



Home Office

ETHIOPIA COUNTRY REPORT

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**Country Information and Policy Unit
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1 SCOPE OF DOCUMENT

1.1 This report has been produced by the Country Information and Policy Unit, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office, from information obtained from a wide variety of recognised sources. The document does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy.

1.2 The report has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum / human rights determination process. The information it contains is not exhaustive. It concentrates on the issues most commonly raised in asylum / human rights claims made in the United Kingdom.

1.3 The report is sourced throughout. It is intended to be used by caseworkers as a signpost to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain. These sources have been checked for currency, and as far as can be ascertained, remained relevant and up to date at the time the document was issued.

1.4 It is intended to revise the report on a six-monthly basis while the country remains within the top 35 asylum-seeker producing countries in the United Kingdom.

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2. GEOGRAPHY

2.1 The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has an area of 1,133,380 sq km and lies in north-eastern Africa. Ethiopia has been land-locked since the independence of its former province of Eritrea on the Red Sea coast in May 1993. It is bordered by Eritrea and Djibouti to the north, Somalia to the east, Kenya to the south and Sudan to the west. **[1][2]** The 1994 Constitution established a federal structure of nine autonomous ethnically-based 'national states' and the federal capital territory.**[9]** The largest city is the federal capital Addis Ababa. Other important towns are Dire Dawa, Harar, Mekele, Jijiga, Nazret, Gondar Bahir Dahr and Dessie. At mid-2000 the country's population was officially estimated to be 62,908,000, with overall density of population of 55.5 inhabitants per sq km. **[1][2]**

2.2 The official language is Amharic but many other languages are spoken. English is used widely in official and business circles. There are more than 80 ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Although many of these groups influence the political and cultural life of the country, Amharas and Tigrayans from the northern highlands play a dominant role. The largest single group is the Oromos, who account for 40 percent of the population. **[3a]** The nine autonomous national states established under the 1994 Constitution, broadly reflecting regional ethnic boundaries, are those of the Afar, Amhara, Benishangul/Gumuz, Gambela, Harari, Oromo, Somali, Southern and Tigray (or Tigray) peoples.**[9]** About 45% of the population are Muslims and 40% adherents of the Ethiopian Orthodox (Tewahido) Church. There are small Evangelical Protestant and Roman Catholic populations. **[1][2]** Most of the Jewish Beta Israel population was evacuated to Israel between 1984 and 1991. **[3a]**

2.3 Ethiopia's climate is mainly temperate owing to its high plateau terrain. The average annual temperature is 13°C, with abundant rainfall in some years and low humidity. The lower country is very hot and subject to drought conditions. Ethiopia is one of the world's least developed countries. In 2001 over 82% of the population was engaged in agriculture, and 2000 figures show agriculture accounted for over 45.1% of GDP. [1][2] Coffee is the principal cash crop, although overall export earnings from coffee have reduced recently from 69% in 1998 to 41% in the 2000/2001 financial year. [36] In 2000 Ethiopia's principal markets for exporting were Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy, Japan and Djibouti. The economy, blighted by years of war, State repression, drought, famine and forced resettlement, is heavily indebted and dependent on foreign aid. Ethiopia uses its own solar calendar; the Ethiopian year 1995 began on 11 September 2002. [1][2]

For further information on geography, refer to Europa Yearbook, source [2].

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3. THE ECONOMY

3.1 The Ethiopian economy relies heavily on the agricultural sector. Agriculture accounts for around half of Ethiopia's GDP, 85% of exports and 80% of total employment. Coffee is critical to the Ethiopian economy but historically low prices have seen many farmers switching to qat to supplement their income. In November 2001 Ethiopia qualified for debt relief from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. Under Ethiopia's land tenure system, the Government owns all land and provides long-term leases to the tenants; the system continues to hamper growth in the industrial sector as entrepreneurs are unable to use land as collateral for loans. The Government estimates that annual growth of 7% is needed to reduce poverty, yet the maintenance of 5% in 2003 will be quite difficult (one estimate is for 1.5% growth). [22]

DROUGHT & FAMINE

3.2 The World Food Program (WFP) estimates 14 million Ethiopians need food immediately to survive into 2003. [22]. Among the most at risk are people in the regions of Oromiya, Tigray, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, say the ICRC. [14ae]

3.3 Oxfam reports in November 2002 that, the south and east regions of Ethiopia have been the worst affected. Here people rely on their livestock, and between May and November 2002 hundreds of thousands of animals have died because of failed rains. Children have been without milk and are particularly vulnerable. [42]

3.4 According to Oxfam, in the 1960s Ethiopia used to export food, but a combination of factors have brought about this crisis including:

- **Poor rains.** The first rains this year failed completely. The second, between

June and September, were extremely sporadic.

- **Lack of investment in development.** Poor rains have meant that many animals have died leaving people destitute and children malnourished.
- **Land ownership.** Most of the land in Ethiopia is owned by the Government which means that farmers are discouraged from investing in irrigation systems, this also exacerbates environmental degradation.
- **Trade rules.** Coffee makes up 60% of the country's exports and the last three years have seen prices plummet to a thirty year low. As a result of this collapse the country is losing around twice as much as it gained in debt relief. The coffee crisis has meant that many coffee farmers have been much more vulnerable and the Government does not have the money to deal with this crisis.

[42]

3.5 Ethiopia has now seen its fourth year of drought, which has severely affected key grain producing areas. The cumulative shocks, worsened by the 1998 war, have left the population with little means of coping with yet another year of shortages. Cereal production was just 20 percent of the national ten-year average, and will cover less than 10 percent of the annual national cereal requirements. [41]

3.6 However, the situation has left many wondering whether Ethiopia's famine was created entirely by drought. The former British International Development Secretary, Clare Short, pointed to the ongoing conflict with neighbouring Eritrea. [31]

3.7 "There was a war, the border is still militarised, the process of demarcating the border hasn't been done yet, there are problems over access to the port. All of this has made the emergency more difficult. But whatever the difficulties we have got to get food through to people," she said. [31]

3.8 She added that she saw a long-term food plan as crucial. "If you keep giving people handouts of food, you undermine local agriculture. We have got to keep people fed but we have got to restore their ability to grow food for themselves. There will be crisis year after year after year in Ethiopia unless we can start much more effective long-term development," she said. [31]

3.9 Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, says the famine could dwarf the situation in the 1980s that led to the Live Aid relief fund and concerts. "The disaster we had in 84-85, the number involved was roughly a third to one half of the number of people involved now. So if that was a nightmare, this will be too ghastly to contemplate." [31]

3.10 He added that he saw "no possibility" that Ethiopia would cope without international aid. "Even if we had the food available in the domestic market the Government doesn't have the money to buy this surplus food for redistribution". [31]

3.11 In June 2003 the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) reported that Ethiopia is facing a food crisis unparalleled in its history. One in five of the population

faces starvation and the aid bill is expected to top \$800 million. World Food Programme needs a staggering 230,000 metric tonnes more of food aid towards the 2003 requirement of 619,000 metric tonnes. Total food aid needed in the country is 1.5 million metric tonnes. **[14ah]**

3.12 More information and maps of the suspected famine/malnutrition zones will be available on the UN Reliefweb website. **[43]**

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4. HISTORY

ORIGINS OF ETHIOPIA

4.1 Ethiopia can trace its history back to around 100BC with the kingdom of Axum. It has existed as a political entity since the 1st century BC. In the 1930s Emperor Haile Selassie wrested power from the old nobility and established a modern autocracy; he continued to rule until 1974, apart from a period of Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941. He in turn was ousted from power in a military coup led by radical elements in the armed forces in September 1974, against a background of growing demands for democratisation, army mutinies, the revolt in Eritrea, serious economic difficulties and famine. Haile Selassie was detained by the military and died in their custody in August 1975. **[1][2]**

THE DERG AND THE "RED TERROR"

4.2 The 1974 revolution, organised by an Armed Forces Co-ordinating Committee known popularly as the Derg or Derg (Shadow), established a Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC). In 1977 Lt-Col Mengistu Haile Mariam executed his predecessor and replaced him as Chairman of PMAC and Head of State. He then began a campaign against political and armed opponents during which tens of thousands of Ethiopians, particularly in urban areas, were killed or tortured. This became known as the "Red Terror" campaign. **[1][2]**

4.3 Following an attempted coup in 1989, Ethiopian socialism was abandoned and Mengistu's Government lost access to cheap fuel and its arms supply. This led to free market policies replacing economic planning and opposition parties were invited to join a unity party. Socialism was effectively abandoned in March 1990 and the ruling Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) was renamed the Ethiopian Democratic Unity Party (EDUP), with membership open to non-Marxists. **[1][2]**

4.4 In January 1991 the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) announced a moderate political programme which made no reference to Marxism and was acceptable to the United States. As opposition forces closed in on Addis Ababa Mengistu's armies ended their resistance. Mengistu fled Ethiopia on 21 May 1991, seeking asylum in Zimbabwe. He was granted permanent residence in March 2001. **[1][2]**

<Refer to Africa South of the Sahara (source [1]) for more detailed history of events prior to 1995>

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1995 CPR & NATIONAL STATE ELECTIONS, DERG TRIALS

