

# Kazanchis: Cultural Erasure & Crimes Against Humanity in Addis Ababa

## A Formal Complaint and International Legal Submission

By Ras Nahom Aynealem | July 2025

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### I. Introduction

This case is brought forth on behalf of the displaced and destroyed people of Kazanchis — and by extension, all of Addis Ababa — who have suffered from a brutal, systemic, and coordinated campaign of forced eviction, cultural destruction, and urban cleansing under the administration of the Prosperity Party and Mayor Adanech Abebe.

We, the survivors, witnesses, and descendants of these crimes, assert that the events that began with the demolition of Kazanchis on **Meskerem 21, 2016 (September 28, 2023)** constitute not only **gross human rights violations**, but also **crimes against humanity, state terrorism, and cultural genocide**.

This case is submitted as an official legal complaint to be reviewed by:

- The **United Nations Human Rights Council (OHCHR)**
  - The **African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights**
  - The **International Criminal Court (ICC)**
  - **UNESCO**, and all relevant cultural preservation authorities
  - **Alliances of international NGOs and legal bodies**
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### II. Background

Kazanchis is one of the oldest, most historic neighborhoods in Addis Ababa — home to generations of Ethiopians, Menelik-era architecture, iconic musicians, and freedom fighters. A hub of resistance, memory, and culture.

Beginning in the early 2000s, under the EPRDF regime and later accelerated by the Prosperity Party, Kazanchis was targeted for "redevelopment." Hotels and government offices replaced homes. But the most violent attack came in 2023.

- **On Meskerem 21, 2016**, government bulldozers, with no prior legal notice, stormed Kazanchis at dawn.
  - Families were dragged from their homes, often barefoot, as their houses were flattened.
  - Entire communities — elderly, children, mothers — were rendered homeless.
  - Media coverage was suppressed. Ahadu TV aired only a brief report. Victims interviewed were later evicted from temporary shelters.
  - More demolitions continued across **Mexico, Piassa, Arat Kilo**, and other core districts of the capital.
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### III. Evidence Submitted

We present over **70 pieces of digital and testimonial evidence**, including:

- **Video recordings** of forced night demolitions
- **Photos** of destroyed homes, funeral posters, displaced elderly
- **Testimony** from survivors, including:
  - Children separated from their families
  - Women beaten and left in the cold
  - Individuals who died from trauma, exposure, or suicide post-eviction
- **Audio recordings** with city officials admitting to the demolitions
- **Historic footage** of Kazanchis before destruction, including:
  - Ras Imru Haile Selassie's home
  - Residences of, Prince Asrate Kassa, Ambassador Abebe Reta, and many more Registered National Heritages and homes of many social figures such as Kegn Geta Yoftahe Nigussie, And Noble men like Fitawrari Desalegn, Balambaras Demissie, and many more.
  - Tilahun Gessesse's iconic house
  - Fitawrari Atnaf Seged's Libefana and Grazmach Tasie's Menelik-era compound
- Names and details of at least **seven confirmed deaths** linked to the demolitions

This archive is part of our public case file, backed by a digital repository, witness list, and press documentation.

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### IV. Legal Claims

We assert that the Ethiopian federal and Addis Ababa city governments are responsible for the following violations:

1. **Forced Eviction Without Due Process**
    - In violation of Article 11 of the ICESCR and UN Basic Principles on Evictions
  2. **Cultural Genocide**
    - Destruction of heritage sites, homes of national heroes, and erasure of collective memory
  3. **Crimes Against Humanity (Rome Statute, Article 7)**
    - Deportation, persecution, inhumane acts causing severe suffering
  4. **Extrajudicial Killings & State Negligence**
    - Deaths caused directly by the demolitions and aftermath
  5. **Suppression of Free Expression & Media**
    - Targeting victims for speaking out, evicting those who gave interviews
  6. **Racial, Class, and Political Discrimination**
    - The affected communities are disproportionately working-class, poor, and opposed to the Prosperity Party
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## V. Demands for Justice

We call on the international community, legal bodies, and concerned citizens to support our demands:

- **Immediate international investigation and trial** for those responsible
  - **Recognition of the Kazanchis destruction as a crime against humanity**
  - **Restitution and full reparations** for displaced families
  - **Reconstruction and protection of historic neighborhoods**
  - **Sanctions against Ethiopian officials complicit in these crimes**
  - **Permanent archive and digital memorial** for victims and survivors
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## VI. Final Statement

Kazanchis is not just a neighborhood. It is a symbol. Its destruction represents a turning point — a violent war against the poor, the historic, and the powerless. It is our duty to remember and to rebuild.

We carry this case in the name of:

- **Solomon Tesfaye (English)**
  - **Surafel**
  - **Mike**
  - **Solomon Seifu**
  - **Getaneh Bezabih**
  - **Kifle Yared**
  - **Girma Tenbola**
- And all unnamed martyrs of Addis Ababa.

We will not stop until justice is served, memory restored, and our people returned.

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### Prepared by:

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Lead Petitioner – Addis Ababa Rising

July 2025

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia