 2018, when a new administration took power and carried out a number of reforms. But during this time of transition, there have been worries about human rights abuses. The UNHRC's influence in advancing human rights in Ethiopia after 2018 was investigated in this study.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia has faced persistent and systematic human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, ethnic-based violence, sexual violence, and the suppression of fundamental freedoms such as speech and assembly, particularly during political crises and armed conflicts like the Tigray War (Amnesty International, 2020). Reports have documented atrocities by government forces, rebel groups, and allied militias, including mass killings, ethnic cleansing, deliberate starvation, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

For instance, Amnesty International (2021) reported massacres in Axum, where Ethiopian and Eritrean forces indiscriminately killed hundreds of civilians, while Human Rights Watch (2022) uncovered widespread sexual and gender-based violence in Tigray, described as part of a deliberate campaign of terror. Although these reports highlight the scale of abuses, they often focus on immediate consequences rather than exploring mechanisms for accountability or sustainable solutions to prevent recurrence.

Scholars such as Alex de Waal (2015) and Kjetil Tronvoll (2020) have explored the roots of Ethiopia's human rights crises, linking them to the country's ethnic federalism, authoritarian governance, and history of political exclusion. De Waal (2015) argues that Ethiopia's ethnic federalism, introduced in the early 1990s, institutionalized ethnic divisions and created a political environment prone to inter-ethnic competition and violence. Tronvoll (2020) further examines how power struggles among Ethiopia's political elites, coupled with the militarization of governance, have exacerbated human rights abuses.

Other scholars, such as Sarah Vaughan (2003), have analyzed the historical legacy of state repression and the role of authoritarianism in perpetuating impunity. While these works provide valuable insights into the structural and historical factors contributing to Ethiopia's human rights violations, they often neglect to address the role of international actors, such as the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), in mitigating these abuses and promoting accountability.

The UNHRC has taken steps to address Ethiopia's human rights crisis, including its joint

investigation with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) into the atrocities committed during the Tigray War (UNHRC, 2021). This investigation identified widespread abuses by all parties to the conflict, including government forces, Eritrean troops, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). However, the joint report received significant criticism for its perceived lack of independence, as the EHRC is closely affiliated with the Ethiopian government.

Mehari Taddele Maru (2021) have also pointed out the limitations of the UNHRC's efforts, noting that the Ethiopian government's resistance to international scrutiny undermines the effectiveness of these mechanisms. Furthermore, the lack of enforcement power within the UNHRC has raised concerns about its ability to ensure accountability for perpetrators or justice for victims. The Ethiopian government's refusal to fully cooperate with international investigations, including its rejection of the UNHRC's independent commission of inquiry established in 2022, further illustrates the limitations of global human rights mechanisms in contexts where state actors are unwilling to engage.

Despite the growing body of literature on Ethiopia's human rights violations, there remains a critical gap in addressing the role and effectiveness of international mechanisms like the UNHRC in promoting accountability and meaningful reform. Much of the existing research, such as that by Tronvoll (2020) and Vaughan (2003), focuses on the internal political and ethnic dynamics driving Ethiopia's crises, while reports by organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch emphasize the documentation of violations. However, there is insufficient scholarly analysis on how international human rights bodies can overcome structural barriers, such as state non-cooperation, limited enforcement mechanisms, and geopolitical constraints, to address ongoing violations and promote sustainable reforms. Scholars such as Kathryn Sikkink (2011), in her work on international human rights mechanisms, emphasize the importance of global accountability frameworks, but there is a lack of Ethiopia-specific research exploring how these frameworks can be effectively applied in such a complex and resistant context.

Basically, numerous earlier studies mentioned above primarily addressed the right to protection, human rights crises and violations, the government's response, widespread

abuses, limited freedoms, and limited accountability, the effectiveness of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, the African Union's response to the Tigray conflict, Ethiopian human rights violations, and the role of different actors in human rights prevention and protection. Nobody carried out any research on the promotion of human rights.

Accordingly, this gap in the literature highlights the urgent need for deeper research into the intersection of international human rights advocacy, domestic accountability processes, and the structural obstacles that hinder progress in Ethiopia. The limited attention to the role of the UNHRC and other global mechanisms not only leaves critical questions unanswered but also risks perpetuating a cycle of impunity. Without a comprehensive understanding of how international actors can effectively engage in Ethiopia, the potential for tangible improvements in the country's human rights landscape remains limited, leaving victims of violations without justice and undermining the global commitment to human rights.

Another gap was noticed in the above, and as of right now, there is no research on human rights promotion in the Ethiopia Human Rights probe. This demonstrated the time gap as well. No study places a strong emphasis on promoting human rights from the early regime to the current one. Therefore, the idea of promoting human rights is often overlooked by Ethiopian academics. Nonetheless, this study made an effort to concentrate primarily on the present human rights promotion, especially since the middle of 2018. The UNHRC was used as a case study.

1.3. Core Argument

As the thesis's central argument, the federal government's exclusive prohibition and the UNHRC's imbalanced responses have been the basic challenges in promoting human rights in Ethiopia since 2018. This damages cooperation between the federal government and UNHRC or enhances public distrust.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

To assess the Role of United Nations Human Rights Council in Promoting Human Rights in

Ethiopia since 2018.

1.4.2. Specific Objective

1. To assess the magnitude of human rights violations in Ethiopia since 2018.
2. To investigate the interventions and actions taken by the UNHRC in response to these violations since 2018.
3. To identify the challenges of UNHRC's efforts in promoting human rights in Ethiopia since 2018.

1.5. Research Questions

To guide the study and achieve the objectives, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What look like magnitude of human rights violations in Ethiopia since 2018?
2. What actions and interventions the UNHRC under taken in response to these violations?
3. What challenges that hindered UNHRC's efforts in promoting human rights in Ethiopia?

1.6. Research Methodology and Methods

1.6.1. Research Methodology

Simply said, research methodology describes the "how" of a research project. More precisely, it concerns the methodical way in which a researcher plans a study to guarantee accurate and trustworthy findings that respond to the goals, objectives, and research questions. It alludes to the methodical strategy and methodology that researchers employ when carrying out their investigations. It is the main idea that guides your investigation. It establishes a broad strategy for researching the subject and chooses the research methodology. Because research methods are the instruments used to collect data, they are not the same as research methodologies (Dawson,

2019). The researcher used a research approach in terms of methodology for this investigation.

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to investigate the UNHRC's action in response to human rights violations in Ethiopia in 2018. According to Kothari (2004), the objective of the research approach is to generate the most amount of knowledge with the least amount of time, money, and effort. Explaining "how" and "why" a certain program or phenomenon works in a particular environment is the aim of qualitative research methodology. It is used to gain a better knowledge of a problem and is useful for understanding a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2009).

1.6.2. Research Methods

The precise strategies and processes that researchers employ to gather, examine, and interpret data in order to address research issues are referred to as research methodologies. They are distinct from research methodologies since they deal with the methods used to gather data for your study. They serve as the foundation of every research endeavor, aiding in the testing of theories and the resolution of questions. The type of data required, the resources available, and the nature of the research issue all influence the choice of research methodology (Dawson, 2019). As a result, the methods of data sources, sampling strategy and size, data collection tools, data analysis strategy, ethical consideration, reliability, and research organization were the main emphasis of this investigation.

1.6.2.1. Data Sources

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather primary data. Key informants' in-depth information was gathered through interviews. The study has gathered a significant amount of data from primary and secondary sources. Therefore, semi-structured interview is utilized to gather primary data from the key informant's sources of knowledge. Secondary data was gathered from a number of sources, such as pertinent publications, scholarly articles, official reports, and policy documents (Saldana, 2011). Primary and secondary sources of data were gathered for this study in order to address its central research questions. It is thought that a comprehensive picture of the current state of affairs can be obtained by combining primary.

1.6.2.2. Data Collection Instruments

There are several methods for collecting data using tools or instruments. Among the many types of data collection tools, the researcher used key informant interviews, and document reviews. The rationale behind using multiple types of data collection instruments is to triangulate and ensure the reliability of the data. The interview prepared by using Amharic and English language as a medium of communication. Finally, the data provided by the informants intertwined in the text through direct quotes in which they support the analysis with powerful and insightful illustrations and explanations. Intensive document reviewing was used to cross check salient kinds of literature on the area of this research.

1.6.2.2.1. Semi-structured Key Informant Interview

Key informant interviews were provided valuable insights into the nature of UNHRC's role in promoting human rights violations. Semi-structured interviews are important to a researcher for probing the views and opinions of informants, which is desirable for them to expand their answers (Grey, 2004). The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility and in- depth exploration of the research objectives. The informant interview will include UNHRC experts, and the Ethiopia Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The way of conducting the interview will be one-on- one interview with key informants, used an interview guide that covers topics such as the nature and extent of human rights violations, the response of the UNHRC, the UNHRC's efforts, and the challenges of UNHRC's efforts.

1.6.2.2.2. Document Review

In addition to conducting in-depth interviews, the investigator employed document analysis. Examining the contents of publications such as books, magazines, newspapers, journals, proclamations of rules and regulations, historical documents, published and unpublished materials, and any other verbal materials, whether written or spoken, is the process of document analysis (Kothari, 2004).

Document analysis was involved the review and analysis of official reports of UNHRC and government, policy documents, academic articles, and other relevant published and unpublished documents. By using the above published and unpublished written documents, the researcher was trying to analyses the role of UNHRC in the protection of human rights

violations in the case of Ethiopia since 2018.

1.6.2.3. Sampling Technique and Sampling Size

For this study, purposeful sampling was selected from a variety of non-probability sampling techniques. Purposive sampling is a crucial tool that must be used when selecting informants for this investigation. Purposive sampling is therefore a non-random sample technique, and the analyst uses it to examine all of the cases that are extensive and challenging for the general public to access. Deliberate sampling approaches are generally widely used in qualitative research. Additionally, selecting informants who can add value to the study is crucial (Kumar, 2011).

The study employed in addition to purposeful, snowball sampling to select participants who have direct experience and knowledge of UNHRC's roles in promoting human rights violations in Ethiopia. This includes UNHRC experts and the Ethiopia Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The sample size of this research was determined by the saturation level of the data collected from those key informants. As a result, the researcher has selected the saturation of the sample size as a reference frame.

1.6.2.4. Methods of Data Analysis

The primary and secondary data collected were analyzed used the thematic method of qualitative data analysis. According to Mathews and Ross (2010), thematic analysis is a method of dealing with data that starts with raw data and stays in contact with it throughout. This is a crucial aspect of methods for handling qualitative data since, even though the information needs to be analyzed, condensed, and categorized, we still need to stay connected to or rooted in the original data (Mathews and Ross, 2010). This approach was ensuring a systematic exploration of the data, allowing for understanding the perspectives, experiences, and narratives of different stakeholders regarding the UNHRC's role in addressing human rights violations in Ethiopia. It can provide insights into the effectiveness, challenges, and potential solutions related to the UNHRC's actions.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study's strength is its analysis of the UN Human Rights Council's involvement in

addressing Ethiopia's human rights abuses since 2018, a time of intense violence and instability. The study adds to a better knowledge of the intricacies involved in international human rights advocacy by examining the extent and kind of these transgressions, the UNHRC's actions, and the difficulties encountered in advancing human rights. It also draws attention to the UNHRC's shortcomings, such as political opposition, restricted access, and a dearth of enforcement tools. In addition to offering insightful information about the efficacy of international human rights organizations, this study lays the groundwork for future research on the advancement of human rights in conflict areas, opening the door to more focused interventions and international collaboration in the fight against violations of human rights.

1.7. The scope of the study

The study was focus on the period after 2018 when Ethiopia experienced political transitions. It was primarily analyzing the role of the UNHRC in addressing human rights violations reported during this timeframe. The study was relied on a variety of sources, including primary sources such as key informant interviews and reports, documents, journal articles and books among others, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

1.8. Ethical Considerations in the Research

Ethical clearance was received from the ethical committee of the Department of political science and international relations, College of social science, Addis Ababa University ethical clearance committee. The Research ethics committee's letter would then be sent to the UNHRC concerned. A letter of permission was received from the administrative bodies of the region to communicate inside the UNHRC office with the appropriate bodies. After detailed explanation of the research goals, informed written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

All participants were told of their privacy and were not used as personal identifiers. The data collectors were then continued the work after obtaining informed consent from each participant by giving due respect to the research participant's standards, principles, beliefs, and maintaining the confidentiality of the data. During data collection, any personal identity

of the study participants was not registered. Data security could be protected by storing the questionnaires and data in a safe location.

However, the researcher was utilized codes rather than utilizing the name of the participants to secure their protection. Secondary sources utilized in this study was legitimately be cited and recognized to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism was emphatically be condemned by the researcher throughout the whole part of this study.

1.9. The Trustworthiness of the Research

To ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative data, the researcher was ensured credibility by asking the same questions for different participants. Moreover, to assure the credibility of the data, the researcher was used different data collection strategies such as observation, interview, document analysis, and continuous contact with an advisor, as well as, collecting data on time from research participants. This study was examined and reviewed by experts. This ensured depend ability of the study that made the study replicable and a reference to the researchers. For ensuring the validity of the study, my advisor examines the items measures. Thus, some useless, repeated, and ambiguous items are omitted.

