

# **THE RIGHT TO DEFENCE COUNSEL IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS IN ETHIOPIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The right of the accused individuals to a defense counsel is recognized in almost all international and regional human rights instruments. Given the central role this right plays in the administration of justice, it seems unfortunate that its content and scope remain far less clear in nearly all these instruments. Over the years, human rights monitoring organs, both international and regional, have tried to establish the content and scope of this right thereby paving a road for its easy exercise at a national level. It is thus part of the aim of this article to look at the way this right is understood by human rights monitoring organs. Against this backdrop, this article also seeks to assess the availability of the right to an effective defense counsel under the Ethiopian legal system, identify the legal and practical problems in respect to this right and consider if Ethiopia has lived up to regional and international human rights standards and commitments. I must indicate however that, unless incidentally, there is no occasion here to report on Ethiopian court practices.