4.5 Elections of deputies to the Council of People's Representatives (CPR) and the national state assemblies were held simultaneously in May 1995 but were boycotted by most opposition parties. The EPRDF and its allies won a landslide on the CPR. In Tigray the TPLF won all the seats in the state assembly and all the state's seats on the CPR. EPRDF-allied parties met with similar success in the Amhara and Oromo states. The EPRDF won all 92 local assembly seats in Addis Ababa. Elections in the Afar and Somali regions, where opposition to the EPRDF was strong, were postponed to June 1995, when pro-EPRDF parties secured narrow victories. **[1][2]** International observers concluded that the elections were largely free and fair but were worried about the lack of participation by opposition parties in the political process. **[3a]**

4.6 Legislative power was transferred from the transitional Council of Representatives to the new Federal Parliamentary Assembly (FPA) on 21 August 1995. The transitional administration was terminated on 22 August 1995 when the new Constitution took effect and the country was officially renamed the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). On the same day Dr Negasso Gidada, Minister of Information in the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) and a member of the EPRDF-allied OPDO, was elected President of Ethiopia. Ex-President Meles Zenawi was elected Prime Minister by the CPR and he appointed a 17-member Council of Ministers, which was approved by the FPA. **[2]**

4.7 In December 1994 the trial of 69 senior officials of the former Mengistu Government, including Mengistu who is living in exile in Zimbabwe, commenced in Addis Ababa. Twenty-three of the defendants were being tried in absentia and five had died while awaiting trial. The defendants were charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes between 1974 and 1991. **[1]** The trial of a total of 5,198 people charged with genocide and war crimes committed under the Mengistu administration began at the Federal High Court in Addis Ababa in 1997. **[3a]** A considerable number of verdicts have already been delivered, with many defendants being sentenced to up to 20 years' "rigorous imprisonment". **[1]**

4.8 Prime Minister Meles' Government came under increased criticism in late 1995 and early 1996 over its treatment of political opponents, particularly those in the press, intellectuals and civil rights workers. The Secretary-General of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association (ETA), Dr Taye Woldesemayat, was arrested in mid-1996 on his return from a visit abroad along with several associates. In July 1999 Dr Taye was sentenced to 15 years in prison but was released in May 2002. **[1][2][7b]**

4.9 In 1996 Ethiopia made armed incursions into Somalia to attack bases of al-Ittihad al-Islamia (the Islamic Unity Party), a group seeking independence for the Somali-populated Ogaden district. The al Ittihad al-Islamia claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks on three hotels in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa in early 1996 and the attempted assassination of the Chairman of the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League and Minister of Transport and Communications in the Federal Government. Further armed incursions into Somalia against al-Ittihad bases were made by Ethiopian forces in following years and in 1999 these operations intensified when Eritrea attempted to distract Ethiopia from the border conflict by supplying Somali factions opposed to Ethiopia. [1][2]

4.10 The Government launched a drive against corruption in September 1995, which it claimed was endemic in Ethiopia. In October 1996 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Tamirat Layne was accused of 'indiscipline' and removed from office. He was later implicated in corrupt activities. He was also dismissed as Secretary-General of the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) and was finally sentenced to 18 years imprisonment in February 2000. [1][2]

BORDER CONFLICT WITH ERITREA 1998-2003

4.11 A simmering border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and a deterioration in relations since Eritrea adopted its own currency to replace the Ethiopian birr in 1997, which resulted in disruption of cross-border trade, led to an outbreak of hostilities in May 1998. [1][2]

4.12 Both states accused the other of invading disputed border territory. The dispute was centred on an area of land in the Badme area, although Eritrean forces made incursions into other areas along the border. Ethiopia and Eritrea launched air raids against each other's territory on 5 June 1998. Eritrean aircraft bombed the northern Ethiopian towns of Adigrat and Mekele. Ethiopian aircraft attacked Asmara airport, killing and injuring several people. [1][2]

4.13 Large numbers of Ethiopians and Eritreans were expelled from each other's countries in the wake of the border dispute. Each side accused the other of illegal deportations, involving several thousand people, and mistreatment of those remaining. [1][2]

4.14 An Amnesty International report issued in January 1999 stated that 52,000 Eritreans had been expelled from Ethiopia since June 1998. Amnesty believed that Ethiopia was operating a systematic policy to arrest and expel anyone of full or part Eritrean descent. Amnesty reported that at least 22,000 Ethiopians had left Eritrea but found no evidence to support Ethiopian claims that 40,000 Ethiopians had been mistreated and forcibly expelled from Eritrea. The Ethiopian Government agreed to stop deporting Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin after it signed a cessation of hostilities agreement with Eritrea in 2000. [6d]

4.15 On 27 June 2001 however, the Government repatriated 723 Eritreans without notifying the ICRC in advance according to established procedures. The ICRC monitored the deportation or repatriation of 2,892 Eritreans or Ethiopians of Eritrean

origin during the year. It is estimated that approximately 80,000 to 100,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin remain in Ethiopia. **[6d]**

4.16 Ethiopia continued to insist on Eritrea's withdrawal from all Ethiopian territory, Eritrea repeatedly rejected this demand, inhibiting progress. In April 2000 delegations from Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed to attend the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) sponsored talks in Algiers, although the delegations would not agree to meet face to face, and the talks collapsed after 6 days. **[1]**

4.17 In mid May 2000 hostilities resumed with Ethiopia launching a major offensive. Fighting continued although both sides agreed to attend peace talks in Algiers under the auspices of the OAU. **[1]**

4.18 Peace talks commenced in May 2000 although fighting continued until a revised agreement was eventually signed on 18 June 2000. The agreement allowed for a return to the pre-May 1998 border positions, a 25km security zone inside the Eritrean border and the deployment of a UN peace-keeping force. **[1]**

4.19 In mid September 2000 the UN Security Council approved the deployment of a 4,200 strong peacekeeping force, United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), on the Eritrean side of the border. UNMEE was given an initial mandate of 6 months and charged with monitoring and ensuring that Eritrea and Ethiopia comply with their agreement on the cessation of hostilities, including the redeployment of respective forces to agreed positions. **[1]**

4.20 On 12 December 2000 in Algiers Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a comprehensive peace agreement ending the border conflict. **[2]** The agreement provides for a permanent end to hostilities, the release and repatriation of POWs and civilian detainees, and an investigation into the origins of the conflict. It establishes two neutral commissions. One to delimit and demarcate the boundary and the second to resolve compensation claims. **[4c]** On 18 April 2001 the UN declared that a 25km buffer zone, separating the forces of the 2 countries, had been established. **[4g]**

4.21 On 13 April 2002 the International Tribunal at The Hague announced the long awaited border decision. The determination gave something to both sides and was welcomed publicly by the two Governments. Each Government welcomed the ruling and declared victory. There were reports of celebration in both capitals. Eritrean President Isayas Afewerki said that he was "completely satisfied" with the ruling. For his part, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has said, "the ruling vindicates Ethiopia's land claims". Some confusion remains however over which side of the border lies Badme town, the flashpoint for the conflict. **[4n]** Internationally the outcome and reaction from the two Governments has been lauded, a significant endorsement coming from the Arab League on 18 April 2002. A five-member panel of judges, treaty experts and international jurists decided the boundary. **[37b]**

4.22 In late August 2002, Eritrea repatriated 279 Ethiopian prisoners of war (POWs), stating that it had thereby returned all POWs, but the Ethiopian Government accused Eritrea of still holding prisoners in undisclosed locations. It demanded information about seventy-three police and militia members who remained unaccounted for, and

about a pilot who had been paraded through the streets of the Eritrean capital after his plane was shot down in 1998. **[8c]** On 29 November 2002 1,130 POWs and 95 civilian internees of Eritrean origin were released by the Ethiopian authorities and repatriated. **[13a]** In early March 2003 the Border Commission reported to the UN Security Council that Ethiopia's requests for changes to the border ruling in order to 'take better account of human and physical geography', threatened to undermine the peace process as a whole. Despite Ethiopia's claims that it had been promised that demarcations could be refined, later in March the Boundary Commission categorically ruled Badme to be in Eritrean territory, thus rejecting Ethiopia's territorial claim over the town. **[2]** The Ethiopian Government on 4 April voiced its opposition stating that the Government "would exert utmost efforts to legally and peacefully correct the Commission's misinterpretations of the border ruling" and accused the Commission of an "unfair tendency" in implementing the ruling. **[48]**

4.23 Ethiopia and Eritrea allowed 28 tourists to cross the contested border between the countries on 28 July 2003. 28 South African tourists travelled into Eritrea from Ethiopia via the symbolic Mereb Bridge, which links both countries. While the crossing does not mark the first people to enter one country from the other since the war flared up in 1998, it is seen as significant given the numbers involved. Since the war tension between both sides has remained high. "I think the significance was that if there is a will to let people move from Ethiopia and Eritrea on both sides, it can happen," said UN Force Commander Major General Robert Gordon. "I am sure it can be done in the future." **[14ai]**