1.10. Organizations of the study

This thesis is divided into the following well-structured chapters. Chapter one provides a comprehensive exploration of the study's background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance, scope, and methodology. Chapter two focuses on conducting a thorough review of related literature, establishing a strong conceptual and theoretical framework. Chapter three specifically examines human rights violations in Ethiopia since 2018, analyzing their nature, causes, and consequences. Chapter four is dedicated to data analysis and discussion, presenting the findings using rigorous analytical techniques. Concluding remarks and recommendations will be presented in the last chapter. Overall, the thesis is organized to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the research topic and to effectively communicate the research outcomes.

Chapter Two

Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives

2.1. Conceptual Perspective

2.1.1. Meaning of Human Rights

Human rights are universal and inalienable, meaning they cannot be taken away. They apply to everyone, regardless of their background, gender, or race. All right political, civil, social, cultural, and economic are equally important and interdependent. One cannot fully enjoy any right without the others. Everyone has the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives (UNFPA, 2005).

Human rights include the freedom from torture, the freedom of speech and religion, the right to life, the right to an education, and the right to justice, among others. This is non-discrimination and equality principles, which state that every person, irrespective of differences, is entitled to equal protection and treatment under the law (Wardani, 2023).

Human rights are a collection of principles related to equality and justice. All while Conceptual being able to live without fear, oppression, or prejudice. They widely agreed that human rights cover a range of entitlements such as the right to a fair trial, protection from slavery, prevention of genocide, freedom of speech, and access to education (Panamaldeniya, 2022). According to Donnelly (2013), all individuals have equal rights or no rights at all, irrespective of their self-identification as human beings and they apply to all living beings, recognizing all Homo sapiens as entitled to human rights (Donnelly, 2013).

Some thinkers argue that human rights encompass ethical guidelines or standards for particular behaviors expected from individuals, which are consistently upheld in both local and global legislation and they agreed the rights of others should not disregard (Panamaldeniya, 2022). Promoting social justice, economic growth, and peace and security all depend on upholding human rights. The United Nations has been actively promoting and defending human rights as a global organization and ensures that international agreements into account regional and cultural differences (UNHRC, 2007).

2.1.2. Classification of Human Rights

Human rights can be categorized in a variety of ways. For example, human rights are separated into three generations. The concepts of "three generations" and *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*—the three pillars of the French Revolution—are inseparable. According to Vasak, there are three generations of human rights: civil-political rights (18th century), social-economic-cultural rights (19th century), and collective or solidarity rights (20th century).

2.1.2.1. First Generation Rights (Civil and political rights)

The privileges that were common and derived from the 18th century are referenced by the first generation. It mostly consisted of negative rights rather than positive ones and embodied the ideas of liberal individualism and laissez-faire. It expresses a protest against the government's interference in personal interests, mainly political and civil ones. During this time, the freedoms against discrimination, torture, arbitrary arrest, detention, exile, and inhuman treatment have all been discussed. It served as the foundation for both the French and American revolutions (Cornescu, 2009).

The primary components of the first generation of human rights are In order to counteract the state's arbitrary power and the pope church's intervention, negative rights (also known as "freedom from") were promoted above positive rights (also known as "right to"). However, to assume that solely negative rights were promoted would be inaccurate. Positive rights including the right to asylum, a fair and public trial, and security were also negotiated during this period (Zieck, 1992).

2.1.2.2. Second Generation Rights (Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights)

The rights to labor, freedom of association, education, learning, and insurance against illness, old age, and disability (social insurance) are all examples of socio-economic and cultural rights. Both international law (the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights) and positive law provide these rights. Since consecration necessitates a substantial amount of work from the State and is therefore appropriate for everyone's success, this dedication does not have the same coverage as the case of first generation rights. While the first generation of rights can be enjoyed independently and alone, the second generation of

rights necessitates institutional backing from the state. To establish an institutional framework that permits the exercise, for instance, of the right to retirement or education, the state must step in through legislation. According to estimates, social economic rights are connected to an individual's "social status" if the rights of the first generation constitute "free status" (Cornescu, 2009; Sepulveda, et.al, 2004).

2.1.2.3. Third Generation Rights (the right to peace and security, development, and health/clean environment)

These rights, such as the right to self-determination, the right to peace, the right to development, the right to humanitarian aid, environmental law, the right of sexual minorities, and the rights of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, can only be exercised collectively rather than individually. In international law, these rights are typically positively consecrated. As with second generation rights, third generation rights require not only the establishment of institutional support from the State but also the restriction of first generation rights through so-called "positive discrimination," meaning that these rights, like those of any minority, necessitate the limitation of first generation rights. Although the environmental law permits social groups to live in a clean, healthy environment free of hazardous agents, it also imposes some restrictions on the rights of first- or second-generation people, such as the right to work or the right to possess a forest (Sepulveda, et.al, 2004).

2.1.3. Human Rights Violations

Human rights violations: Undermining development and fundamental freedoms rights violations can take various forms, from direct actions by the state to its failure to prevent such abuses (Diprose, 2008). One of the primary ways in which human rights violations hinder progress is by undoing the gains made in key areas such as education, health, employment, and infrastructure. Violence, whether stemming from crime, insurgencies, or large-scale communal conflicts, disrupts the normal functioning of these vital sectors (Diprose, 2008). This, in turn, undermines the ability of individuals to access essential services and opportunities, further exacerbating the challenges they face.

Moreover, human rights violations, such as genocide, torture, rape, slavery, starvation, and medical experimentation, are considered crimes against humanity (Alvareze, 2010). These

egregious acts not only inflict profound suffering on the victims but also erode the fundamental moral rights that should be afforded to all individuals.

The perpetrators of these abuses can come from various backgrounds, including police, judges, prosecutors, government officials, and even activists and addressing human rights violations is not only a moral imperative but also a crucial step towards sustainable development (Panamaldeniya, 2022; Diprose, 2008). This breadth of involvement highlights the systemic nature of the problem and the need for comprehensive efforts to address it.

Beyond the direct consequences on individuals and communities, human rights violations can also have far-reaching implications for a nation's overall development and global standing. When a state fails to uphold the fundamental rights of its citizens, it undermines its own legitimacy and credibility on the international stage (Donnelly, 2013).

The lack of accountability and the impunity with which human rights abuses are sometimes carried out can lead to a culture of disregard for the rule of law. This, in turn, can erode public trust in government institutions and the broader social fabric, making it increasingly difficult to address underlying societal challenges (Landman, 2006).

Furthermore, the international community has a responsibility to respond to egregious violations of human rights. When states fail to fulfill this obligation, it can lead to sanctions, diplomatic isolation, and even intervention, which can have significant economic and political consequences for the offending nation (Donnelly, 2013).

In the context of development, human rights violations can also have a direct impact on the allocation of resources and the prioritization of development initiatives. When a significant portion of a country's budget is diverted towards addressing the consequences of human rights abuses, such as the provision of services for displaced populations or the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, it can detract from investments in critical areas like healthcare, education, and infrastructure (Landman, 2006).

Additionally, the erosion of trust and social cohesion caused by human rights violations can make it more challenging to implement and sustain development programs, as communities may be less willing to cooperate with the government or external actors (Diprose, 2008). To

address these multifaceted challenges, a comprehensive and sustained approach is required. This includes strengthening the rule of law, improving government accountability, and fostering a culture of respect for human rights (Landman, 2006).

2.1.4. United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was formed on March 15, 2006, by the United Nations General Assembly under Resolution 60/251 as part of a reform initiative to replace the criticized and ineffective United Nations Commission on Human Rights in addressing global human rights concerns. It established in 1946 and functioned for six decades (Freedman, 2011; Rahman, 2023). The decision to create the UNHRC stemmed from concerns surrounding the Commission on Human Rights. It played a crucial role for human rights and increasing criticism due to the perceived politicization, double standards, and selectivity in its decisions (Smith, 2010).

The UNHRC primary responsibility is to promote and safeguard human rights worldwide (UNHRC, 2007). The establishment of this new body aimed to construct a stronger and more effective institution dedicated to human rights compared to its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights. The Human Rights Council meets at least three times a year to discuss human rights issues, receive reports from special rapporteurs and UN bodies, and adopt resolutions addressing country-specific situations (Williams, 2019).

The current dynamic within the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) is pushing the Council to adhere more closely to normative standards and ground realities. Civil society stakeholders play a significant role in shaping this dynamic. NGOs should focus on creating new mechanisms rather than just reacting to specific cases (Rathgeber, 2013).

2.1.4.1. Role of UNHRC in Addressing Human Rights Violations

The UNHRC investigations, reports, and recommendations to governments, the council tackles human rights violations (Freedman, 2011). It has also facilitated the establishment of commissions and mechanisms to investigate and prosecute human rights abuses in countries such as Syria, Myanmar, and Venezuela (HRW, 2021).

Since its establishment, the UNHRC has several special procedures, including special rapporteurs, independent experts, and working groups, to investigate human rights abuses in specific areas (Rahman, 2023).

According to Williams (2019), there are many different approaches that the UNHRC takes in its diplomatic efforts and grouped into several broad categories: Promotion of human rights education and awareness-raising, promoting a better understanding of human rights, advocacy and pressure on governments, cooperation with other UN bodies and human rights organizations, Research and documentation of human rights abuses.

2.1.4.2. Mechanisms of the UNHRC

The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) address human rights violations globally. The mechanisms work in tandem to promote accountability, protect victims, and drive progress in the international human rights landscape. One of the key mechanisms of the UNHRC is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This state-led process regularly evaluates the human rights situations of all UN Member States, providing a platform for peer-to-peer review and the exchange of best practices (UN Human Rights Council, 2007).

The Special Rapporteurs, for example, address issues such as extrajudicial executions, freedom of expression, and the rights of indigenous peoples. They conduct country visits, communicate with governments, and submit comprehensive reports to the UNHRC, shedding light on urgent human rights concerns and providing actionable recommendations (OHCHR, 2022).

The UNHRC's Advisory Committee serves as a critical "think tank" for the Council, providing expertise and advice on thematic human rights issues. Comprised of 18 independent experts, the advisory Committee conducts research, analyzes trends, and offers recommendations to the UNHRC, contributing to the development of international human rights norms, standards, and policies (OHCHR, 2022).

2.1.4.3. The Vital Objectives of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

According to Rahman's (2023) comprehensive analysis, the UNHRC's objectives are

multifaceted and geared towards fostering a world where fundamental freedoms and human dignity are respected and upheld for all.

Firstly, the UNHRC is charged with the weighty responsibility of making well-informed, evidence-based recommendations to the international community on how to improve human rights conditions around the world (Rahman, 2023). This advisory function is essential for galvanizing global action and catalyzing positive change.

Secondly, the UNHRC plays a crucial role in supporting and bolstering the work of other vital human rights mechanisms within the United Nations system. By collaborating closely with treaty bodies, special procedures, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council seeks to enhance the overall coherence, effectiveness, and impact of the international human rights framework (Chowdhury and Bhuiyan, 2010). This synergistic approach ensures that the UN's human rights efforts are coordinated, complementary, and mutually reinforcing.

Thirdly, the UNHRC is tasked with the vital function of facilitating constructive dialogue and cooperation among member states. By providing a neutral, multilateral platform for states to engage in open and transparent discussions, the Council encourages the sharing of best practices, the identification of common ground, and the fostering of collective solutions to complex human rights challenges (Chowdhury & Bhuiyan, 2010). This diplomatic role is instrumental in promoting a spirit of international solidarity and collective responsibility for upholding human rights.

Fourthly, a fundamental objective of the UNHRC is to ensure that states fulfill their solemn obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of all individuals within their territories. The Council works tirelessly to hold member states accountable for their human rights commitments, and to encourage them to take concrete, tangible actions to implement international human rights standards at the national level (Rahman, 2023). This accountability function is essential for translating lofty human rights principles into meaningful, on-the-ground realities.

Finally, the UNHRC is charged with the vital task of meticulously identifying, monitoring,

and reporting on human rights situations in diverse countries and regions. By conducting thorough investigations, documenting abuses and violations, and shining a spotlight on critical human rights challenges, the Council aims to raise global awareness, spur remedial action, and prevent further deterioration of human rights conditions (Rahman, 2023). This monitoring and reporting function is a crucial component of the UNHRC's efforts to safeguard human dignity and fundamental freedoms worldwide.

2.2. Theoretical Perspective

Human rights theories provide frameworks for understanding the nature, origin, and justification of human rights. They explore what rights individuals possess simply by being human and how these rights should be protected and promoted. Here are some key human rights theories:

2.2.1. Natural Rights Theory

The origins of natural rights theory can be traced back to ancient Greek and Roman philosophy (Waldron, 2002). Rooted in the philosophy of thinkers like John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, this theory posits that human rights are inherent and universal. They exist independently of any government or legal system and are derived from natural law. According to this view, individuals possess rights such as life, liberty, and property simply by virtue of being human. Individuals possess inherent rights that should be respected and safeguarded by all (Clapham, 2007). They are often regarded as fundamental and inalienable, implying that no authority has the authority to deprive individuals of these rights or violate those (Hussain & Akhtar, 2023).

2.2.2. Positive Rights Theory (Legal System)

This theory emphasizes that rights are granted by legal systems or social agreements. Positive rights require action from others (typically the state) to ensure that individuals can enjoy these rights, such as the right to education, healthcare, and social security. This perspective highlights the role of governments in creating and enforcing rights (Walters, 1995).

Central to Positive Rights Theory is the idea that certain human rights depend on collective

societal efforts. For instance, the right to education necessitates schools, trained teachers, and equitable access for everyone. Similarly, the right to healthcare requires robust public health systems and adequate funding. This theory emphasizes that governments have obligations to provide and maintain the necessary infrastructure and services. Furthermore, it highlights that human rights are dynamic, evolving with societal progress and demanding ongoing adaptation by legal systems to meet emerging needs (Shue, 1980).

