Oral Presentation to the Committee on the Rights of the Child Concerning Ethiopia

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Thank you for giving me this opportunity to address the Committee about our concerns at the Global Detention Project regarding the treatment of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Ethiopia, particularly with respect to the treatment of children and families fleeing conflicts in countries that neighbour Ethiopia. While the recommendations I provide today are based on a written Submission from my organisation, I also think it important to note that I address the Committee as a refugee from Sudan who spent many years in immigration detention in Australia's offshore detention centre in Papua New Guinea, and I know first-hand the harmful impact of detention.

Over the past couple of years, there have been an increasing number of reports from international organizations, human rights groups, and media outlets revealing Ethiopia's increasingly restrictive and coercive response to the movement of people across it borders drive by nearby conflict and persecution. This has included reports of mass arrests and forced removals, as well as separation of children from their families. In light to these reports, we call upon the Committee to urge State Parties to adopt the following recommendations:

1. **Abolish Immigration Detention for Children**: Detaining children, whether unaccompanied or with their families, represents a human rights violation as leading global experts have concluded, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which clearly states this violations in its **joint General Comment with the Committee on Migrant Workers No 23/No 4 (2017)**. Any form of detention of children because of their migrant or refugee status is inherently harmful to children and violates their rights. Ethiopia must cease all forms of child migration detention and instead develop appropriate and humane reception measures that meet the full set of needs of children.

2. **Ensure Family Integrity**: Families should never be separated due to migration enforcement. States must ensure they remain together and are provided with proper accommodation, healthcare, and social services outside of detention facilities.

3. **Transparency and Monitoring**: Governments must disclose all locations where refugees and migrants, particularly children, are held in detention. Independent monitoring bodies should have unrestricted access to these facilities to ensure compliance with human rights standards.

4. **Stop Arbitrary Detention**: Authorities should halt the arbitrary detention of migrants and refugees, particularly vulnerable groups such as children. Instead, they should establish screening and referral processes to appropriate social services, especially in cases of individuals without valid documentation.

5. **No Deportation to Danger**: Governments must ensure that no refugee or migrant, especially children, is deported to countries where they face persecution, violence, or other forms of harm. This includes respecting the principle of non-refoulement.

6. **Ensure the safety and security** of the refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers affected by the armed, particularly those who are displaced from Sudan, to effectively prevent and address violations of their human rights and provide them with adequate access to essential services.

7. **Ensure that, in practice,** no one may be expelled, returned, or extradited to another state where there are substantial grounds for he or she would be in danger of being subjected to torture and particular children.

8. **We urge the state** to immediately cease the deportation of Eritreans back to Eritrea, where they are at significant risk of persecution. Such deportations could expose children and their families to serious harm, including potential violations of their fundamental human rights. Given the ongoing dangers in Eritrea, deporting individuals back to these conditions constitutes a breach of international protection obligations.