NATIONAL ELECTIONS MAY 2000

4.24 National elections were held in May 2000 for the House of People's Representatives (HPR). Prior to the elections opposition parties claimed that candidates had been refused registration and endorsement, supporters had been harassed and intimidated, local administrators had been partial and state media had failed to provide agreed services. There were also reports of violence associated with polling and demonstrations prior to polling. **[4b][5b]**

4.25 At the end of 1999 the National Election Board (NEB) had begun investigating abuses related to candidate registration. Reports from throughout the country indicated NEB instructions on registration had been ignored and offices where registration should have taken place were closed hindering the registration of opposition candidates. Citizens who tried to register to vote were told by Government personnel that they had to prove citizenship, under the law only citizens can vote and it was reported that Ethiopians of Eritrean origin were not allowed to register or vote. **[3b]**

4.26 There were reports that local authorities in Oromiya, Amhara, and Southern Regions would on occasion arrest and detain supporters of opposition parties prior to, and following the May 2000 elections. Most were released without being charged and although some were released on bail without charges being dropped. **[3b]**

4.27 According to observers from the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), local UN staff, diplomatic missions, political parties, and domestic NGO's, the elections were

generally free and fair in most areas. **[8a]** Serious election irregularities were reported in the SNNPRS region, particularly Hadiya zone where there were incidents of election officials instructing voters who to vote for, candidates campaigning at polling stations and candidates being pressured into quitting. As a result of these allegations the NEB investigated and ordered new elections in 16 constituencies of SNNPRS. **[3b]** The new elections were held in June and were declared generally free and fair by international observers. **[3b]**

4.28 In the 2000 national elections, 17 opposition political parties contested the election, including the AAPO, the SEPDC, and the Oromo National Congress. The better funded and better organised incumbent party, the EPRDF, generally dominated candidates of the relatively weaker and less organised opposition parties and independent candidates, except in the SNNPRS, where the opposition made significant gains. EPRDF candidates won 481 seats in the HPR, EPRDF affiliate candidates won 37 seats, opposition party candidates won 16 seats, and independent candidates won 13 seats. The Government established a donor supported fund for opposition party candidates, provided opposition candidates access to state-owned electronic media, and changed the law to permit civil servants to run for office without first resigning their positions. The Government was willing to engage opponents in open debate at candidate and party forums. Many of these debates were broadcast live on national radio and television and reported on in both government and private newspapers. Free radio broadcast time was set aside for the elections, and 225 independent candidates and 33 political parties made use of it. **[3a]**

4.29 The EPRDF domination was only challenged to any extent in the SNNPRS region where opposition candidates won a significant number of seats. A notable result was the Minister of Defence losing his seat to an AAPO candidate. **[3a][18]**.

EVENTS OF 2001-2003

4.30 Against the background of political dissent and stalemated war, university students in April 2001 protested against what they saw as the Government's interference with academic freedom. The students' main demands were permission to republish a banned student magazine, dismissal of two university administrators closely affiliated with the government, and removal of security troops stationed inside the university campus. **[8b]**

4.31 While the Government initially conceded the first two demands, it did not commit to a schedule for removing the security forces. When students continued to press their demands, the Minister of Education issued an ultimatum threatening students who did not return to classes with arrest. The security forces' efforts to enforce the ultimatum set off clashes on April 17 and 18 2001, that quickly got out of hand as non-students joined in the protests, leading to rioting and looting. In suppressing the protest, the police used excessive force, including live ammunition, and conducted massive arrests. At the end of the two days, over forty civilians, primarily students, had been killed and another four hundred injured. Other campuses also witnessed anti-government protests. **[8b]**

4.32 The Government immediately detained almost 2,000 students; although most were quickly released, several hundred were shipped to prisons two hundred kilometres or more from the capital. Aside from those arrested, over one hundred students fled to Kenya and another seventy or so to Djibouti. **[8b]**

4.33 At least 31 people were killed and 253 others injured in the upheaval that followed the clashes between the police and Addis Ababa University students. **[38b]** Eighty members of the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) and more than 30 members of the All Amhara People's Organisation (AAPO) were believed to have been held incommunicado following the riots in the capital, on 17 and 18 April 2001. **[14g]**. All but one are now free. Trials of those accused of incitement to riot started on 9 October 2001 and many still continue. **[14q]** In August 2001, the AAU Senate announced that it would readmit all expelled students who had abandoned classes in the wake of the April 2001 disturbances. **[21c]** Among those arrested were Mesfin Woldemariam, founder of the Ethiopian Human Rights Organisation and a professor at AAU. Professor Mesfin and his colleague Berhanu Nega are now out on bail. **[20a]**

4.34 In late May 2001 it was reported that some twenty heads of government institutions and businessmen had been arrested on suspicion of involvement in corruption. Those arrested included Siye Abraha leader of the TPLF dissident group involved in the split with the Prime Minister's ruling group. Others arrested included his three brothers and high-ranking officials of the Ethiopian Privatisation Agency. **[14h]** It has been reported however that most of the ousted members of the TPLF have been allowed to remain at liberty although they have not been permitted to return to Tigray, and at least one them has had articles attacking the party published in the independent press. **[34]** In July 2001 the Federal High Court ruled to block personal and business accounts of some of the government officials and private businessmen accused of corruption. **[14m]** On 30 August 2001 the Federal Supreme Court ordered that all businessmen and government officials who had been detained be moved to the central prison in Addis Ababa pending the establishment of formal charges within 15 days. **[14o]**

4.35 On 22 June 2001 Dr Negaso Gidada, President since 1995, walked out of a meeting of the ruling coalition EPRDF. He was then dismissed from the OPDO central committee, one of the constituent parties of the ruling coalition, following accusations that he was helping dissidents in the TPLF. **[14i]** He later announced that he would continue serving as head of state despite a campaign to discredit him. **[14j]** Another prominent member of the OPDO Almaz Meko speaker of the House of Federation, the upper chamber of parliament, announced in August 2001 that she was applying for asylum in the United States. She had stopped in the United States on transit on her way back to Ethiopia after attending a convention of women MP's in the Caribbean. She explained that she felt the Oromo people were not being democratically represented by the OPDO and as a result said she would join the OLF to continue her struggle for the cause of the Oromo. **[4i][38c]**

4.36 Dr Negaso announced he had withdrawn from the OPDO as of 31 August 2001. **[14p]** In October 2001 following the completion of his 6-year term as president Dr Negaso was officially succeeded by Lieutenant Girma Wolde Giorgis a 76-year-old independent member of parliament and businessman from the majority Oromo ethnic

group. [4m]

4.37 In 2002 police violence in Tepi and Awassa, in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's (SNNP) regional state, resulted in the deaths of more than one hundred civilians and the arrest of hundreds more. In Tepi, members of two minority ethnic groups, the Sheko and Majenger, clashed in March 2002 with local officials and police over political rights. Some civilians were reported to have been armed with machetes. At least eighteen civilians and one local official died. In the following days, more than one hundred were killed and villages razed on the order of local authorities, leaving some 5,800 homeless. Nearly one thousand civilians were arrested after the disturbance, and 269 remained in detention when a diplomatic delegation visited in June. [8c][6a]

4.38 In the city of Awassa on 24 May 2002, soldiers using machine guns mounted on armoured cars shot into a crowd of farmers protesting a change in the administrative status of the city. The government acknowledged seventeen deaths but independent reports stated that twenty-five civilians were killed and twenty-six injured. [8c][6a]

4.39 Police also shot at crowds of unarmed students in March and April 2002 in Oromiya, Ethiopia's most populous state. State officials acknowledged that five high school students were killed and over a dozen wounded when police shot into groups protesting government educational and economic policies. The Oromiya state parliament justified the police tactics by asserting that the police had no funds to purchase non-lethal crowd control equipment. [8c]

4.40 Police subsequently arrested several hundred students, teachers, and others whom it accused of being members or sympathisers of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), an armed movement that the government claimed had instigated the student protests. In June 2002, over three hundred people were incarcerated in Dembi Dolo, including some seventy school children. Some of those detained there and in Ambo town, about 130 kilometres west of Addis Ababa, were tortured according to Human Rights Watch. Most of the prisoners were released on bail two months after their arrests. The Government suspended teachers and civil servants from their jobs. [8c]

4.41 Military forces conducted an increased number of low-level operations against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Somalia-based Al'Ittihad Al'Islami terrorist organisation (AIAI), and elements of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in 2002. [3a]

4.42 In August 2002 some 90 state employees, including 41 police officers and 11 administrative officials, were arrested by the state authorities for their roles in the March riots and charged with human rights violations, instigation of violence and abuses of office. [2]

4.43 Politically there have been moves by the ruling coalition to engage in more dialogue with the opposition, following calls by the European Union for such dialogue. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi agreed to face opposition leaders and academics in a series of televised debates. Kifle Wodajo, of the Addis Ababa-based

independent InterAfrica Group (IAG) which organised the debates, said he hoped it would lead to a “culture of open dialogue”. It is expected the forum will continue on a regular basis every two months. [14z]

4.44 At the first debate representatives of the private sector and civil society groups criticised the Government's economic policies, describing them as a failure and saying the economy had not registered any growth. They also questioned the existence of a free and independent justice system, describing the current system as "partisan". [14aa]