Critics of Positive Rights Theory argue that it places a heavy burden on governments, particularly in resource-constrained contexts, where fulfilling positive rights may be financially or logistically challenging. However, proponents contend that such rights are essential for achieving justice and equality in society. They argue that positive rights address systemic inequalities and create opportunities for individuals to lead fulfilling lives. For example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) enshrines positive rights as fundamental, calling on states to use "maximum available resources" to progressively realize these rights (UN General Assembly, 1966). This reflects the global recognition of positive rights as integral to human dignity and well-being. While the implementation of positive rights requires resources and effort, their fulfillment is essential to achieving a fair and equitable society, making them a cornerstone of modern human rights discourse.

2.2.3. Social Contract Theory

Philosophers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke introduced the idea that individuals consent to form societies and governments to protect their rights. The social contract outlines the relationship between individuals and the state, suggesting that rights arise from mutual agreements and obligations among citizens and their government. It posits that societies are formed through agreements ensuring mutual rights and responsibilities. It can be used to argue for government accountability in protecting human rights as part of the "social contract" (Robertson, 2004).

Locke's contributions to the social contract, particularly his emphasis on natural rights, continue to influence modern human rights frameworks. Muldoon (2019) argues that Locke's assertion of inherent rights, such as life, liberty, and property, forms the philosophical

foundation for international human rights laws, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Locke's principle that governments derive legitimacy from their ability to protect these rights is echoed in contemporary debates about state accountability and the legitimacy of international interventions in cases of human rights abuses (Muldoon, 2019). This perspective reinforces the idea that human rights are not only moral claims but also legal and political obligations that states must uphold.

Rousseau's notion of the "general will" has also been revisited in the context of balancing individual and collective rights. Pateman (2020) examines how Rousseau's idea of collective responsibility aligns with modern human rights concerns, such as environmental justice and social equity. This perspective underscores the importance of integrating individual freedoms with societal obligations to achieve shared well-being. Rousseau's vision of a social contract emphasizes that human rights are not merely individual entitlements but are deeply embedded in the moral and social fabric of society, requiring collaboration and shared responsibility to ensure their realization (Pateman, 2020).

2.2.4. Cultural Relativism

This theory argues that human rights should be understood within the context of cultural norms and values. Proponents believe that what is considered a right in one culture may not be applicable or relevant in another. Critics argue that cultural relativism can be used to justify human rights abuses (Paul and Mishra, 2017).

Cultural relativism is the principle that an individual's beliefs, values, and practices should be understood based on their own culture, rather than judged against the criteria of another culture. In the context of human rights, cultural relativism raises important debates about the universality of human rights norms. Proponents argue that human rights must take into account the diversity of cultural traditions and social practices, as imposing a universal framework risks undermining cultural autonomy and imposing Western-centric values (Merry, 2006). This perspective suggests that human rights should not be applied uniformly across all societies but rather interpreted in ways that respect cultural differences and local traditions (Donnelly, 2013).

Critics, however, contend that cultural relativism can be used to justify the violation of fundamental human rights, such as gender inequality, discrimination, or harmful traditional practices. For example, practices like female genital mutilation or child marriages are often defended under the guise of cultural relativism, raising concerns about the tension between respecting cultural practices and protecting universal human rights. Donnelly (2013) argues that while cultural diversity is essential, certain rights—such as the right to life and freedom from torture—are non-negotiable and should be universally upheld regardless of cultural differences. This tension highlights the challenge of balancing cultural sensitivity with the enforcement of international human rights norms.

Recent scholarship has sought to bridge the gap between cultural relativism and universal human rights. Scholars such as An-Na'im (2016) propose a cross-cultural approach to human rights that emphasizes dialogue and consensus-building among cultures. This approach recognizes the importance of cultural context while advocating for the universality of core rights that protect human dignity. It suggests that human rights can be both universal and adaptable, allowing for cultural variations in their application while maintaining the core principles of equality, dignity, and justice. This perspective seeks to create a culturally inclusive human rights framework that respects diversity without compromising fundamental rights.

2.2.5. Universalism

In contrast to cultural relativism, universalism posits that human rights are universal and should apply to all people, regardless of culture, nationality, or religion. This perspective is reflected in documents like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which aims to establish a common standard for all humans (Paul and Mishra, 2017)

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2.2.6. Feminist Theory

Feminist perspectives on human rights highlight how traditional human rights frameworks often overlook gender-specific issues. Feminist theorists advocate for recognizing women's rights as human rights and addressing systemic inequalities that affect women's experiences and access to rights. Analyzes gender inequalities and advocates for systemic change to ensure women's rights. Addresses issues like reproductive rights, violence against women, and gender pay gaps (Mooki, Ozoemana, and Hansungule, 2010).

Charlesworth and Chinkin (2000) critique the androcentric nature of international human rights law, pointing out that it often ignores women's experiences and fails to address

gender-based violence and discrimination. They argue for a more inclusive framework that incorporates women's lived realities into human rights discourses. Similarly, Merry (2006) emphasizes the importance of cultural and structural transformations to address violence against women, arguing that global human rights mechanisms must engage with local practices to be effective.

Furthermore, feminist theorists advocate for recognizing reproductive rights as a fundamental aspect of human rights. They argue that control over one's reproductive health and decisions is essential for achieving gender equality and autonomy (Petchesky, 2003). Without these rights, women remain vulnerable to systemic inequalities that impede their ability to fully participate in social, economic, and political life

2.2.7. Critical Theory (Power Structure)

Rooted in Marxist thought, critical theory examines how power dynamics and social structures affect the realization of human rights. It critiques mainstream human rights discourse for failing to address underlying issues of inequality and oppression, advocating for a more transformative approach to rights. Examines power dynamics and systemic oppression, arguing for transformative changes to structures that perpetuate inequality. Helps in critiquing and addressing injustices, particularly in areas like race, gender, and class discrimination (Habermas, 1987).

Critical Theory offers a robust lens for understanding human rights by examining how power dynamics and systemic inequalities impede their realization. Rooted in Marxist thought, this framework critiques the mainstream human rights discourse for its failure to address the structural conditions perpetuating inequality and oppression. It argues that human rights cannot be fully realized within existing social and economic systems that prioritize maintaining power hierarchies over achieving equity and justice (Horkheimer, 1982).

From this perspective, traditional human rights frameworks often focus on individual freedoms and legal protections while neglecting the underlying socio-political structures that cause systemic oppression. For instance, Critical Theorists highlight how global capitalism exacerbates inequality, creating conditions where economic rights—such as access to

housing, healthcare, and education—are systematically denied to marginalized populations (Fraser, 1997). This critique emphasizes that a purely legalistic approach to human rights is insufficient without addressing the broader systems of power that sustain oppression.

Furthermore, Critical Theory underscores the importance of transformative change to dismantle structures that perpetuate inequality. For example, it critiques how patriarchal norms and institutionalized racism obstruct the realization of gender and racial equality, despite formal legal protections. Rather than treating these issues as isolated violations of rights, Critical Theory situates them within the broader context of systemic power dynamics, arguing that meaningful human rights progress requires structural reform and social transformation (Young, 1990).

By focusing on the intersections of race, class, and gender, Critical Theory challenges the Universalist assumptions of mainstream human rights discourse. It calls for an approach that recognizes the lived experiences of marginalized communities and addresses the root causes of their oppression. In doing so, it not only critiques existing human rights practices but also advocates for a more equitable and inclusive framework that prioritizes justice over the mere formalization of rights (Habermas, 1987).

2.2.8. Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory provides a critical framework for understanding the evolution and application of human rights, emphasizing the impact of colonial histories and power imbalances on contemporary human rights issues. This perspective argues that the legacy of colonialism has shaped not only the discourse surrounding human rights but also the lived experiences of marginalized communities in the Global South. Scholars such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) highlight the necessity of amplifying "subaltern" voices—those historically silenced or ignored in dominant narratives—asserting that genuine human rights discourse must include the perspectives and experiences of those most affected by oppression. By centering these voices, postcolonial theory challenges the prevailing narrative that often overlooks the historical injustices that continue to influence current human rights challenges.

A central critique of postcolonial theory is directed at the imposition of Western-centric human rights models, which can obscure the cultural and social realities of formerly colonized nations. As noted by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), the imposition of Western ideals often disregards indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices that are essential for understanding rights within specific contexts. This critique is vital, as it reveals how universal human rights frameworks can perpetuate neocolonial attitudes, reinforcing the dynamics of power established during colonial rule. Advocating for localized approaches to human rights, postcolonial theorists argue for the need to develop frameworks that are sensitive to the historical and cultural contexts of marginalized communities, thereby ensuring a more equitable representation of their rights and needs.

Moreover, postcolonial theory emphasizes the intersectionality of human rights issues, examining how aspects such as race, class, and gender intersect with colonial histories to create unique challenges for diverse groups. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) articulates, it is essential to recognize that the struggles for human rights are not homogenous; they are shaped by specific historical and cultural contexts. This perspective fosters a nuanced understanding of human rights activism, encouraging solidarity among various movements while advocating for the recognition of distinct grievances related to colonial legacies. Ultimately, by interrogating the dominant frameworks through which human rights are often viewed, postcolonial theory paves the way for a more inclusive, just, and representative human rights agenda that genuinely reflects the needs and aspirations of marginalized communities worldwide.

2.3. Empirical Review

Empirical reviews of human rights violations provide critical insights into the role of international institutions like the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in addressing atrocities, promoting accountability, and advocating for justice in conflict-ridden regions. The UNHRC has established mechanisms such as Fact-Finding Missions (FFMs), Commissions of Inquiry, and Universal Periodic Reviews to investigate and document abuses, thereby reinforcing its mandate to uphold human rights worldwide. This review examines the UNHRC's interventions in several countries facing severe human rights crises,

including Syria, Myanmar, Venezuela, South Sudan, and Sudan. It highlights the council's efforts in documenting violations, mobilizing international action, and overcoming challenges in promoting justice and accountability (Ghosal and Pal, 2021; International Service for Human Rights, 2023).

1. UNHRC Promotion of Human Rights in Myanmar

Since the military coup on February 1, 2021, Myanmar's human rights situation has sharply deteriorated. The military, known as the Tatmadaw, has engaged in widespread repression, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, and torture, targeting ethnic minorities and political dissidents (U.S. Department of State, 2023). In response, the UNHRC has taken significant steps to address these abuses.

The UNHRC established an Independent Fact-Finding Mission tasked with investigating human rights abuses committed by the military and documenting the experiences of victims (UNHRC, 2021). These investigations revealed systematic abuses, particularly against the Rohingya population, which the United Nations has characterized as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" (U.S. Department of State, 2023). The mission's reports provided evidence for calls for international accountability measures, including targeted sanctions against military leaders and support for the restoration of democracy (UNHRC, 2021).

The escalating violence has led to mass displacement, with hundreds of thousands of Rohingya fleeing to neighboring countries. The UNHRC has emphasized the importance of humanitarian access and the protection of displaced individuals. However, the military junta's resistance to international oversight and restrictions on humanitarian aid has exacerbated the crisis, highlighting the ongoing challenges of promoting human rights in Myanmar (UNHRC, 2021; U.S. Department of State, 2023).

2. Venezuela

The human rights situation in Venezuela has dramatically worsened in recent years, with widespread repression, arbitrary detentions, and violence against political dissidents. The government of Nicolás Maduro has intensified its crackdown on opposition, creating an atmosphere of fear and impunity (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

In response, the UNHRC established a Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to investigate gross human rights violations and international crimes in Venezuela. This mission has been instrumental in documenting abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances, and in identifying potential perpetrators (UNHRC, 2022). The mission's reports raised international awareness and encouraged accountability measures, such as targeted sanctions against those responsible for violations (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

However, the Venezuelan government has sought to evade scrutiny by expelling members of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and restricting access for international observers (Human Rights Watch, 2023). These actions have hindered the ability of the UNHRC to monitor the crisis effectively. Despite these challenges, the UNHRC's advocacy continues to play a key role in shedding light on abuses and mobilizing international action.

3. South Sudan

Since South Sudan gained independence in 2011, its human rights situation has been marked by ongoing armed conflict, ethnic violence, and widespread abuses. The UNHRC has actively addressed these issues by establishing a Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan to investigate abuses and provide recommendations for accountability and justice (UNHRC, 2021)

The Commission documented systematic violations, including sexual violence, torture, and the targeting of civilians based on ethnic identity. These findings underscored the urgent need for accountability mechanisms and reconciliation efforts. However, the ongoing conflict and political instability in South Sudan have significantly hindered the implementation of human rights protections, with local authorities often resisting international oversight (UNHRC, 2021).

Restricted humanitarian access further complicates efforts to address the crisis, as international organizations struggle to provide assistance and monitor conditions on the ground. The UNHRC's efforts remain crucial in advocating for the rights of victims and promoting peacebuilding initiatives in the country (OHCHR, 2021).

4. Republic of Sudan

The conflict in Sudan, which escalated on April 15, 2023, between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has caused a severe human rights and humanitarian crisis. According to the OCHA (2024), approximately 8.1 million people have been displaced, with 6.3 million displaced internally and 1.8 million fleeing to neighboring countries.

In response, the UNHRC adopted a resolution on October 11, 2023, to establish an independent Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) tasked with investigating human rights abuses and identifying perpetrators (International Service for Human Rights, 2023). This mission aims to document violations, particularly those impacting civilians, and provide evidence for accountability measures.

The conflict has severely restricted humanitarian access, leaving millions without essential aid and exacerbating the suffering of vulnerable populations. The UNHRC's efforts to document abuses and advocate for justice are critical in addressing the ongoing crisis and ensuring accountability for perpetrators of violations (OCHA, 2024; International Service for Human Rights, 2023).

5. Syria

The conflict in Syria, which began in 2011 within the broader regional context of the Arab Spring, has been marked by grave human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, torture, mass displacement, and the targeting of civilians. In response to this crisis, the UNHRC has taken significant steps to address these abuses and promote accountability.

One of the most notable actions by the UNHRC was the establishment of an independent Commission of Inquiry in 2011. This commission was tasked with investigating and documenting human rights violations committed during the conflict. Its reports provided critical evidence of systematic abuses, including the use of chemical weapons, indiscriminate bombings, and the targeting of civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and schools (Shahbazyan, 2020).

The reports produced by the Commission of Inquiry highlighted the roles of various actors in the conflict, including the Syrian government, rebel groups, and international parties, in perpetuating violence and violations of international law. The UNHRC has also consistently called for unrestricted humanitarian access to provide relief to affected populations and assist survivors of human rights abuses (Ghosal & Pal, 2021).

Despite these efforts, the situation on the ground remains dire. The Syrian government has resisted international scrutiny and restricted access to humanitarian organizations. Ongoing violence and displacement have exacerbated the suffering of millions, creating one of the largest refugee crises in modern history. The UNHRC's documentation of abuses and calls for accountability remain critical in ensuring that the voices of victims are heard and that justice is pursued (Shahbazyan, 2020).

This research examined the role of the UNHRC in promoting human rights violations in Ethiopia since 2018. The political reforms implemented by the Ethiopian government in that year created an opportunity to address the country's historically poor human rights record, which included extrajudicial killings, torture, enforced disappearances, and other severe violations (Amnesty International, 2021).

Despite these reforms, widespread reports of violence against civilians in northern Ethiopia emerged, including killings, rape, gender-based violence, forced displacement, and property destruction. Allegations were made against the Tigray People's Liberation Front, Amhara regional militias, and other armed groups for perpetrating these acts, as well as against local militia groups in Benishangul-Gumuz and western Oromia. Civilians in the Afar, Oromia, and Somali regions were also attacked and killed by local militias (Human Rights Report, 2022).

Chapter Three

Pre and Post 2018 Human Right Condition in Ethiopia

3.1. Overview of Human Rights Situations in Ethiopia

Ethiopia, an ancient and sovereign nation in the Horn of Africa, was instrumental in the continent's struggle against colonization. It was one of the original members of the Organization of African Unity, which subsequently evolved into the African Union, and the United Nations. Emperor Menelik II led Ethiopia's establishment as a modern state in the late 19th century, uniting several ethnic groups and geographical areas under a single governmental authority (Belay et al, 2020).

The Accord Report (2017) stated that throughout its history, Ethiopia has experienced political and economic coercion and cultural assimilation. The EPRDF overthrew the Derg military regime in 1991 and led the transition period. In 1995, they established the current Ethiopian Constitution, which implemented a decentralized federal system based on ethno-linguistic factors and regional autonomy. Additionally, they have initiated numerous large-scale projects to accelerate economic transformation in the country (Belay et al, 2020).

In November 2015, extensive protests against the government began in Ethiopia, initially triggered by opposition to the contentious "Addis Ababa Integrated Regional Development Plan" but soon evolving to encompass broader calls for economic and political changes. Subsequently, the government initiated a comprehensive reform process in response to these issues, culminating in the election of Abiy Ahmed as the current Prime Minister in April 2018 (Belay et al., 2020). The ACLED Country Report (2017) stated that Prime Minister Abiy has introduced various reforms, including the release of political prisoners and efforts to reconcile with Eritrea. Despite the reform efforts, it is clear that substantial challenges persist in the country.

Human rights are inherent privileges held by all individuals by virtue of their humanity. They are intended for everyone, regardless of factors like race, gender, religion, or socio-economic status. International agreements and principles set out these rights and hold governments responsible for promoting them. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in

1948 highlights key aspects of human rights, including universality, inalienability, and the interconnectedness and interdependence of these rights from birth (OHCHR, 2022). Violations of one human right can have a ripple effect on the respect for other rights, underscoring the importance of treating all rights with equal significance to uphold human dignity (OHCHR, 2010).

In 2016, Ethiopia experienced a state of emergency that lasted for several months. During this period, there were government crackdowns in the Oromia region, resulting in protests. According to the Human Rights Watch World Report (2017), these largely non-violent protests led to the deaths of at least 500 individuals and the arrest of 1,600 people. Additionally, access to the internet via mobile phones was blocked, and an independent publication, Addis Standard, ceased printing due to restrictions imposed during the state of emergency. Furthermore, Ethiopia has detained numerous opposition leaders, journalists, and dissenters using its counterterrorism law from 2009.

3.2. The Pre-reform Human Rights Violations in Ethiopia

During the imperial period in Ethiopia, the enjoyment of freedoms and entitlements was determined by the rulers rather than being inherent to individuals (Tsegaye, 2009). Even after the introduction of a modern constitution in 1931, human rights were not adequately respected. The revised constitution of 1955 made some improvements, but human rights remained largely symbolic as the regime continued to abuse them severely (Endalcachew, 2015).

Ethiopia has faced challenges such as drought, famine, poverty, and human rights violations, which can be traced back to past imperialistic and socialist regimes. However, in 1991, the EPRDF came into power after overthrowing the socialist Dergue regime through armed conflict (Alex, 1992). The Ethiopian Constitution of 1995 further reinforced these principles by including comprehensive provisions on human and democratic rights in accordance with international norms (Tesfay & Mekuriya, 2021).

In 2005, Ethiopia experienced election-related violence and the government's response led to severe human rights abuses, including killings, arbitrary detentions, and harassment of

opposition party members. Multiple international organizations reported on these abuses. The resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in 2018 marked a significant turning point, driven largely by the efforts of various groups advocating for change (Tronvoll, 2008).

In mid-2015, Oromo youth protested against Addis Ababa's expansion into Oromo lands. By early 2016, Amhara youth rebelled against injustices, with Gondar and Bahir Dar becoming protest hubs. On July 25, 2016, Gondar witnessed large demonstrations where slogans like "Oromo blood is my blood" were carried (Addis Standard, 2023). Despite government forces' violent crackdown, Amhara-Oromo solidarity continued to grow. TPLF sowed division between the two groups to maintain control. Oromo and Amhara leaders united for a common cause after multiple meetings. Protest movements spread to other regions, leading to the overthrow of TPLF and the rise of Dr. Abiy Ahmed as leader on April 2, 2018 (Addis Standard, 2023).

3.3. Post Reform Human Rights Violations in Ethiopia

According to a World Report (2019), the Abiy administration, responsible for implementing reforms, has experienced both achievements and setbacks in the realm of human rights. HRW, in its report on January 15th, 2019, commended Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for the significant transformation of the human rights landscape in 2018 (World Report 2019).

Since becoming prime minister, Abiy has implemented significant social, economic, and political reforms, distinguishing himself from his predecessors during the early stages of his tenure. He has made impactful speeches in protest-filled cities, expressing regret for past violence against demonstrators and promoting unity and Ethiopian identity (Weber, 2018).

According to HRW report, the positive changes observed after Abiy assumed office are supported by the following evidence: the government lifted the state of emergency, released numerous political prisoners, committed to legal reforms to address repressive laws, and implemented various other reforms that contributed to an improved respect for human rights (HRW, 2019). The reduction in arrests, detention, abuse, and harassment of individuals are critical of the government, based on reports from various non-governmental organizations (USDOS, 2018).

In June 2018, the Ethiopian government formed a legal advisory council to reform repressive laws that allowed the arbitrary detention and conviction of opposition leaders and government critics. Additionally, the government lifted the ban on foreign-based political parties such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), and Ginbot-7, allowing their return and operation in the country (Amnesty International, 2020).

Despite the initial optimism surrounding Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's leadership in Ethiopia, the country has experienced escalating violence and ethnic conflicts instigated by various groups. This has resulted in widespread displacements, killings, and turmoil in multiple regions, leading to a shift from hope to uncertainty and despair among the population (Tsfay and Mekuriya, 2021).

These challenges highlight the importance of addressing underlying social tensions, grievances, and identity issues in order to foster trust, empathy, peace, and development in a diverse society. The progress made in human rights reforms has been hindered by these conflicts, which have caused significant internal displacement and a breakdown of law and order in the country (HRW, 2020).

The Ethiopian government has struggled to control crimes and illegal activities, leading to widespread hooliganism across the country. Several high-profile individuals, including the CEO of GERD, the Ethiopian military chief of staff, and the Amhara regional government cabinet, were assassinated with little progress in the trial process and obtaining justice. The assassination of a young Oromo artist further highlighted the government's failure to prevent killings and vandalism. The state judicial system has continued to malfunction, resulting in a sense of injustice that has become synonymous with both the government and the country (Siyum, 2021).

Conflict erupted in Ethiopia's Tigray region in November 2020, initially between government forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The violence has later spread to neighboring regions, resulting in serious violations of international humanitarian law, including executions, sexual violence, and property destruction. Tigrayan civilians have been subjected to ethnic cleansing, despite a declared humanitarian truce (Bader, 2022).

The conflict has led to a dire humanitarian situation, with an estimated 5.2 million people in Tigray urgently needing food aid, and a total of 20 million people in Ethiopia requiring humanitarian assistance due to the Tigray conflict, locust invasion, and drought. The fighting has resulted in thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions of people, both internally and into neighboring countries (Al Jazeera, 2022).

According to the Wilson Centre report (2023), the Eritrean military targeted the Tigrayans and obstructed humanitarian aid delivery by damaging roads and links. The Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) and Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) committed widespread abuses against civilians, including attacks on schools, looting, occupation, and weaponized rape. Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) has been a pervasive and organized tactic. The war has affected over 20 million people, with women and children comprising the majority. Additionally, 5.5 million people have been displaced and sought refuge in other regions. The conflict initially confined to Tigray has spread to neighboring regions of Afar and Amhara (Wilson Centre, 2023).

The period following the reforms in Ethiopia has seen the involvement of third parties, including individuals, groups, and non-state actors, in human rights violations. These violations encompass civilian killings, rape, gender-based violence, forced displacement, looting, and property destruction. Interestingly, the government and its agents have played a diminished role in these violations compared to non-state actors (Tsfay & Mekuriya, 2021). The Oromo Liberation Army, specifically operating in western, central, and southern Oromia, has been reported to target civilians and government officials, particularly in the western parts of Oromia (USDOS, 2022).

Ethiopia has confronted serious human rights issues, including government-sanctioned unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and cruel treatment. Arbitrary arrests, harsh prison conditions, and political prisoners were prevalent. Conflicts resulted in civilian casualties and the recruitment of child soldiers. Freedom of expression was severely limited, with violence against journalists and censorship. Internet freedom, peaceful assembly, corruption, gender-based violence, trafficking, racial or ethnic targeting, and the criminalization of same-sex conduct were also significant concerns (USDOS, 2022).

The merger of regional police forces into the military in the Amhara region resulted in a deteriorating security situation. This led to a surge in violence, including the fatal shooting of two Catholic Relief Services workers and intense battles in various cities and towns. The conflict caused a high number of casualties, including innocent children and refugees, and extensive damage to public infrastructure such as hospitals (HRW, 2023).

By August 29, 183 deaths were reported, and security forces conducted widespread arrests during household searches, further worsening the situation. The federal government declared a state of emergency in the region, but its effects extended beyond the intended boundaries, creating additional challenges (HRW, 2024).

According to Human Rights Watch reports in 2023, security forces in Ethiopia have intensified efforts to suppress internal divisions within the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, leading to casualties and arrests in Shashemene, Oromia. Despite failed peace talks, the government launched an anti-insurgency campaign against the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in May, resulting in violence affecting both the Oromo and Amhara communities. This has caused significant damage to vital infrastructure, including healthcare facilities and water systems, throughout August (HRW, 2023).

In Shegar city, near Addis Ababa, authorities demolished homes and businesses, leaving residents homeless, while excessive force was used against peaceful protesters opposing the demolitions. Additionally, clashes between security personnel from the Oromia and Somali regions have tragically resulted in the loss of lives among Somali civilians in Ethiopia's Somali region (World Report, 2024).

Ethiopia is experiencing a period of turmoil marked by ongoing mass demonstrations that started in November 2015. The protests have been met with severe state repression, leading to numerous casualties, injuries, and arrests. This recent wave of unrest is not an isolated event but part of a broader pattern of political and ethnic clashes that have occurred in the country since the regime took power in 1991 after the civil war. The situation in Ethiopia reflects a complex and deep-seated set of challenges that the country has been facing for several years (Abbink, 2016).

3.4. Cases of Human Rights Violations in Ethiopia post 2018

During the post 2018 period, several factors contributed for human rights violations. The return of previously exiled opposition parties and rebel groups, facilitated by the government's expansion of the political space, resulted in political instability and security challenges. The polarization and antagonism within the political sphere further intensified tension and uncertainty, negatively impacting public life. The resulting political instability, driven by polarized and extremist ideologies, has led to extensive human rights abuses and violations throughout the country (Tesfay & Mekuriya, 2021)

Civil society organizations and human rights defenders face challenges in operating freely. The government has imposed restrictions on the activities of NGOs, limiting their ability to advocate for human rights and provide assistance to affected communities (Buyse, 2018). Involvement of youth groups in violence is mainly influenced by economic challenges like a weak economy and high unemployment rates (Semir, 2019).