4.45 In August 2003 fifteen Ethiopian opposition parties formed a “rainbow coalition” to challenge the decade-long political hold of the current Government. Veteran politician Dr Beyene Petros, who will chair the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) for the first six months, said its primary focus would be to defeat the current Government in the 2005 elections. A central manifesto pledge would be the “re-negotiation” of the controversial boundary ruling that has placed contested territories in Eritrea.[14ak]

4.46 Security forces committed more than 1,000 unlawful killings, including some alleged political killings during 2002 according to the US State Department. These include unconfirmed reports of unlawful killings by government security forces in the Oromiya and the Somali regions. [3a] Information Minister Bereket Simon, while acknowledging serious problems in isolated regions of Ethiopia, stated that the Government had been cracking down on human rights abuses. “In some parts of the country there has been abuse by local administrators, and the Government - at both a federal and regional level - has taken corrective measures,” he stated. “Those who have committed such crimes have been taken to court and the Government has taken full responsibility in bringing the perpetrators to justice”. He disputed the estimates in the US State Department report of numbers killed, and reiterated that the Ethiopian Government had committed itself to improving the country’s human rights record. [14ae]

4.47 On 12 July 2003 a grenade attack was reported on a busy bar in Addis Ababa which injured 31 people - three of them seriously. Police Commissioner Workneh Gebeyehu stated that it was too early to speculate on the perpetrators or link the incident to a blast at the city's Tigray Hotel September 2002 which killed three and injured 38. Commissioner Workneh also reiterated his warning for the public to remain vigilant and said that the country was still on high alert. Ethiopia has stepped up security in the wake of attacks in Morocco and Saudi Arabia. [14ag]

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5. STATE STRUCTURES

THE CONSTITUTION

5.1 The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was adopted by the transitional Government in December 1994. The following is a summary of the main

provisions of the Constitution. [1]

5.2 The Constitution establishes a federal and democratic state structure and all sovereign power resides in the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. Human rights and freedoms, emanating from the nature of mankind, are inviolable and inalienable. State and religion are separate and there shall be no state religion. The state shall not interfere in religious matter and vice-versa. All Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognition; Amharic shall be the working language of the Federal Government. [9]

5.3 Every Ethiopian national, without discrimination based on colour, race, nation, nationality, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, or other status, has the following rights: on the attainment of 18 years of age, to vote in accordance with the law; to be elected to any office at any level of government; to freely express oneself without interference; to hold opinions without interference; to engage in economic activity and to pursue a livelihood anywhere within the national territory; to choose his or her means of livelihood, occupation and profession; and to own private property. [1]

5.4 Every nation, nationality and people has the following rights: an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession; the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language; the right to express, to develop and to promote its culture, and to preserve its history; the right to a full measure of self-government which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits. Women shall, in the enjoyment of rights and protections provided for by this Constitution, have equal right with men. [1]

5.5 The 1994 Constitution also requires the Government to establish a human rights commission and office of the ombudsman. [9] In July 2000 parliament completed legislative action to create both of these, however neither had been formed by the end of 2002. [6a] [3a][33b]

CITIZENSHIP & NATIONALITY

5.6 According to Article 6 of the Constitution any person shall be an Ethiopian national where both or either parent is Ethiopian and foreign nationals may acquire Ethiopian nationality, although there is no provision for dual-nationality. It also affirms that the law shall determine particulars relating to nationality. [9]

POLITICAL SYSTEM

POLITICAL OVERVIEW

5.7 Ethiopia is a Federal Republic with 9 ethnically based states and 2 self-governing City administrations as its administrative divisions. In December 1994, Ethiopia ratified its Constitution, which was made effective from 22 August 1995. Nationally the Government is split into Executive and Legislative Branches. [22]

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

5.8 The Chief of State is President Girma Wolde Giorgis who replaced Negasso Gidada at the end of the latter's term of office on 8 October 2001. The Head of the Government is Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Negasso Gidada and Meles Zenawi both took these offices in August 1995. The President is elected by the House of the People's Representatives for a six-year term, the Prime Minister is designated by the party in power following the legislative elections. The Ethiopian Cabinet is known as the Council of Ministers as provided for by the 1994 Constitution; Ministers are selected by the Prime Minister and then have to be approved by the House of People's Representatives. **[22]**

5.9 Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, was born in 1954. He joined the fight against the Mengistu regime in the 1970's. Initially a Marxist-Leninist, by the 1990's he had publicly become a proponent of the free market and parliamentary democracy. Upon Mengistu's overthrow, he was chosen as transitional head of state and was one of the architects of the 1994 constitution, which provided for a federal republic with ethnically-based regions. In 1995 he became Prime Minister. **[4a]**

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

5.10 Ethiopia has a bicameral Parliament which consists of the House of Federation (Upper Chamber) which consists of 108 seats, and the House of People's Representatives (Lower Chamber) which consists of 548 seats. Members of the House of Federation are chosen by state assemblies to serve five-year terms. Members of the House of the People's Representatives are elected by popular vote from single-member districts to serve five-year terms. **[22]**

ETHIOPIAN POLITICS IN GENERAL

5.11 The Constitution provides for the right of peaceful assembly and free speech, although on occasions the Government has restricted these rights. **[9]** Organisers of large public meetings or demonstrations must obtain a permit in advance and on occasions the issuing of permits and the revocation of them has affected the organisation of the events. In January 2002 the ETA paid the equivalent of \$105 (900 birr) to rent the meeting hall of the Sidama Zone Culture Department for 3 days. After taking the money, the Culture Department refused to allow the ETA use of the meeting hall and also refused to return ETA's money. On 15 October 2002, police fired into the air to disperse a crowd of 4,000 farmers gathered at a meeting of the Ethiopian Democratic Union Party (EDUP) in Este Woreda in the village of Dankura Maryam, South Gonder Zone. EDUP officials maintained they had a valid permit for their meeting. **[3a]**

5.12 The Constitution provides for freedom of association and the right to engage in unrestricted peaceful political activity. **[9]** The Government requires political parties to register with the National Election Board (NEB). Parties that do not participate in two consecutive national elections may be subject to de-registration. Registered political parties also must receive permission from regional governments to open local offices. In 2002 there were 58 organised political parties in Ethiopia; 8 were national

parties, and the remainder operated only in limited areas. There were no reports during 2002 that any political party had its registration revoked. [3a]

ETHNICITY IN ETHIOPIAN POLITICS

5.13 The question of ethnic groups/nationalities has always been a problem for Ethiopian leaders as Ethiopia is deeply divided along ethnic lines ([also see Human Rights – Ethnic Groups, and Annex B – Main Political parties](#)). It is an issue that helped to bring down the Derg and remains an important issue in Ethiopian politics. There are more than 80 ethnic groups. Although many of these groups influence the political and cultural life of the country, Amharas and Tigrayans from the northern highlands play a dominant role. The largest single group are the Oromos, who account for 40 percent of the population. [3a] There is a great dominance within the regions to the extent that non-ethnically based parties' struggle for representation. Of the 178 members elected to the House of People's Representatives from Oromia, 173 are from the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (the OPDO). All but four of the 138 members elected from Amhara belong to the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM). All 38 members elected from Tigray belong to the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF). [18] Only the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) has set itself up as a non-ethnically based party yet even the EDP relies on a mainly Amhara constituency. [3a]

5.14 A great many of these new political parties, mostly ethnically based, emerged in the early 1990s. By 1993 there were over 100 parties although in the May 1995 elections less than half participated. As Tigrayans only make up around 5% of the population the Tigrayan-dominated EPRDF has set up surrogate parties with which it could form alliances. [1] In August 2002 the All-Amhara People's Organisation (AAPO) reflected the growing shift away from ethnic-based politics by changing its name to the All-Ethiopia Unity Party (AEUP). This is in order to make the organisation more global and encompassing. [7d][47]

THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC FRONT

5.15 According to results published by the National Electoral Board, the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO) won the largest number of seats in the House of People's Representatives, taking 178 of the 546 available. The OPDO's major partners in the EPRDF coalition, the Amhara National Democratic Movement and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), gained 134 and 38 seats respectively, while a number of smaller groups in the EPRDF won a further 19 seats. The EPRDF thus comfortably retained its large majority in the lower chamber. [2]

5.16 In March 2001 a split was reported in the TPLF with senior members of the Central Committee opposing the policies of the Prime Minister. Concerns were believed to have centred on progressive policies departing from the Marxist ideology, which brought the party to power in 1991 and criticism of the Prime Minister's handling of the conflict with Eritrea. [4e]

5.17 As a result twelve members of the Central Committee known as the "Siye group"

walked out of a meeting and were held for a time in the former emperor's palace in Addis Ababa. The group was named after Siye Abraha, the former defence minister removed from his position in 1995 by Prime Minister Meles. **[14c]** Further events believed to be linked to this split included the removal of the president of Tigray state from his post in April 2001, **[14e]** the resignation of a senior army general in May 2001 **[33a]** and the murder of the security chief Kinfe Gebre-Medhin in May 2001. Mr Kinfe was a close ally of the Prime Minister but the reasons for his murder remain unclear. **[4i]**