Additionally, private and social media platforms, both within Ethiopia and internationally, spread false news to fuel violence for political motives (Meseret, 2020). The recent protests in Ethiopia have their roots in long-standing ethnic and geographic causes. These protests, preceded by smaller clashes in previous years, led to a brutal crackdown by security forces. Human Rights Watch reported around 400 deaths and thousands of arrests during the repression (Abbink, 2016).

The crisis in Ethiopia has a deeper social dimension, with a substantial number of unemployed youth and an urban underclass facing exclusion from educational and employment opportunities. The government's suspicion and surveillance extend to emerging cultural and political youth organizations such as the Blue Party, Muslim youth groups associated with the Awoliya School, Orthodox Christian associations, and the Zone 9 bloggers, resulting in the closure of several of these groups (Abink, 2016) This social context contributes to the ongoing human rights violations in Ethiopia, exacerbating tensions between the government and these youth organizations.

3.5. Response of UNHRC to Human Rights Violations in Ethiopia

The United Nations and other international organizations with which it is linked give the subject of human rights a high priority. However, the issues of commerce and national security must be taken into account when clearly defining a country's foreign policy in bilateral or multilateral forums. Serious human rights violations occurring within the nations with whom we have diplomatic relations should be accorded top priority. One frequently mentioned argument in favor of such a tactic is the need to respect a country's sovereignty and refrain from meddling with its diplomatic endeavors, and non-interference by a nation in diplomatic relations (Ghosal & Pal, 2021).

The UNHRC also oversees respect for human rights through a variety of mechanisms, including its resolutions in nations where grave or ongoing human rights violations occur; a system of "special procedures" (independent reporting and working groups); and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a mechanism whereby all UN Member States are subjected to a critical assessment of their human rights conduct in a formal session every four years where they are also given recommendations (Ghosal & Pal, 2021). The United Nations Human Rights Council to enhance the promotion and projection of human rights worldwide. Its primary mission is to investigate and monitor human rights issues globally, including in Ethiopia (Shahbazyan, 2020).

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has stressed the importance of unbiased observers assessing the human rights conditions in Ethiopia. However, the Ethiopian government has rejected these appeals and instead highlighted its own investigations conducted by the Ethiopian Commission. The African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, the European Parliament, and the US Congress, along with other bodies, have also called for impartial investigations into reported human rights violations and the excessive use of force by security forces during protests in Ethiopia. These investigations aim to examine the actions of all parties involved in the conflict since November 3, 2020, and consider any potential gender-related aspects of these violations and abuses (OHCHR, 2023).

The Human Rights Council's has its role in preventing human rights violations and responding to emergencies, particularly highlighting the situation in Ethiopia as deserving

urgent attention (OHCHR, 2023). Additionally, as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, Ethiopia is expected to uphold high human rights standards and collaborate fully with relevant mechanisms, although access requests from UN Special Procedures remain pending (freedom House, 2017). Before the 54th regular session of the Human Rights Council, various civil society and human rights organizations are appealing to delegations to extend the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia's mandate until September 2024 (HRW, 2023).

In the ongoing conflict, it is crucial for the Ethiopian government to grant unrestricted access to the Commission and provide comprehensive support for its work. The United Nations General Assembly should back the mandate given to the ICHREE, ensuring it has the necessary resources and staff. Furthermore, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Ethiopian Human Rights Commission should fully cooperate and assist by facilitating access to information and evidence in their possession. Collaboration and support from all parties involved are essential for conducting a thorough and effective investigation (Relief web, 2022).

3.6. The Nexus of EHRC and UNHRC

From May 16 to August 30, 2021, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) conducted a joint investigation into reported human rights violations, abuses, and breaches of international humanitarian and refugee law during the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia (OHCHR, n.d). The EHRC and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) maintain a cooperative and engaged relationship in the realm of human rights.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is an independent entity established by the Constitution of Ethiopia. It operates as a national institution responsible for safeguarding and advancing human rights. The EHRC directly reports to the Parliament and operates under Proclamation No.210/2000, which has been amended by Proclamation No.1224/2020 (EHRC, 2022).

As a national human rights institution, the EHRC operates within Ethiopia and works to

protect, promote, and monitor human rights within the country (EHRC, 2022). It is not a direct subsidiary but functions independently as a national institution the ultimate aim of this mechanism is to improve the human rights situation in all countries and address human rights violations wherever they occur (UN Human Right Council, 2007).

From July 2022 to March 2023, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) collaborated on 15 consultations focused on transitional justice (TJ) in various regions and city administrations of Ethiopia. These consultations took place in Afar, Amhara, Harari, Oromia, Somalia, Tigray, and Dire Dawa (EHRC-OHCHR, 2023). The engagement between the EHRC and the UNHRC demonstrates a cooperative relationship that involves sharing information and working together on transitional justice issues.

The mandate of the EHRC includes reporting on national situations, encouraging broad national consultations, and raising awareness around human rights. Thus, the EHRC takes part in the preparation of the report submitted to the HRC (UPR Info, 2015). While the EHRC operates as a national human rights institution, it interacts with the UNHRC through reporting, participation in the UPR process, and collaboration with relevant UN entities in the field of human rights.

The EHRC, a governmental commission that works to ensure the human and democratic rights of the people, is not working within its full capacity. The Commission is mandated to investigate and report human rights violations and abuses to urge and pressure the government and the international community. Nevertheless, the Commission is facing a structural problem and has no budgetary and civil servant freedom to work on the mandates and responsibilities given by the law. These problems hinder the Commission to ensure the protection of human and democratic rights and to challenge the government effectively (Tesfay & Mekuriya, 2021).

Chapter Four

Role of United Nations Human Rights Council in Promoting Human Rights in Ethiopia

Introduction

Ethiopia's human rights status has been the subject of intense international attention and investigation since 2018. This study examines the extent and nature of human rights violations in Ethiopia. The study also focuses on the difficulties in promoting human rights in Ethiopia and the role of UNHRCs.

Reliable accusations of widespread atrocities and human rights violations have surfaced since the northern region's conflict began in late 2020. These arbitrary killings, the disproportionate use of force by security forces, indiscriminate bombing and shelling, summary executions, and the intentional persecution of ethnic minorities led to the hunger and mass displacement of Tigrayans and others (Amnesty International, 2022 and UNOCHA, 2022).

However, there has been controversy regarding the effectiveness and impact of the UNHRC's work, as stated by Amnesty International (2022). This has raised worries about the impartiality and seeming politicization of the UNHRC's response, as well as doubts about its capacity to enforce its demands for action and guarantee compliance.

This study explores the intricate and varied human rights issues in Ethiopia and the UNHRC's role in resolving them through the use of a theme analytic approach and an examination of pertinent literature. The goal of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Ethiopia's human rights situation and the international community's response in order to guide future policy and action. It accomplishes this by examining the type and gravity of the violations, the UNHRC's interventions, and the outcomes and effectiveness of those measures.

4.1. Extents of Human Rights Violations in Ethiopia since 2018

This section is designed to focus on the general human rights breaches in Ethiopia.

Addressing the seriousness of human rights breaches in Ethiopia is crucial before looking at the role, area of action, and challenges to human rights promotion. It is crucial to look at the following matters to demonstrate the UNHRC's level of promotion: Are there any human rights abuses in Ethiopia? How does Ethiopia appear to safeguard human rights? Are there any discrepancies in the implementation and protection of human rights? To what extent are human rights violated in Ethiopia? It is necessary to address these questions prior to examining promotion.

Even after major political reforms were implemented in 2010, Ethiopia still faces considerable human rights concerns. The Kampala Treaty was ratified, the electoral board and human rights commission were reorganized, and the Federal Courts Act, Public Proclamation, Anti-Terrorism Act, and Civil Society Organizations Proclamation were modified as part of these reforms (Amnesty International 2010).

Conflicts and harsh government reactions have resulted in continued identity-based violence, extrajudicial murders, and other atrocities in Ethiopia's Oromia, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Amhara regions (MoFA social and human rights directorate, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa). After the resulting humanitarian crisis in northern conflict a peace agreement might be becoming, but remains severe, and continued particularly in the Amhara region (The Guardian, 2023).

The daily lives of many Ethiopians have not yet improved significantly despite the reforms' seeming promise in the midst of persistent violence and instability. Following the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) in Pretoria on November 2, 2022, there was a notable decline in widespread violence in Tigray. However, the Tigray war is still unsolved, and the Federal Government has failed to uphold its COHA duties regarding territorial integrity, transitional justice, and human rights (International Human Right Council, 2023).

As MoFA secretary (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) noted, there are serious and continuous human rights violations in Tigray, according to COHA investigations into the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) and their attacks on civilians, including past and present sexual and gender-based violence, as well as violations committed by foreign armies or Amhara militia

in some regions of Tigray.

The Commission documented numerous violent cases of rape, sexual violence, and displacement in Tigray. In 2023, it also documented widespread arbitrary detentions, particularly of Amharas, but also of other ethnic groups; the continued, pervasive use of hate speech and incitement to discrimination based on gender and ethnicity; and the continued devolution of civil authority through militarized "Command Posts," including under State of Emergency legislation (International Human Rights Council, 2023).

Press and freedom of expression have been severely suppressed in the region since 2018. Many independent media sources have been compelled to self-censor or shut down as a result of the tremendous pressure they have experienced (MoFA social and human rights directorate 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa). Similarly, journalists covering the war have faced intimidation, incarceration, and, in some cases, violence. The government has also limited internet and telecoms access in crisis zones. The security forces employ extrajudicial killings and excessive force, including as indiscriminate shelling and bombing (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

These actions have caused significant displacement, forcing many Tigrayans to flee the violence. Humanitarian access to these displaced individuals and the Tigray region is severely restricted, leading to severe food shortages and famine conditions, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis (Amnesty International, 2021).

Similarly, MoFA secretary (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) mentioned, mass displacement and violence have been reported in the Amhara region, with many residents supposedly slaughtered in massacres similar to those in China. Due to the escalation of the violence and the targeting of civilian populations, which has resulted in great suffering and displacement, these atrocities have further contributed to the human rights catastrophe that is developing throughout Northern Ethiopia.

As noted by MoFA social and human rights directorate (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa), the UNHRC has accused the Ethiopian government of committing violations of international humanitarian law, including gender-based violations such as widespread sexual violence, the

destruction of civilian infrastructure, and the targeting of civilians leading to mass displacement. The UNHRC has also reported on attacks on Eritrean refugee camps, further exacerbating the human rights crisis in the region (UNHC, 2022). MoFA secretary, (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) stated that arbitrary detention and due process violations have also been widespread. Thousands of Tigrayan civilians, human rights defenders, and opposition figures have been arrested, often without charge or access to legal counsel.

However, the lack of accountability and the inability of Ethiopia's domestic institutions to uphold its obligations under international humanitarian law have contributed to the ongoing human rights challenges in the Tigray conflict (UNHC, 2022). Further, there are reports of torture, ill-treatment, and forced disappearances of detainees. This crackdown on civil society has occurred alongside the closure of universities and the detention of politicians who have sought refuge outside the country without due process of law.

Sadly, the human rights crisis in Ethiopia has been characterized by widespread ethnic targeting and violence. Credible evidence indicates that civilians from various ethnic groups, including Tigrayans, Amharas, and others, have been specifically targeted based on their identity (Amnesty International, 2021). The use of sexual violence as a tactic of war has disproportionately affected ethnic minority women (The regional director of human right, 08-09-2016, Addis Ababa). Massacres of Amhara populations have been reported in the Oromia region, carried out by the OLF-Shene and other armed groups. Conversely, Tigrayan and Amhara civilians have faced atrocities at the hands of the ENDF, Fano militia, and the TPLF (Amnesty International, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2022). The systematic nature of these attacks on civilians from different backgrounds highlights the alarming ethnic dimensions of the conflict and the urgent need for accountability and protection of all affected communities (The regional director of human right, 08-09-2016, Addis Ababa).

As noted in MoFA international law affair (13-09-2016, Addis Ababa), there are increasing requests for independent investigations and accountability procedures as a result of the scope and seriousness of these alleged infractions. However, it has been difficult to completely document the scope of the abuses due to access restrictions and a persistent atmosphere of fear. States of emergency imposed in impacted areas have strengthened the government's

hold on power and limited civil society's capacity to keep an eye on and report on the situation. Ethiopia's human rights situation is still terrible as the battle continues, with catastrophic effects on the civilian populace.

The extent of human rights crisis in Ethiopia has drawn significant international attention and scrutiny since the outbreak of conflict in the Tigray region in late 2020. Credible reports have documented widespread atrocities and human rights abuses committed by all parties to the conflict, including extrajudicial killings (Amnesty International, 2021), excessive use of force (OHCHR, 2021), indiscriminate shelling and airstrikes (Amnesty International, 2021), summary executions (HRW, 2022), and the targeted persecution of ethnic minorities (OHCHR, 2022).

Ethnic violence has displaced millions. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported that in 2019 alone, over 1.9 million people were internally displaced due to conflict, primarily ethnic violence (IDMC, 2019). Armed clashes between ethnic groups, such as between the Oromo and Amhara, have led to significant loss of life and property. The Gedeo-Guji conflict in 2018, for example, displaced nearly 1 million people within a few months (OCHA, 2019).