THE OPPOSITION

5.18 EPRDF and affiliated parties also hold all regional parliaments by large majorities, although opposition parties hold approximately 25 percent in the Addis Ababa region council and 10 percent in the Southern Nations and Nationalities People's Regional State (SNNPRS or Southern Region) council. In the 2000 national elections, 17 opposition political parties contested the election, including the AAPO, the SEPDC, and the Oromo National Congress. **[3a]**

5.19 For the 2000 General Elections, the Government established a donor supported fund for opposition party candidates, provided opposition candidates access to state-owned electronic media, and changed the law to permit civil servants to run for office without first resigning their positions. The Government was willing to engage opponents in open debate at candidate and party forums. Many of these debates were broadcast live on national radio and television and reported on in both government and private newspapers. Free radio broadcast time was set aside for the elections and 225 independent candidates and 33 political parties made use of it. **[3a]**

5.20 There have however been credible reports of violence against opposition members, and as of end of 2002 no action was taken. The US State Report documents the January 2001 case in which rapid deployment forces of the federal and regional police killed 2 supporters during a meeting organised by the Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (CAFPDE); the April 2001 case in which the army killed 4 Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition (SEPDC) members in Badoacho, Shone Woreda; the case in which government forces killed at least 11 supporters of the SEPDC in the period leading up to the December 2001 elections; the 2000 case in which an EPRDF member killed 3 persons, including an opposition party election observer; the 2000 killing of 5 election observers, 1 opposition candidate, and 3 other persons when their cars were struck either by rockets or hit landmines; and the 2000 beating to death of a man detained allegedly in retaliation for election activities. **[3a]**

5.21 Several SEPDC candidates for the national or municipal elections were detained, and two SEPDC members elected to the regional council in 2000 were detained without having their parliamentary immunity formally removed. Another representative elected in 2000 whose parliamentary immunity was removed by the regional council in July remained in hiding in the country. **[3a]**

5.22 There were numerous credible reports that persons who supported or voted for the opposition during the 2000 elections were harassed. For example, there were credible reports that ruling party personnel withheld fertiliser and food aid in the SNNPRS region as retaliation for voters electing opposition candidates. According to the SEPDC, some SEPDC supporters were suspended or dismissed from their jobs in retaliation for voting for the opposition, and some teachers in the Southern Region who served as SEPDC election observers were not able to collect their salaries and were denied entry to summer update courses. **[3a]**

5.23 In December 2001, opposition groups in the SNNP State boycotted zonal elections, claiming that their candidates had been denied access to the ballot and had been molested by government party supporters. The chairman of the South Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Coalition (SEPDC), Beyene Petros, one of a handful of opposition members of the federal parliament, accused the National Elections Board of having assigned government officials and government party members as election judges. The chairman of the commission deemed the charge without merit and threatened to sue Beyene. In March 2002, people known to be government party functionaries disrupted a meeting of the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) in Awassa at which members were protesting government acquiescence to revision of the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Police present at the meeting failed to intervene. **[8c]**

5.24 Military forces continued in 2001 and 2002 to conduct an increased number of low-level operations against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Somalia-based Al'Ittihad Al' Islami terrorist organization, and elements of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) both in the country and in southern Somalia and northern Kenya. **[3a]**

United Ethiopian Democratic Forces

5.25 In August 2003 fifteen Ethiopian opposition parties formed a “rainbow coalition” to challenge the decade-long political hold of the current Government. Veteran politician Dr Beyene Petros stated that the newly-formed United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) was the largest coalition opposition force within the country. Its birth followed a seven-day conference in Washington DC where opposition leaders agreed on a 10-point action plan for the impoverished nation. Beyene, who will chair the UEDF for the first six months, said its primary focus would be to defeat the current Government in the 2005 elections. The coalition would have a minimal political agenda, however a central manifesto pledge would be the “re-negotiation” of the controversial boundary ruling that has placed contested territories in Eritrea. Beyene heads the Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy CAFPDE – one of the 15 groups that joined the conference. Among the other main parties are the All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP), the Oromo National Congress (ONC) and the United Ethiopian Democratic Party (UEDP). Beyene said a major breakthrough had come in persuading certain opposition groups within the coalition to lay down their arms and pursue their fight through the ballot box. A national council, made up of two officials from each party, will control policy and direction of the UEDF, while a 15-person executive committee will provide leadership. The UEDF will also have a “council of elders” made up of prominent Ethiopians who will act as

advisers to both committees. [14ak]

THE ALL-ETHIOPIA UNITY PARTY

5.26 The All-Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP) is the new name for the party previously known as the All-Amhara People's Organisation (AAPO). The name change occurred in August 2002. The AAPO was previously an ethnic-based group seeking self-determination for the Amhara people. [44][47]

5.27 The AAPO was established in 1991 to defend the rights of the Amhara people, which it believed were best served by a unitary state rather than the federation advocated by the EPRDF (and implemented in the 1995 constitution). The AAPO's then leader was jailed from 1994 to 1998, having been convicted of incitement to armed insurrection for making statements which he claimed were within the rights of free speech. The AAPO boycotted the 1995 federal elections but contested those of 2000 in order to retain its party registration (which would otherwise have been withdrawn). It fielded 17 candidates for the House of People's Representatives and won one seat in Addis Ababa. [44]

COUNCIL OF ALTERNATIVE FORCES FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN ETHIOPIA

5.28 The CAFPDE was formed in 1993 but was unable to contest the 1995 elections because it was not granted official registration until mid-1996. Chaired by Beyene Petros and including his SEPDC among its constituent groupings, it sought to bring together political parties and organisations based on a variety of interests, as well as bodies representing professional groups, to campaign on a pro-human rights and economic liberalisation agenda. Originally comprising 30 organisations and groupings, the CAFPDE was reduced to a coalition of five small groupings following the split in December 1999. [44]

5.29 Beyene Petros successfully contested the 2000 federal elections as a CAFPDE candidate in a constituency where a new election was held on 25 June, after the annulment of the 14 May result by the National Electoral Board (which had upheld claims that the conduct of the May elections in this and 13 other southern Ethiopian constituencies was "undemocratic and not free"). No other CAFPDE candidates were elected (although several other members of parties in the coalition were elected to represent their own parties). [44]

5.30 CAFPDE were charged with holding an illegal meeting in Eastern Shoa Zone, Oromia regional state in January 2001. Of the 10 opposition candidates arrested, 9 were taken into custody. The tenth was released on bail because he was not from that area. Although the law permits campaigning during this time the candidates were arrested for campaigning illegally. After riots in which police killed two CAFPDE supporters, the candidates were charged with incitement to violence and the killings of the two CAFPDE supporters. [3a]

5.31 In April 2001 it is alleged that the army killed four members of the CAFPDE

associated Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition (SEPDC) in Badoacho, Shone Woreda and that government forces killed at least 11 supporters of the SEPDC in the period leading up to the December 2001 elections. [3a]

ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY

5.32 The EDP was formed in 1998 following a split in the AAPO. It fielded 15 candidates for the federal House of People's Representatives in May 2000, winning two seats in Addis Ababa. Its policies included land reforms to benefit peasant farmers. EDP party members (including candidates in local government elections) claim to have been among those targeted by the security forces in May 2001 in a campaign against political activists following the violent suppression of student demonstrations in Addis Ababa. [44] The EDP has since joined forces with the Ethiopian Democratic Union Party to form the United Ethiopian Democratic Party (UEDP). Its leader Dr Admasu Gebeyehu said it had some 20,000 members and described it as "one of the largest" political parties in the country. [14a]

HADIYA NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION

5.33 The HNDO, founded in 1991, is a regionally-registered party associated with several wider alliances promoted by its leader Beyene Petros (*see Prominent People*). His outspoken criticisms of government encroachment on human rights and political freedoms made him one of the most prominent opposition figures in Ethiopian parliamentary politics in 2001. The HNDO won 5 seats in the federal House of People's Representatives in 2000, although Beyene Petros himself stood in a neighbouring constituency as a candidate of the CAFDE. All the HNDO deputies were, like Beyene Petros himself, returned in new elections held on June 25 after the annulment of the 14 May 2000 results by the National Electoral Board. [44]

OROMO LIBERATION FRONT

5.34 Formed in 1975, the OLF operated through different branches with little central leadership, having a minor contribution to the military struggle against the Mengistu regime compared with the contributions of Eritrean forces or the TPLF. Mutual antipathy between the OLF and TPLF led to the creation, under the latter's auspices, of the rival OPDO in 1990. Initially committed to an independent Oromo state, the OLF said in June 1991 that it would support substantial regional autonomy within a federal Ethiopia, and in August 1991 it accepted four ministerial posts in the TGE headed by Meles Zenawi of what had then become the EPRDF. [44]

5.35 The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) first became active in the 1980s, advocating self-determination for the Oromo people and the promotion of their culture and language. Although Oromo peasant farmers, who had benefited from land reforms in 1975, initially supported Mengistu's Government, peasant opposition to farming co-operatives increased support for the OLF. [1]