MoFA secretary (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) stated, the deliberate targeting of ethnic minorities, particularly those from Tigray and Amhara, was the primary and grave problem of Ethiopia's human rights crises. The interviewees claimed that the ethnic cleansing effort against the Tigray and Amhara peoples, the use of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions, and sexual violence as "weapons of war" are all systemic components of Ethiopia's human rights crisis.

Seemingly, the human rights crisis in Ethiopia has involved the systematic targeting of ethnic minorities, particularly the Tigrayan population, by security forces and allied militias. These groups have carried out extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and employed sexual violence as a "weapon of war" in what has been characterized as a "campaign of ethnic cleansing" (Amnesty International, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2022).

However, the conflict has expanded beyond Tigray, with the TPLF and other forces also attacking civilians, religious sites, and property in the neighboring Afar and Amhara regions. This has led to numerous massacres, such as those in Aksum (Amnesty International, 2021) and Kobo (OHCHR, 2022), further exacerbating the broader human rights crisis unfolding across different parts of the country amidst the protracted and widening conflicts (International Crisis Group, 2023).

Amnesty International's research has documented numerous incidents of Tigrayan civilians being killed "in their homes, in the streets, and as they tried to flee" (Amnesty International, 2022). Human Rights Watch has also reported on the "unlawful killings of Tigrayan civilians" by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces, as well as the Amhara regional police and allied militia (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Beyond Tigrayans, other ethnic minorities such as Amhara's and Oromos have also been subjected to targeted violence and persecution (MoFA international law affair, 13-09-2016, Addis Ababa). The OHCHR has received credible reports of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and the forced displacement of these communities (OHCHR, 2021). This systematic targeting of specific ethnic groups reflects a deeply concerning pattern of human rights violations motivated by ethnicity and identity.

Alongside the targeted persecution of ethnic minorities, the conflict in Ethiopia has been characterized by indiscriminate attacks on civilian populations. Interviewees described "indiscriminate shelling of populated areas" (MoFA secretary, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) by government forces and their allies, as well as the "excessive use of force by security personnel" against unarmed protesters and civilians (MoFA international law affair, 13-09-2016, Addis Ababa). Human rights reports have documented numerous incidents of airstrikes, artillery bombardments, and ground offensives that have killed and injured civilians, including women and children. In one incident documented by Amnesty International, an airstrike on a busy market in Tigray killed at least 59 civilians (Amnesty International, 2022).

The OHCHR has also reported on the "disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force" by security forces, particularly during demonstrations and civil unrest (OHCHR, 2021). Local communities have been devastated by these indiscriminate attacks on civilian populations,

which not only clearly violate international humanitarian law but also exacerbate the country's humanitarian crisis. These attacks frequently result in fatalities and the destruction of homes, schools, and vital infrastructure.

In the Tigray region, security forces have been accused of extrajudicial killings and excessive force, such as indiscriminate shelling and airstrikes during military operations and protests. Allegations include summary executions, particularly targeting Tigrayan men of military age (Human Rights Watch, 2022). These actions have caused significant displacement, forcing many Tigrayans to flee the violence. Humanitarian access to these displaced individuals and the Tigray region is severely restricted, leading to severe food shortages and famine conditions, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis (Amnesty International, 2021).

The human rights crisis in Ethiopia has been characterized by widespread ethnic targeting and violence. Credible evidence indicates that civilians from various ethnic groups, including Tigrayans, Amharas, and Oromos, have been specifically targeted based on their identity. Massacres of Amhara populations have been reported in the Oromia region, carried out by the OLF-Shene and other armed groups. Conversely, Tigrayan and Amhara civilians have faced atrocities at the hands of the ENDF, Fano militia, and the TPLF (Amnesty International, 2021).

Economic, social, and cultural rights have also been severely compromised, particularly in regions affected by conflict and displacement. As noted by (The regional director of human right, 08-09-2016, Addis Ababa), Conflict and displacement have severely disrupted access to essential services. In conflict zones, particularly in the northern part of the country, schools and health facilities have been destroyed or repurposed for military use, depriving communities of these vital services. For instance, UNICEF reported that many schools and health centers in Tigray have been damaged or occupied by armed forces, significantly hindering children's education and access to healthcare (UNICEF, 2021).

MoFA social and human rights directorate (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) stated that the ongoing conflict has exacerbated food insecurity, with many regions experiencing severe food shortages. The destruction of agricultural infrastructure and the blockade of humanitarian aid have led to famine-like conditions, particularly in Tigray. According to the

World Food Program, millions are in need of urgent food assistance (WFP, 2021). Similarly, the conflict has also disrupted livelihoods. Farmers have been unable to plant or harvest crops, and markets have been destroyed or are inaccessible, further contributing to economic hardship (MoFA secretary, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa). The International Labor Organization notes that the conflict has led to significant job losses and a decline in economic activities (ILO, 2021).

The conflict in Northern part of Ethiopia and other parts of the country has also impacted cultural heritage sites. Numerous historical and religious sites have been damaged or destroyed, which not only affects the cultural identity of the community but also tourism and local economies dependent on these sites (UNESCO, 2021). These violations of economic, social, and cultural rights highlight the extensive and multifaceted impact of the conflict on the affected populations, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia.

This analysis examines the nature and extent of these violations in detail, drawing on key informant interviews and a comprehensive review of reports from human rights organizations, the United Nations, and other credible sources. Let us look some of the human right crisis and extent of violations happened in Ethiopia.

4.1.1. Impediment of Humanitarian Access

The crucial and deeply concerning aspect of the human rights crisis in Ethiopia is the deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid and the resulting exacerbation of the humanitarian catastrophe. Interviewees highlighted how "severe restrictions on humanitarian access" have led to "famine-like conditions" in parts of the country, particularly in northern regions (MoFA secretary, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa; The regional director of human right, 08-09-2016, Addis Ababa). The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) has reported that "over 5.2 million people in Tigray are in urgent need of food assistance," but that "the delivery of aid has been severely impeded by ongoing fighting, bureaucratic obstacles, and targeted attacks on humanitarian workers and assets" (UNOCHA, 2022).

In addition, Amnesty International has also documented instances of humanitarian convoys being "blocked, looted, or attacked," further exacerbating the dire situation faced by

vulnerable populations (Amnesty International, 2022). The deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid, coupled with the ongoing conflict and the targeting of critical infrastructure, has resulted in a catastrophic situation, with the risk of famine and widespread starvation (MoFA international law affair, 13-09-2016, Addis Ababa). This constitutes a severe violation of international humanitarian law and the fundamental human rights of the affected populations.

4.1.2. Sexual and Gender-based Violence

Since 2018 the human rights crisis in Ethiopia has also been marked by the widespread use of sexual and gender-based violence as a "weapon of war." Interviewees described "the systematic and organized use of rape and other forms of sexual violence" against Amhara and Tigrayan women and girls by TPLF, security forces, and allied militia groups (MoFA social and human rights directorate, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa; MoFA international law affair, 13-09-2016, Addis Ababa). Similarly, HRW also documented numerous cases of "gang rape, sexual slavery, and other forms of sexual violence" perpetrated by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces, as well as by Amhara regional police and militia (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Further, the OHCHR has also received "credible reports of widespread sexual and gender-based violence" against civilians, including the "rape of women and girls, some as young as 8 years old" (OHCHR, 2021).

In addition to being grave human rights violations, these horrifying acts of sexual assault have a significant and enduring impact on the survivors' and their communities' physical, mental, and social well-being. The seriousness of the issue and the pressing need for justice and responsibility are further highlighted by the targeted and organized character of these atrocities.

4.1.3. Displacement and Humanitarian Crisis

The regional director of human right (08-09-2016, Addis Ababa) indicated that the "targeted persecution of ethnic minorities" and the "indiscriminate attacks on civilian populations" have led to the "forced displacement of millions of people". According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the conflict has resulted in

the internal displacement of over 2.5 million people in Ethiopia, with the majority of them being Tigrayans (UNOCHA, 2022).

The agency has also reported on the "severe restrictions on humanitarian access" that have prevented the delivery of essential aid to these displaced populations, leading to "famine-like conditions" in parts of the country (UNOCHA, 2022). The combination of forced displacement, restricted humanitarian access, and the targeting of critical infrastructure has created a catastrophic situation, with vulnerable populations facing acute food insecurity, a lack of access to clean water and sanitation, and the risk of disease outbreaks (Amnesty International, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2022).

This humanitarian crisis is a direct result of the human rights violations perpetrated by the parties to the conflict and constitutes a grave breach of international human rights and humanitarian law (OHCHR, 2021). The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that the displacement has also resulted in over 63,000 Ethiopian refugees fleeing to neighboring countries, primarily Sudan (UNHCR, 2022). The displacement of these populations has exacerbated already dire human rights violations.

According to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the lack of access to healthcare, clean water, and adequate shelter for the internally displaced has led to the spread of diseases, malnutrition, and the loss of lives (MSF, 2021). The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has also documented the severe food insecurity and lack of basic services faced by these displaced communities. The ICRC's reports highlight the dire humanitarian situation in Tigray, with many people lacking access to adequate food, clean water, and essential medical care (ICRC, 2022). The targeting of critical infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools, and water sources, by the parties to the conflict has further worsened the humanitarian situation (Amnesty International, 2021).

The United Nations has warned that the restricted humanitarian access and the "de facto blockade" of aid to Tigray have pushed the region to the brink of famine, with millions facing starvation (UN, 2022). This displacement and humanitarian crisis are inextricably linked to the human rights violations perpetrated during the conflict, including the targeting of civilian populations, the use of starvation as a weapon of war, and the systematic

destruction of livelihoods and essential services (OHCHR, 2022). Addressing this crisis will require a concerted effort to hold the parties accountable for their actions and to ensure the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to the affected populations.

4.1.4. Freedom of Expression and the Press

Journalists have been frequently arrested and detained under vague and broad charges. For example, Eskinder Nega, a prominent journalist and founder of the Balderas for True Democracy party, was detained multiple times on charges related to incitement and terrorism (Amnesty International, 2021). Broad anti-terrorism laws and incitement statutes have often been used to justify such arrests, stifling critical reporting.

As noted by MoFA social and human rights directorate (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa), Journalists have faced physical attacks and threats from both state and non-state actors. These actions create a climate of fear, leading many to practice self-censorship to avoid repercussions. Reports from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) indicate that several journalists have been assaulted, their offices raided, and their equipment confiscated (CPJ, 2021).

The Ethiopian government has intensified its crackdown on the media, with numerous journalists facing arbitrary detention, harassment, and even physical violence. These actions have created an environment of fear and self-censorship, making it increasingly difficult for the media to report on sensitive issues, particularly the ongoing conflict in the Northern region (CPJ, 2021). The repression of press freedom has drawn international condemnation, with human rights organizations and press freedom advocates calling on the Ethiopian government to respect the rights of journalists and allow for the free flow of information (OHCHR, 2021).

The government has repeatedly shut down the internet, particularly during periods of political unrest (MoFA secretary, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa). Severe restrictions on independent media, including the shutdown of internet and telecommunications services in conflict zones harassment, detention, and in some cases, violence against journalists reporting on the conflict Censorship and tight government control over the flow of

information from affected regions (MoFA social and human rights directorate, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa). For instance, the internet was shut down nationwide following the assassination of Hachalu Hundessa in June 2020, aiming to prevent the organization of protests and the spread of information (Access Now, 2020).

These shutdowns not only impede communication but also disrupt economic activities and access to essential services. Social Media Censorship: Social media platforms have been specifically targeted for censorship. Authorities have blocked access to social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp during critical periods, such as elections or major protests, to control narratives and suppress dissent (Net Blocks, 2020). Legal and regulatory frameworks have been used to restrict media freedom and control the press (MoFA secretary, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa).

The Anti-Terrorism Proclamation and the Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation have been criticized for their broad and ambiguous definitions, which can be used to criminalize legitimate journalistic work. These laws have enabled the government to prosecute journalists and activists for content deemed as inciting violence or spreading false information, even when such content constitutes legitimate criticism or reporting (Freedom House, 2021).

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA) has the power to grant and revoke media licenses. There have been instances where media outlets critical of the government have faced bureaucratic hurdles, delays in license renewals, or outright revocation of their licenses (Human Rights Watch, 2022). This regulatory environment creates a compliant media landscape where outlets are wary of antagonizing the authorities (Reporters without Borders, 2021).

4.2. The Interventions and Actions Taken by the UNHRC in Response to Human Rights Violations in Ethiopia

The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has played an important role in identifying, investigating, and denouncing the widespread human rights violations occurring in Ethiopia by establishing the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia

(ICHREE), adopting resolutions, and cooperating with other UN instruments (UN Human Rights Council, 2022).

The regional director of human right (08-09-2016, Addis Ababa) pointed out that the UNHRC's efforts have been severely hampered by the crisis's enduring nature, the Ethiopian government's ongoing resistance, and the absence of a strong and well-coordinated international response. To resolve Ethiopia's human rights issue and provide justice and redress for the victims and their communities, it will be crucial to overcome these challenges and make sure the UNHRC's recommendations are implemented effectively (Amnesty International, 2022).

According to MoFA social and human rights directorate, (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) thorough grasp of the scope and character of the crimes perpetrated in Ethiopia has been made possible thanks in large part to the UNHRC's admirable interventions and activities in response to the country's human rights crises. Adopting resolutions, establishing the ICHREE, and interacting with other UN mechanisms have all helped to increase global awareness, draw attention to the issue, and promote justice and accountability.

Moving forward, the UNHRC must continue to maintain its focus on the situation in Ethiopia, strengthen its investigative and monitoring capacities, and work closely with the international community to increase the pressure on all parties to the conflict to respect human rights and international humanitarian law (OHCHR, 2021). Only through sustained and concerted action can the UNHRC help to bring an end to the ongoing human rights violations and the immense suffering of the Ethiopian people (UN Human Rights Council, 2022).

4.2.1. The Role of the UNHRC in Promoting Human Rights in Ethiopia

Since 2018, the UNHRC has been instrumental in addressing human rights violations in Ethiopia through the establishment of ICHREE. Despite facing tremendous opposition and obstacles, the commission's efforts to document abuses and disseminate evidence are crucial in ensuring accountability and fairness for victims. Continuous international support and weight are essential to the UNHRC's effective efforts to protect human rights in Ethiopia

(Amnesty International, 2023).

According to Amnesty International (2023) report, the UNHRC has played a crucial role in addressing human rights violations in Ethiopia since 2018, particularly in response to the conflict in the Tigray region that began in late 2020. The International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) to investigate allegations of serious human rights abuses by all parties involved in the Tigray conflict. This commission was tasked with documenting crimes, preserving evidence, and identifying those responsible and justice for victims (Amnesty International, 2022).

The UNHRC's interventions have faced resistance from the Ethiopian government, which has tried to end the commission's mandate, arguing that it undermines national sovereignty and the peace process. Despite these efforts, international human rights organizations and several UN member states have emphasized the importance of the commission's work in providing impartial investigations and supporting justice and reconciliation (Voice of America, 2021).

Reports by the ICHREE have highlighted widespread violations, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, sexual violence, and destruction of civilian infrastructure, which may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. These findings have been crucial for international awareness and advocacy, pressing the Ethiopian government to address these abuses and comply with international human rights standards (ICHREE, 2022).

In addition to the ICHREE, the UNHRC has also called for the Ethiopian government to grant full access to humanitarian aid and ensure the safety of civilians amid ongoing conflicts in regions like Tigray, Amhara, and Afar (Voice of America, 2021). The council's efforts are part of a broader international response to mitigate the humanitarian crisis and promote peace and stability in Ethiopia.

Overall, the UNHRC has played a pivotal role in documenting human rights violations in Ethiopia, advocating for accountability, and supporting efforts to provide justice for victims amidst a complex and ongoing conflict.

4.2.2. Intervention area of UNHRC in Ethiopia

The human rights situation in Ethiopia has drawn significant international concern, particularly in light of the ongoing conflict and reported abuses. The UNHRC has taken proactive steps to address these violations through various mechanisms aimed at investigation, documentation, and advocacy. This section outlines the UNHRC's intervention strategies, which include the establishment of fact-finding missions, joint investigative efforts with local and international bodies, and the adoption of resolutions that seek to promote accountability and protect human rights. Through these initiatives, the UNHRC aims not only to document the extent of human rights violations but also to foster a coordinated international response to the crisis, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable and that the rights of victims are upheld.

4.2.2.1. Establishment of Fact-Finding Missions and Investigations

According to the MoFA secretary (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) the UNHRC has prioritized the foundation of fact-finding missions to efficiently accumulate prove of human rights mishandle in Ethiopia. These missions utilize different strategies, counting on-site examinations, witness interviews, adherent symbolism, and legal investigation, to compile comprehensive and valid reports on the nature and scale of human rights infringement (UNHRC, 2021).

As noted as MoFA international law affair (13-09-2016, Addis Ababa) stated that in December 2020, the UNHRC established the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) to conduct an independent investigation into the human rights situation in the country. The ICHREE was mandated to "collect and preserve evidence of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law" and to "make recommendations on accountability measures" (UNHRC, 2020).

Through its extensive field investigations, interviews with victims and witnesses, and the collection of documentary evidence, the ICHREE has produced several comprehensive reports detailing the atrocities committed by all parties to the conflict. In its first report, the ICHREE found "reasonable grounds to believe that violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, some of which may amount to war crimes and

crimes against humanity, have been committed in Ethiopia" (ICHREE, 2021). Subsequent reports have further corroborated these findings, with the latest report in 2022 stating that "there are reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in Tigray" (ICHREE, 2022).

The UNHRC's actions aim to pursue accountability and justice. The findings from the fact-finding missions are not merely for documentation but aim to identify perpetrators and recommend measures for bringing them to justice (UN Human Rights Council, 2021). This underscores the importance of both international and domestic judicial processes in addressing abuses, providing a pathway for holding violators accountable, and ensuring justice for victims (Amnesty International, 2022).

The UNHRC has also deployed special rapporteurs and independent experts to monitor and report on specific human rights issues in Ethiopia. These experts engage with local stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, and victims of human rights abuses, to obtain accurate and contextual information (MoFA secretary, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa). The work of these experts highlights the UNHRC's commitment to targeted monitoring and advocacy for the protection of human rights defenders and other vulnerable groups (OHCHR, 2021; Amnesty International, 2022).

4.2.2.2. Joint Investigative Mechanisms

According to The regional director of human right (08-09-2016, Addis Ababa) the United Nations Human Rights Council has intensified its efforts to galvanize a global response to the human rights crisis in Ethiopia. In March 2021, the UNHRC requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to collaborate with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in conducting a joint investigation into the human rights violations occurring in Tigray (UNHRC, 2021).

The findings of this joint investigation, published in November 2021, corroborated the findings of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) and called for "independent, transparent, and effective investigations" into the alleged crimes (OHCHR, 2021). The UNHRC has also worked closely with the UN Security Council, providing regular updates on the situation and advocating for stronger action. The UNHRC

has urged the Security Council to consider imposing targeted sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses, as well as to refer the situation in Ethiopia to the International Criminal Court (UNHRC, 2021).

Furthermore, the UNHRC has engaged with other UN agencies, such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the WFP, to address the severe humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict and the human rights violations. According to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the collaborative investigations between various bodies have enhanced effectiveness through pooled resources and expertise, ensuring a more comprehensive assessment of the human rights situation in Ethiopia. The joint efforts between the UNHRC and ACHPR have been instrumental in addressing the human rights crisis with a unified approach (ACHPR, 2021).

Through the establishment of the ICHREE, the adoption of resolutions, and the coordination with other UN mechanisms, the UNHRC has played a pivotal role in documenting, investigating, and condemning the widespread human rights violations occurring in Ethiopia (UN Human Rights Council, 2022; Amnesty International, 2022). However, the persistence of the crisis, the continued resistance from the Ethiopian government and the lack of a robust and coordinated international response has posed significant challenges to the UNHRC's efforts (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

Moving forward, the UNHRC must continue to maintain its focus on the situation in Ethiopia, strengthen its investigative and monitoring capacities, and work closely with the international community to increase the pressure on all parties to the conflict to respect human rights and international humanitarian law (OHCHR, 2021). Only through sustain and concerted action can the UNHRC help to bring an end to the ongoing human rights violations and the immense suffering of the Ethiopian people (UN Human Rights Council, 2022).

4.2.2.3. UNHRC Resolutions and Advocacy

The UNHRC has also been active in passing resolutions and issuing statements to address the human rights crisis in Ethiopia. In December 2020, the UNHRC adopted a resolution establishing the ICHREE and calling for "unhindered, independent, and impartial investigation" into the alleged violations (UNHRC, 2020). Since then, the UNHRC has

continued to maintain a strong focus on the situation in Ethiopia, regularly discussing the issue and passing additional resolutions. In July 2021, the UNHRC adopted a resolution condemning the "gross violations and abuses of human rights" and calling for the "immediate cessation of hostilities" (UNHRC, 2021).

The UNHRC has also used its platform to advocate for the protection of civilians, the provision of unimpeded humanitarian access, and the accountability of those responsible for the atrocities. The High Commissioner for Human Rights has repeatedly called on the parties to the conflict to "comply with their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law" and to ensure the "protection of civilians" (OHCHR, 2021).

4.2.3. Areas UNHRC's promote human rights in Ethiopia

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has been at the forefront of the international response to the deteriorating human rights situation in Ethiopia since the outbreak of conflict in the northern region. Through a range of interventions and actions, the UNHRC has sought to investigate, document, and respond to the widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law occurring in the country. This analysis examines the impact and effectiveness of the UNHRC's efforts, assessing the extent to which the Council's interventions have contributed to addressing the crisis, holding perpetrators accountable and promoting justice.

The analysis draws on academic literature, human rights reports, and interviews with four key informants closely involved in the UNHRC's response to the crisis in Ethiopia. Investigating and Documenting Human Rights Violations One of the UNHRC's most significant contributions has been the establishment of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) in December 2020. The ICHREE's mandate to "collect and preserve evidence of human rights violations, abuses, and violations of international humanitarian law" has been instrumental in generating a comprehensive understanding of the nature and scale of the atrocities committed in Ethiopia (UNHRC, 2020).

The ICHREE's meticulous investigations and thorough reporting have been widely

recognized as a crucial source of credible information and evidence. The ICHREE's findings, which have been presented in multiple reports, have corroborated and expanded upon the documentation and reporting of other human rights organizations, providing a robust and authoritative account of the human rights situation (Amnesty International, 2021).

According to MoFA international law affair (13-09-2016, Addis Ababa), "the ICHREE's work has been invaluable in shedding light on the systematic nature of the violations, the targeting of specific ethnic groups, and the involvement of various parties to the conflict". The informant further noted that the ICHREE's comprehensive documentation has been instrumental in raising international awareness and mobilizing global attention on the crisis in Ethiopia.

4.2.3.1. Advocacy and Diplomatic Efforts

The UNHRC has leveraged its platform and authority to advocate for a robust and coordinated international response to the human rights crisis in Ethiopia. Through the adoption of resolutions, the issuance of statements, and engagement with other UN mechanisms, the UNHRC has consistently condemned human rights violations and called for immediate action (UNHRC, 2021; UNHRC, 2022).

The UNHRC resolutions have been particularly significant in establishing formal mechanisms and mandates to address the crisis. This includes the creation of the ICHREE and the call for a joint investigation by the OHCHR and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (UNHRC, 2020; UNHRC, 2021). Moreover, MoFA social and human rights directorate (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) stated that the UNHRC has used its diplomatic influence to engage with the Ethiopian government and other parties to the conflict, urging them to comply with their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, to ensure the protection of civilians, and to facilitate unimpeded humanitarian access.

As MoFA international law affair (13-09-2016, Addis Ababa) noted, "the UNHRC's sustained advocacy and diplomacy have contributed to maintaining the issue as a priority on the global agenda, which in turn has increased the pressure on the parties to the conflict". However, the informant also acknowledged that the Ethiopian government's resistance to the UNHRC's calls and efforts has been a significant challenge.

4.2.3.2. Mobilizing the International Community

The UNHRC's efforts have also been instrumental in mobilizing the broader international community to address the human rights crisis in Ethiopia. By providing a platform for regular discussions, updates, and calls to action, the UNHRC has played a crucial role in galvanizing global attention and coordinating the responses of various stakeholders (UNHRC, 2022).

The UNHRC's engagement with other UN mechanisms, such as the Security Council and relevant agencies, has been particularly valuable in bridging the gaps between different parts of the UN system and ensuring a more coherent and effective international response (Bellamy and Quintin, 2022). As another key informant stated, "the UNHRC's collaboration with the OHCHR and the joint investigation conducted with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission have helped to enhance the credibility and legitimacy of the international efforts, as well as foster a greater degree of cooperation and coordination among the various actors involved" (MoFA secretary, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa).

Similarly, the UNHRC's advocacy efforts have contributed to the imposition of targeted sanctions by individual states and regional organizations, such as the European Union, against individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses in Ethiopia (EU, 2022). While the scope and impact of these sanctions have been limited, they nonetheless represent a tangible outcome of the UNHRC's efforts to hold perpetrators accountable.

4.3. Challenges Facing UNHRC in Promoting Human Rights

Despite the UNHRC's commendable efforts, the human rights situation in Ethiopia remains dire, and the impact of the Council's interventions has been constrained by several significant limitations and challenges. The following challenges and drawbacks have significantly limited the UNHRC's ability to effectively protect human rights and ensure accountability in Ethiopia, underscoring the need for a more robust and coordinated international response. Let us see the challenges that hindered UNHRC's efforts in terms of Human Right protection.

4.3.1. Challenges from Ethiopian Government

4.3.1.1. Lack of Cooperation from the Ethiopian Government

The Ethiopian government has been generally uncooperative and safe to the UNHRC's endeavors to explore and address human rights infringement (Human Rights Observe, 2021), the UNHRC's capacity to successfully screen and react to the quickly advancing circumstance in Ethiopia has been hampered by the need of unrestricted get to for human rights organizations and the limitations forced by the Ethiopian government on compassionate and investigative exercises (Amnesty International, 2021).

As noted by The regional director of human right (08-09-2016, Addis Ababa), "the lack of cooperation from the Ethiopian government and the absence of a strong, coordinated international response have undermined the implementation of the UNHRC's recommendations". This lack of cooperation is further evidenced by the UNHRC's observation that "the government of Ethiopia has not provided access to the country for the Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, nor has it responded to the Commission's requests for information" (UN Human Rights Council, 2022).

4.3.1.2. Limitations in Enforcement Mechanisms

The UNHRC's resolutions and proposals have been obliged by the nonappearance of a strong requirement component, it is confronted by solid resistance from the Ethiopian government, which has at times denied or made light of the seriousness of the human rights infringement and unwilling to coordinate completely with the ICHREE and other investigative instruments (UNHRC, 2022; Amnesty International, 2021). The reluctance to accept external scrutiny has significantly impeded the Council's effectiveness.