5.36 Clashes between members of the OLF and members of OPDO (an EPRDF

member party) during the run-up to elections led to a final break with the EPRDF in 1992. After this the OLF went into armed opposition to the Government, carrying out low-level guerilla operations and advocating boycotts of all elections. The OLF also clashed with rival Oromo rebel groups (some of which had come into being through splits in the OLF). **[44]**

5.37 In July 2000 the OLF held a meeting with three other groups (United Oromo Liberation Front, Oromo Liberation Council and Islamic Front for the Liberation) to discuss joint action against the Ethiopian Government, which had ignored a peace proposal put forward by the OLF in February 2000. **[44]**

5.38 Since the Government banned the OLF a decade before, thousands of alleged OLF members or sympathisers have been arrested, and this trend continued in 2002. As of March 2002, more than 1,700 such prisoners were reportedly held at the Ghimbi central prison, half of them arrested recently and the rest having been there for five to ten years, some without charge. Hundreds more were detained in prisons and police jails across Oromiya State. Prisoners who were released or escaped from incarceration reported being severely tortured whilst imprisoned. The Oromiya State Minister for Capacity Building, who fled the country in May 2002, denounced the state Government for indiscriminately accusing the Oromo people of supporting the OLF. **[8c]**

5.39 Human Rights Watch notes, in its 2003 report, that "reliable sources" that have reported that the Eritrean Government was giving logistical support, training, and weapons to OLF guerrillas attempting to infiltrate Ethiopia from Sudan, and to armed Tigrean groups opposed to the current Ethiopian government. **[8c]**

5.40 The Oromiya regional authorities in September 2002 offered an olive branch to the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), urging its members to lay down their weapons and join the democratic process. **[14ab]**

5.41 Dr Mohammed Aliyi, the vice president of the Oromiya Regional Government, told IRIN that OLF leaders would be safe from persecution if they decided to join the political process. Mohammed's comments came after several members of the OLF had been arrested in connection with an attack on a hotel on 11 September 2002 – the Ethiopian New Year - in which four people were killed and 38 injured. **[14ab]**

5.42 Even though he branded the OLF as "terrorists", Mohammed said: "We would welcome it if they lay down their weapons and became part of the democratic movement to protest through legal peaceful means." "This is our constitution," he added. "Anybody that can peacefully conduct his struggle is welcome." **[14ab]**

5.43 However, Mohammed, who was appointed vice president a year previously, said the OLF would be unlikely to join the political process because they had "very little support". **[14ab]**

5.44 The OLF and Ogaden National Liberation Front continue to use landmines. Some UN vehicles were hit by mines near Jigiga in 2002, resulting in injuries to personnel. **[3a]**

5.45 In September 2002, a bomb killed four persons at the Tigray Hotel in Addis Ababa. The Government blamed the OLF for the attack and claimed to have arrested the perpetrators. The OLF has however denied responsibility for the attack. On 12 September 2002, regional police officers took Mesfin Itana, an Oromo youth, from his place of work in the Merkato area because of suspected ties to the OLF. On 13 September 2002, police took several young Oromo businessmen from their places of work, and their whereabouts remained unknown at the end of 2002. On 18 September 2002, the police took two brothers, Yilma Mosisa and Gdissa Mosisa, from their home, their whereabouts remained unknown at end of 2002. **[3a]**

5.46 Thousands of criminal suspects remained in detention without charge; many of the detainees were accused of involvement in OLF violent activities or were arrested after the April 2001 student demonstrations. According to the ETA, approximately 142 teachers are also detained, accused of being OLF sympathisers. **[3a]**

5.47 In addition, in April 2002, security forces arrested at least 60 members of the OLF for conspiring to commit terrorist acts in Oromia, and following the June bombing of the Dire Dawe train station, police detained many young Oromo males without warrants for questioning. Among those detained was Dinkinesh Deressa Kitila, an employee of Total/Elf Oil Company, who was arrested in June, and held at Karchale central prison on suspicion of being an OLF supporter. **[3a]**

5.48 The Government has released some 600 OLF fighters during 2002. **[3a]**

OROMO NATIONAL CONGRESS

5.49 The ONC, founded in 1996 by a member of the Addis Ababa University's faculty, exists to oppose the OPDO (part of the EPRDF coalition) through legitimate electoral channels (in contrast to the armed OLF and other resistance movements, which the ONC condemns). It fielded 36 candidates in the 2000 federal elections and won one seat in the federal House of People's Representatives. **[44]**

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THE JUDICIARY

OVERVIEW

5.50 The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary, **[9]** but the judiciary remains weak and overburdened. The federal and regional courts have shown signs of judicial independence although in practice severe shortages of adequately trained personnel in many areas as well as serious financial constraints have combined to deny many citizens the full protections provided by the Constitution. **[3a]** For example in July 2001 residents of Oromiya Regional State complained of delays in the justice process alleging that some suspects had been in detention without charge for periods of up to six years. The head of the Ministry of Justice in Oromiya admitted there were 600 suspects in jail who had not been charged and the assistant Chief Prosecutor for the

area said that of the 1,200 suspects awaiting trial or being tried most had been in detention since 1999. He attributed the delay to failure by police and prosecutors to establish effective cases against the suspects and bring them to the appropriate court, lack of manpower, and delays in the judicial system. **[14k]**

5.51 In keeping with the Constitution the Government continues to decentralise and restructure the judiciary along federal lines, establishing courts at district, zonal and regional levels. The Federal High Court and Federal Supreme Court hear and adjudicate original and appeal cases involving federal law, trans-regional issues and national security. **[9]** The regional judiciary is increasingly independent with district, zonal, and high and supreme courts mirroring the structure of the federal judiciary. In March 2000 the federal High Court created two new three-judge benches at the High Court level to handle criminal cases. **[3b]**

5.52 The Constitution provides legal standing to some pre-existing and customary courts and gives federal and regional legislatures the authority to recognise other courts. **[9]** By law both parties to a dispute must agree before a customary or religious court may hear a case. Shari'a (Islamic) courts may hear religious and family cases involving Muslims. Although not sanctioned by law some traditional courts still function, and these courts resolve disputes for the majority of citizens who live in rural areas and have little access to formal judicial systems. **[3a]**

5.53 Regional offices of the federal Ministry of Justice monitor local judicial developments but the federal judicial presence in the regions is limited. All judges are guided by the Federal procedural and substantive codes, pending the passage by national state legislatures of laws particular to their regions. **[3b]**

5.54 The Government is aware of the severe lack of experienced staff in the judicial system and continues to identify and train lower court judges. Senior Government officials charged with judicial oversight estimate that the creation of a truly independent and skilled judiciary would take decades. The Government welcomed foreign financial and technical assistance to accelerate this process. **[3b]**

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FORMER MEMBERS OF THE DERG/WORKERS PARTY OF ETHIOPIA

5.55 The Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO) was set up in 1992 to record the abuses committed during the Mengistu Government and bring to justice those criminally responsible for human rights violations. The SPO had the authority to arrest and interrogate anyone suspected of involvement in the Red Terror Campaign under Mengistu. Trials began before the Federal High Court in 1994 and are still continuing. Defendants have spent seven to eight years in detention awaiting trial while the SPO carried out its lengthy investigations, which began in December 1994. Charges have been brought against 5,198 people, 2,246 are held in detention while the remaining 2,952 are charged in absentia, including former dictator Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. The defendants are variously accused of genocide, war crimes and aggravated homicide. The process is subject to frequent and lengthy adjournments, although cases were dealt with more quickly during 2000 most were still in progress by

the end of the year. During 2000 five death sentences, one life imprisonment and at least 27 sentences of up to 15 years imprisonment were handed down. No SPO defendants have been released on bail; but by the end of 2000 at least 50 had been released for lack of evidence. **[3b]**

5.56 In July 2000 the special prosecutor Girma Wakjira was jailed for contempt of court after accusing one of the judges of having participated in the abuses under Mengistu. He was released after two weeks. The judge was replaced and transferred to a different court. The special prosecutor announced in May 2001 that the courts had passed verdicts on 1,181 of the 6,180 genocide cases since the trials started in 1994. 274 defendants had been acquitted. He announced that eleven of those found guilty of genocide had been sentenced to death and a further seven to life imprisonment. **[3b][8b][20b]**

5.57 Most of those accused of Derg activities were arrested in 1991 and it is believed that after a decade around 2,200 defendants have yet to be brought to trial. In October 2001 the Amhara State court acquitted another 23 alleged Derg, with two men being sentenced to sixteen years imprisonment. The trial continues of former University of Addis Ababa president Dr Alemayehu Teferra. **[3b][8b]** Between July 2000 and July 2001, 478 had been convicted and 328 acquitted. The Special Prosecutor said all the trials would be completed by 2004. **[6a]**

RECENT EXPERIENCE

5.58 The Constitution affords accused persons the right to be represented by legal counsel of their choice, and, if they do not have sufficient means to pay for it and miscarriage of justice would result, to be provided with legal representation at state expense. **[9]** In practice lengthy pre-trial detention is common, closed proceedings occurred between 1998 and 2001. On occasions detainees were allowed little or no contact with their legal counsel. The Law does not provide for the defence to have access to the prosecution's evidence before a trial, and some trials have historically lasted for years. **[3b]** Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported in its 2002 report that sometimes prisoners have been released after months of captivity without ever being charged or facing a trial. **[8b]**

5.59 The Government had been implementing a major overhaul of the military justice system, which relied upon foreign assistance to train officers in topics including judicial and non-judicial punishment, human rights and the conduct of soldiers during military operations. The outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea led to the suspension of most foreign assistance, delaying this process. **[3b]**

5.60 The Anti-Corruption law was amended in June 2001. The amendment prohibits bail to anyone accused of corruption by the police. This amendment was immediately and retroactively applied to former colleagues of the Prime Minister who had been purged from the EPRDF's constituent parties. **[14s]** The most prominent of these being former defence minister Siye who was arrested with seven others in mid-June of 2001, although several other high profile politicians were also arrested, including Abate Kisho, former President of the SNNPRS and Kuma Demeksa, former President of the Oromiya Regional State, as well as a number of influential business men. **[8a][14an]**

5.61 Siye was bailed but arrested again outside the courthouse, then when time was running out for the trial he was charged with corruption and thus bail was denied. Human Rights Watch (HRW) says that Abate was arrested in July 2001 for allegedly steering contracts to a defendant in the Siye case. He claimed that the acts for which the police arrested him, pre-date the laws that he is alleged to have violated. He was kept for 4 months without charge. In late October 2001 Abate was charged with having used his office to make illegal purchases. **[8b]**

5.62 Prime Minister Meles Zenawi stated at the end of January 2002 that there would be no hiding place for “sleaze and dishonesty” as he continued his crackdown on corruption in the country. The Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission brought charges totalling of 1.2 billion birr (around \$150 million US) against businessmen in 2001. **[14s]** HRW says that several of those arrested had no obvious political ties. **[8b]**

5.63 In May 2002, the State Minister for Capacity Building acknowledged that the justice system was generally backward and incapable of enforcing constitutional guarantees. Human Rights Watch reports that in 2002, judges often refused to release prisoners on bail even when the police or prosecutor had no proper grounds for their detention. Instead, hearings were adjourned for two weeks at a time to allow police to investigate. Occasionally, a court would order the release of a prisoner only for the prisoner to be rearrested and jailed within a day or two outside that court's geographical jurisdiction. For example, police arrested an Addis Ababa businesswoman, Dinkinesh Deressa Kitila, in early June on accusations she had transported OLF documents in her car. She appeared in court several times over two months before the local court ordered her release for lack of evidence. Two days after her release on bail, she was rearrested in another district. As of October 2002, she remained imprisoned. **[8c]**

LEGAL RIGHTS AND DETENTION

OVERVIEW

5.64 The Constitution and the Criminal and Civil Codes prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention. **[9]** However, these rights are not always respected in practice by the Government. The Criminal Procedure code requires that any person detained must be charged and informed of the charges within 48 hours and, in most cases, be offered release on bail. Persons charged with serious offences may be detained for 15 days while police investigate the case and for further periods of 15 days while investigations continue. Bail is not available to those charged with murder or treason. People are, however, often detained without a warrant, particularly in outlying regions, often not charged within the required 48 hours, and, if bailed, never recalled to appear before a court. **[3a]**

5.65 At the end of 2000, 7500 people allegedly associated with armed opposition groups remained in detention without charge or trial, mostly suspected OLF supporters or guerrilla fighters, the majority of such detentions being attributable to the shortage and limited training of judges, prosecutors and lawyers. Judicial search warrants are

required to search houses but in practice are seldom obtained outside Addis Ababa. **[3a]**

5.66 The 1994 Constitution proscribes slavery, which had been formally abolished in 1942, and involuntary servitude. **[9]** There are no reports of slavery in Ethiopia, although child prostitution involving the sale or abduction of young girls remains a problem and there were continued reports that young girls were sold or forced into prostitution by family members. The Criminal Code prohibits forced labour but courts can order its use as a punishment for over-15s. **[3a][3b]**

RECENT EXPERIENCE

5.67 There have been several reports in the past few years of police brutality, beatings, political intimidation and unlawful killings. These include the beating of a group of mothers who were attempting to visit their children detained at Sendafa, a police college being used as a temporary detention centre in 2001. There were also reports of subsequent police visits resulting in violence. In addition there were problems at University demonstrations including the demonstrations at Addis Ababa University (see Education), and according to the Chairman of the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition (SEPDC), government forces killed at least eleven supporters of the SEPDC in the period leading up to the December elections although this is largely unconfirmed. **[3a]**

5.68 The International Committee of the Red Cross announced in February 2002 that it had completed courses for the Ethiopian police on human rights and good policing. The ICRC said that these courses tackled such key concepts as legal and ethical premises of law enforcement, maintenance of public order, basic law enforcement powers (arrest, detention, use of force and firearms), command and management and special attention due to vulnerable groups such as women and juveniles. These courses have so far benefited 860 police commissioners, and zonal and woreda commanders, 1,790 new police recruits, 150 police cadets, 350 special forces cadets and 350 prison administration trainees. **[21d]**

5.69 Dr. Taye Wolde Semayat, president of Ethiopian Teachers Association, was released in May 2002 after an appeals court reduced his sentence to less time than he had already served. He had allegedly been placed in a cell and shackled while in solitary confinement during part of his six-year incarceration (Taye had been convicted of plotting to overthrow the government, though independent observers believed the charges were fabricated). The ETA continued to work to protect teachers' rights despite the fact that the government had created a puppet organisation with the same name, seized the original organisation's funds, and sealed parts of its offices. Seven teachers who supported ETA were arrested in May 2002 in Sendafa and held for two months on what Human Rights Watch describes as "trumped-up charges". **[8c]**

5.70 More than forty teachers who attended a February ETA conference on education for all and teaching about HIV/AIDS were arrested and held for two weeks when they returned home. Between August and October of 2002 the authorities

refused permission for, and police interrupted and dispersed, ETA meetings. Government officials threatened teachers with dismissal or withholding of salary if they failed to disassociate themselves from the original ETA. [8c]

INTERNAL SECURITY

5.71 The security forces consist of the military and the police, both of which were responsible for internal security. The Federal Police Commission and the Federal Prisons Administration are subordinate to the Ministry of Federal Affairs. The military consists of both air and ground forces and reports to the Ministry of National Defence. [3a]

5.72 Following the end of fighting between Ethiopian and Eritrean armed forces in 2000, some Ethiopian troops were demobilised, and others were re-deployed from the border area in Tigray to other regions throughout the country, which increased the internal military presence in some parts of the Somali, Oromiya, and the Southern Regions. Military forces continued to conduct an increased number of low-level operations against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Somalia-based Al'Ittihad Al' Islami terrorist Organisation, and elements of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) both in the country, in southern Somalia and in northern Kenya. [3b]

PRISONS AND PRISON CONDITIONS

OVERVIEW

5.73 Prison conditions in Ethiopia are poor and overcrowding remains a problem. Several prisoners and detainees reportedly died during 1999 from illness and disease, including the acting Secretary-General of the ETA, Shimelis Zewidie, who died in June 1999 from tuberculosis. [3a] Although the Constitution upholds treatment respecting the prisoner's human dignity [9] there are credible reports of detainees often being beaten by security officials. Following the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea in May 1998 the Government started to detain and deport civilians of Eritrean origin. [3a]

5.74 The Government permits some independent monitoring of prison conditions and police stations by the ICRC and diplomatic missions. The ICRC, in general, had access in 1999 and 2000 to federal and regional prisons and detention centres and police stations throughout Ethiopia. However, after an ICRC visit in July 1999 the Government refused to allow ICRC access to a Central Investigation Division detention facility in Addis Ababa, but in May 2000 the ICRC was allowed access to this facility. ICRC was also unable to gain access in 1999 to police stations in Addis Ababa holding ethnic Eritrean detainees, but in June 2000 ICRC was permitted access to all police stations in Addis Ababa. ICRC had access in 2000 to some but not all military detention facilities. In 2000 the Government allowed ICRC access to detention facilities holding Eritrean POW's, and in addition ICRC regularly visited civilian Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin detained on national security grounds. [3a]

5.75 Prison food is inadequate and many prisoners have food delivered to them by their families or use their own funds to buy food. Prisoners are usually permitted daily access to a prison yard. Female prisoners are housed separately from males and rape does not appear to be a problem. Visitors generally are allowed however the US State Department report documents 50 detainees who were denied visits from relatives and friends. Prison letters are supposed to be written only in Amharic although this restriction is not strictly enforced. **[3a]**

RECENT EXPERIENCE

5.76 In recent years foreign diplomats have been permitted to visit prominent detainees held by the SPO for alleged war crimes committed under the Derg. These detainees have included Olympic marathon winner Mamo Wolde and former President of Addis Ababa University Dr Alemayehu Tefera. Mamo Wolde was released in December 2001 after serving a 6-year sentence for murder but died a few months after his release. **[3a]**