MoFA secretary (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) stated that, "the UNHRC's resolutions have helped to shape the narrative and set the agenda, but their impact has been limited by the lack of a strong enforcement mechanism". This sentiment is echoed by Amnesty International, which has noted that "the international community must go beyond mere condemnation and take concrete actions to ensure accountability for the atrocities committed in Ethiopia" (Amnesty International, 2022).

4.3.1.3. Disillusionment and frustration among Ethiopians

The seen ineffectualness of the UNHRC's endeavors has driven to a developing sense of thwarted expectation and dissatisfaction among Ethiopians. As human rights advocate famous, "the need of substantial activity and responsibility measures has cleared out numerous Ethiopians feeling disappointed and baffled with the universal community's reaction" (MoFA social and human rights directorate, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa). This opinion is sounded by MoFA international law affair (13-09-2016, Addis Ababa), who expressed that "the need of concrete steps to guarantee equity and change for the casualties has been a major disillusionment for numerous within the Ethiopian human rights community."

4.3.2. Puzzles from UNHRC in Promoting Human Rights in Ethiopia

Since 2018, Ethiopia has experienced severe human rights violations linked to ethnic violence, political instability, and the devastating Tigray conflict (2020–2022). Despite the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)'s mandate to promote and protect human rights globally, the Council has faced significant weaknesses in its response to Ethiopia's crises. These weaknesses are deeply rooted in political bias, institutional limitations, delayed responses, and a lack of enforcement mechanisms, all of which have undermined its ability to hold the Ethiopian government accountable. Below is a detailed analysis of these weaknesses, with insights from Key Informants and scholarly sources.

4.3.2.1. Political Bias and Influence

A major weakness of the UNHRC in addressing human rights violations in Ethiopia has been political bias and the influence of powerful states. Ethiopia's strategic position in the Horn of Africa and its key role in regional politics, particularly through the African Union (AU), it has shielded the country from rigorous scrutiny. As MoFA social and human rights directorate (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) notes, Ethiopia has cultivated strong diplomatic ties with influential states like China, Russia, and various African nations, which has resulted in political protection and selective accountability. MoFA secretary (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) further emphasizes that these geopolitical relationships have allowed Ethiopia to deflect international pressure, particularly from organizations like the UNHRC, thereby evading

significant consequences for its human rights abuses.

As Forsythe (2019) argues, decisions within the UNHRC are frequently shaped by the political considerations of powerful states, which dilute the effectiveness of its human rights actions. This dynamic has been evident in the Tigray conflict, where credible reports of ethnic cleansing, sexual violence, and mass displacement were overshadowed by Ethiopia's political alliances (Human Rights Watch, 2021). MoFA international law affair (13-09-2016, Addis Ababa) highlights how Ethiopia leveraged its position within regional organizations and its peacekeeping efforts to avoid facing the full weight of international scrutiny.

4.3.2.2. Insufficient International Coordination and Pressure

The UNHRC's endeavors have been hampered by the need of a solid, facilitated universal reaction, the usage of the UNHRC's calls for responsibility and equity has been prevented by a need of political will and the nonappearance of a clear and facilitated universal reaction. The disappointment to force significant sanctions or to allude the circumstance to the Worldwide Criminal Court has undermined the UNHRC's endeavors to hold culprits responsible (Bellamy & Quintin, 2022; HRW, 2022).

As noted by The regional director of human right (08-09-2016, Addis Ababa), "the absence of a strong, coordinated international response has undermined the implementation of the UNHRC's recommendations". This lack of international coordination and pressure has been a persistent challenge, as observed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which has called for "a more robust, coordinated international response to address the human rights crisis in Ethiopia" (OHCHR, 2021).

4.3.2.3. Lack of Enforcement Mechanisms

Another fundamental weakness of the UNHRC is its lack of enforcement mechanisms, which severely limits its ability to address human rights violations effectively (MoFA social and human rights directorate, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa). The Council can issue resolutions, condemnations, and recommendations, but it lacks the authority to impose binding actions, such as sanctions or military interventions. This issue was especially evident in Ethiopia, where the Ethiopian government has largely ignored the UNHRC's resolutions (MoFA

secretary, 07-09-2016, Addis Ababa).

The regional director of human right (08-09-2016, Addis Ababa) notes that the Tigray war provided a clear example of how the UNHRC's inability to enforce its decisions has allowed abuses to continue unchecked. Despite multiple calls for investigations and condemning the violence, the Ethiopian government dismissed the UN Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (2021) and took no meaningful steps to hold perpetrators accountable. Freedman, (2011), stated that, the UNHRC's reliance on moral authority and its inability to compel states to comply means that its resolutions often have no tangible impact on the ground. MoFA secretary (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) adds that this lack of enforcement mechanisms leaves the UNHRC as a "toothless" body in cases like Ethiopia, where state sovereignty and non-compliance often trump international law.

4.3.2.4. Inconsistent and Delayed Response

The UNHRC's delayed and inconsistent response to the escalating human rights crisis in Ethiopia has been a significant weakness. The Tigray conflict, which began in November 2020, saw reports of atrocities from the outset, but the UNHRC's initial response was slow and fragmented. MoFA social and human rights directorate (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) points out that the UNHRC's response was marked by bureaucratic hurdles and the influence of powerful member states, resulting in a delay in addressing the violence.

As MoFA secretary (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) notes, these delays allowed the humanitarian crisis to spiral out of control, with thousands of civilians killed, millions displaced, and widespread famine conditions. MoFA international law affair (13-09-2016, Addis Ababa) describes how the UNHRC issued vague statements condemning the violence but failed to initiate urgent action, such as establishing an independent investigation immediately after the outbreak of the conflict. Freedman, (2011), further critiques the UNHRC for its reliance on consensus-building and political negotiations, which often take precedence over timely and decisive actions.

4.3.2.5. Over-reliance on Diplomatic Engagement and Dialogue

The UNHRC has also been criticized for its over-reliance on diplomatic engagement and its

tendency to prioritize dialogue over direct action. While dialogue is important for conflict resolution, MoFA secretary (07-09-2016, Addis Ababa) highlights how the UNHRC's focus on consensus-building and state sovereignty often results in inaction when immediate interventions are necessary. In the case of Ethiopia, the UNHRC frequently called for negotiations and dialogue, giving the Ethiopian government more time to continue its military campaign in Tigray and avoid international consequences.

Freedman, (2011), critiques the UN system's emphasis on state sovereignty, which often prevents the UNHRC from taking stronger measures in the face of severe human rights abuses. The regional director of human right (08-09-2016, Addis Ababa) agrees, noting that the Ethiopian government framed the conflict as an internal issue, which the UNHRC failed to challenge effectively. By focusing on dialogue, the UNHRC allowed the government to maintain control over the narrative and avoid international scrutiny.

4.3.2.6. Failure to Address Systemic Issues and Root Causes

The UNHRC's failure to address the systemic issues and root causes of human rights violations in Ethiopia has been another key weakness. The ethnic federalism system in Ethiopia has entrenched divisions and fueled violence, but the UNHRC has largely focused on specific incidents of violence without addressing these broader structural issues (MoFA international law affair, 13-09-2016, Addis Ababa).

The UNHRC often overlooks systemic discrimination and economic inequalities that are at the root of many human rights crises. MoFA international law affair (13-09-2016, Addis Ababa) indicated Ethiopia's political structure has fostered ethnic divisiveness, which has been a major cause of violence; nevertheless, the UNHRC has not done enough to address these root problems. The UNHRC has addressed specific atrocities, but it hasn't addressed the larger problems of economic injustice and ethnic politics that fuel the bloodshed.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion

The human rights situation in Ethiopia has deteriorated significantly since 2018, particularly with the outbreak of the Tigray conflict in late 2020. Despite initial political reforms, widespread atrocities—including extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, ethnic targeting, and the displacement of millions—have been documented. Systemic issues, such as ethnic federalism, have fueled violence against minority groups like Tigrayans and Amharas, while the obstruction of humanitarian aid has exacerbated famine-like conditions. Violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict—including government forces, allied militias, and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF)—highlight the severity of the crisis. The human rights violations in Ethiopia are not isolated incidents but rather systemic and widespread, raising concerns of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The UNHRC has made significant efforts to address Ethiopia’s human rights crisis, including the establishment of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE). This commission has been instrumental in documenting violations, preserving evidence, and identifying perpetrators. The UNHRC has also collaborated with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and adopted resolutions aimed at holding perpetrators accountable, protecting civilians, and addressing the humanitarian crisis. While these efforts have brought international attention to the crisis, limitations such as restricted access to conflict zones and resistance from the Ethiopian government have hindered their full implementation. Despite these challenges, the UNHRC’s actions have led to global awareness, targeted sanctions, and calls for international accountability.

The UNHRC faces significant challenges in its efforts to promote human rights in Ethiopia. Chief among these is the Ethiopian government’s resistance, including restricted access to investigators, non-compliance with recommendations, and attempts to terminate ICHREE’s mandate. Strategic alliances between Ethiopia and powerful states, such as China and Russia, have further shielded the government from effective international scrutiny.

Additionally, the UNHRC's lack of enforcement mechanisms limits its ability to hold perpetrators accountable, leaving many of its resolutions and recommendations unimplemented. Internal weaknesses, such as political bias, delayed responses, and over-reliance on diplomacy, have also undermined the Council's effectiveness. These challenges highlight the need for stronger international collaboration, better enforcement frameworks, and a coordinated response to address systemic issues and ensure accountability.

This study highlights critical gaps in the promotion of human rights in Ethiopia by various institutions, creating opportunities for further research. Future studies could examine the role of other international and regional organizations in addressing Ethiopia's human rights crisis, as well as explore the systemic issues, such as ethnic federalism, that contribute to ongoing violence. Additionally, further research could focus on strengthening accountability mechanisms and identifying effective strategies for international intervention to protect human rights and deliver justice to victims.

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Key informants

No	Code of Key Interviewee	Positions or Academic Rank	Interview date and time	Interview type	Place of Interview
1	MoFA social and human rights directorate	Director of Social and Human Rights in International Organization Affairs General Directorate in the Ministry of Foreign affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	07/09/2016 3:20-4:30 am	Face to face	Addis Ababa
2	MoFA secretary	First Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia International organizations directorate general	07/09/2016 4:50-6:30 am	Face to face	Addis Ababa
3	MoFA international law affair	Ministry of Foreign Affairs International Law Affaire Directorate General. Director of Human Right issues.	<u>13/09/2016</u> <u>3:45 -4:35</u> <u>am</u>	Face to Face	Addis Ababa
4	The regional director of human right	Regional Director, Human Rights Monitoring and Investigation	<u>08/09/2016</u> <u>3:30-4:50</u> <u>pm</u>	Face to face	Addis Ababa

Appendices

Appendix I: Interview Questions Guideline

Addis Ababa University

College of Social Sciences

Department of Political Science and International Relations

Interview Guideline Questions

The purpose of this interview is to gather information on the underlying “**The Role of UNHRC in promoting human right in the case of Ethiopia since 2018.**” This study is conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy.

I kindly request you to provide accurate information in response to the following questions. Your answers are highly valuable, and the information gathered will be confidential and solely utilized for the purpose of this research. Your participation is greatly appreciated, and I am grateful for your attention and the time you devote.

Thank you in advance!

By: Maritu Behonegn

Phone: +251 910604468

Email: mitumaritu@gmail.com

Interviewing the UNHRC experts

1. Would you please tell me the types and levels of human rights violations in Ethiopia since 2018, according to UNHRC data?
2. Can you provide an overview of UNHRC work on human rights violations in Ethiopia?
3. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the UNHRC's efforts to protect human rights in Ethiopia since 2018? What positive results or challenges have you seen?
4. After 2018, were there any cases where the UNHRC intervention has had a significant impact on the protection of human rights in Ethiopia? Example?
5. In your opinion, what additional measures or strategies do you think UNHRC should incorporate to address human rights violations in Ethiopia and increase its effectiveness?

B. Interviewing the EHRC (Ethiopia human rights commission)

1. Would you please tell me the type and severity of the most frequent human rights violations reported in Ethiopia since 2018??
2. Since 2018, how coordinated has the United Nations Human Rights Council been with EHRC to collect information, prepare and implement responses to uphold human rights in Ethiopia?
3. What activities and interventions have the United Nations Human Rights Council done to resolve the human rights situation in Ethiopia since 2018?
4. In the EHRC's assessment, to what degree have the UNHRC's efforts been successful in improving the overall human rights conditions and providing relief to affected communities in post-2018 Ethiopia?
5. What do you believe were the key challenges and limitations that hindered the UNHRC's ability to more effectively address the human rights crisis in Ethiopia, and what lessons should be learned for similar situations in the future?

C. Interviewing policy personnel and victims

1. Can you describe the types and levels of human rights violations in Ethiopia since 2018 and the UNHRC's actions and effectiveness in addressing them?
2. How have the reported violations impacted individuals and communities, and what support, if any, have they received from the UNHRC?
3. What are the strengths and limitations of the UNHRC's interventions in Ethiopia, and how can their role be further enhanced?
4. For victims, what support have you sought and how effective has it been in addressing the violations you have experienced?
5. What are the main challenges hindering the UNHRC's effectiveness in promoting human rights in Ethiopia, and what expectations do you have for the Ethiopian government and the UNHRC in addressing these violations?