5.77 Human Rights Watch reports that prison conditions remain harsh in Addis Ababa and the provinces. Medical care remains rudimentary and rationed to a handful of prisoners per day. Prisoners with AIDS reportedly received no treatment, and former prisoners reported having witnessed deaths of prisoners with serious diseases such as tuberculosis. Prisoners were denied access to bathing facilities, mattresses, and blankets. Some released in 2002 told of being detained in such crowded confinement that they had had to take turns sleeping. Food was meagre but adequate. Prisoners who had family living nearby were normally allowed to receive food from family members. In May 2002 the International Committee of the Red Cross reported it had access to 4,800 security detainees in 150 places of detention. **[8c]**

THE MILITARY

MILITARY SERVICE

5.78 There is no longer a compulsory military service; the country has maintained an all-volunteer military since the Transitional Government abolished conscription in 1991. **[19]** The rapid expansion in numbers in the military, from 60,000 in 1998 to over 250,000 in 2000, assisted the goal of bringing more ethnic groups into the military. Most reports indicate that it is now an ethnically diverse organisation with very little friction in the lower ranks between the ethnic groups. In the higher ranks officers are much less ethnically diverse. Promotions in late 2000 were proportionately higher among Tigrayans although there were promotions amongst a range of ethnic groups. In 2000 Oromos were promoted in higher numbers than in previous years. Since the start of the border war with Eritrea the military justice system has been adversely effected due to the withdrawal of foreign assistance in training at a time when the rapid expansion of the military greatly increased the need for trained military lawyers and judges. **[3b]** At the end of the border war with Eritrea, Ethiopia

commenced a major demobilization programme, and by mid-2002 more than 150, 000 troops had been demobilized. [1][2]

CHILD SOLDIERS

5.79 During 1999 military officers admitted that some children under the age of 18 were enlisted and in 2001 the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers claimed that there is evidence of child soldiers being used, both by the military and armed opposition groups. [32] Scarce birth certificates, poor educational facilities, patriotism and pervasive poverty together enticed underage applicants to attempt to circumvent restrictions on underage applicants. Young boys found to be under 18 are prohibited from military service. Children from rural areas often do not have birth certificates and unit commanders who suspect but cannot prove recruits are under 18 can transfer them from frontline combat to rear-area command. [3a]

5.80 In March 2002 a United Nations special representative for Children and Armed Conflict stated that during his visit to Eritrea and Ethiopia, he saw no systematic use of child soldiers and also found no evidence of child abuse in refugee camps. This absence was particularly impressive, "since no other conflict zone he has visited recently had been free of the problem". He attributed this to local authorities and communities organising and monitoring life in the camps. [14t]

MEDICAL SERVICES

GENERAL SITUATION

5.81 Problems with HIV/AIDS, meningitis, tuberculosis and chronic malnutrition are widespread in Ethiopia, and instances of TB is one of the highest in the world. [25] All appropriate drugs for the treatment of tuberculosis are available throughout the country. No treatment for Hepatitis B is available. Treatment for diabetes is now available in Addis Ababa. [17][29]

5.82 Medical training in Ethiopia is offered at three major centres. The country's oldest medical school is located in Addis Ababa, and the other two main centres are the Gondar Medical School and the Jimma Institute for Health Sciences. As of August 2002 it is estimated that there are 1,483 physicians and 4,114 nurses in the country. That breaks down to around one physician for every 40,000 persons, and one nurse for every 14,000. There are approximately 87 hospitals with 11,685 beds, 257 health centres and 196 private clinics in Ethiopia. [27]

5.83 A statistical survey produced in 1997 by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the level of medical services ranked Ethiopia 182 out of a total of 191 countries. [16a] A report issued in June 2000 by the WHO on life expectancy placed Ethiopia in the bottom 10 out of 191 for life expectancy with a figure of 33.5 years, attributing this to the level of HIV/AIDS in the country. [16b] This is a reduction from the UN estimate in 1990-95, which was 47.5 years. The WHO figure for the HIV/AIDS in the adult population at the end of 1999 was over 10%. [16c]

5.84 Treatment for the mentally sick is limited. There is only one hospital for the mentally sick: the Amanuel Mental hospital. This institution has 356 beds, all of which are constantly occupied, and there are ten trained psychiatrists in the country. The Ministry of Health, with assistance from the WHO, has trained 176 psychiatric nurses who work in 226 regional centres throughout the country. **[4k]**

5.85 In April 2001 the Ministry of Health announced that 86% of leprosy sufferers were now successfully completing courses of medical treatment: this represented a recent rise in the numbers completing proper treatment. Improvements followed a leprosy awareness campaign, which resulted in nearly two and a half thousand lepers registering in a period of six months. **[14d]**

HIV/AIDS

5.86 According to the Ministry of Health (MOH), approximately 3.2 million Ethiopians are living with HIV/AIDS, though the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimated a total of 2.1 million at the end of 2001, with an adult prevalence of 6.4 percent. According to the MOH, sexual contact and perinatal transmission are the predominant modes of HIV transmission. Currently, 87 percent of all HIV/AIDS infections result from heterosexual transmission. **[35]**

5.87 As of October 1997, men comprised about 61 percent of reported AIDS cases. HIV prevalence among pregnant women in Addis Ababa increased from 5 percent in 1989 to 18 percent in 1997. As of 2001, about 200,000 children under age 15 were living with HIV/AIDS. Reversing years of progress in child survival, AIDS increased Ethiopia's infant mortality rate by 7 percent from 1995 to 2000. According to the MOH, as of December 2001, an estimated 1 million Ethiopian children had been orphaned due to HIV/AIDS. **[35]**

5.88 Ethiopia adopted a comprehensive HIV/AIDS policy in 1998 to emphasise prevention, care, and support, and to target vulnerable groups. The plan has been updated for the 2000 -2004 period through the Strategic Framework for the National Response to HIV/AIDS. The overall goals of the policy and framework are to reduce HIV transmission; reduce associated morbidity and mortality; and reduce burdens on individuals, families, and society at large. **[35]**

5.89 The National AIDS Council, established in April 2000, includes government members, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and religious bodies. The Council has seven standing committees and implements national policy through 10 general strategies, the most important of which include: information, education, and communication activities; STD prevention and control; HIV testing and screening; adoption of proper sterilisation and disinfection procedures; HIV surveillance, notification, and reporting; and provision of medical care and psychological support to those affected by HIV/AIDS. **[35]**

5.90 USAID provided \$8.2 million in HIV/AIDS assistance to Ethiopia in 2001, up from \$7.6 million in 2000. **[35]**

5.91 In April 2002, President Girma Wolde Giorgis said that supplying the drugs at low

prices to the people living with HIV/AIDS in the country was imperative. [21e].

5.92 Anti-retroviral drugs – which the federal Government started distributing in the last week of July 2003 – will go to 2,000 paying patients under the initial government distribution. According to health experts, at least 200,000 people could qualify for medical treatment – which effectively is being handled on a first come first served basis. [14af]

5.93 Although the cost of the drugs has dropped dramatically in recent years – in Ethiopia the monthly cost is around US \$40 per person - they are still out of the reach of most. The Government is looking at two ways of ensuring greater supply and reducing the cost – by financial support from the Global Fund and through generic drugs. [14af]

5.94 The World Health Organisation (WHO) also adds that the country could soon move towards free distribution of anti-retroviral drugs with support from the Global Fund. Dr Endalamaw Aberra, WHO national programme officer for HIV/AIDS, says US \$28 million has been earmarked for combating the virus for the first year. [14af]

5.95 Dr Endalamaw says that current thinking in treatment is also directed towards improving access to drugs through better health centres and doctors who can administer them. “Access and equity are always relative so the global thinking is that we have to improve access – perfect equity is not achievable,” he stated. He said only half the population have access to health facilities – a physical barrier to receiving treatment and one reason why the first round distribution was limited to just 2,000 people. [14af]

5.96 The distribution also aims to stamp out a black market in the drugs. One senior health official stated that they are selling for around US \$150 a month in Addis Ababa. “We know there are people who get treatment in private clinics,” the official said. “It is a black market and one way of fighting that is making sure the drugs are available. The medical danger of course is that if the drugs are poor quality then you could breed resistance in the country which would be extremely alarming,” the official added. [14af]

THE DISABLED

5.97 It is estimated that there are approximately six million persons with disabilities in Ethiopia. There has been a recent increase in this number following the conflict with Eritrea which resulted in many combatants being disabled as well as the effects of the extensive land-mining of the border and other areas. Although the Ethiopian Constitution stipulates that the state shall provide rehabilitation and assistance to persons with physical and mental disabilities, the Government has provided few resources for this and much of the care for the disabled is undertaken by the approximately 70 NGO's in the area. [3b]

5.98 Despite the rhetoric of the Constitution, by the end of 2001 the Government had yet to enforce equal rights laws for those with disabilities and had failed to mandate access to buildings or government services for persons with disabilities. There is no real evidence of central discrimination although people with disabilities complain of

job discrimination. [3b]

5.99 Wheelchairs and prosthetic limbs are uncommon in Ethiopia although some are provided by the many NGO's that deal with disability in the area. Many schemes have been set up by the NGO's in Ethiopia to help with the standard of living of the disabled. The Amhara Development Association operates a project to provide vocational training to disabled war veterans in Bahir Dar (near Lake Tana). The Tigray Development Association operates a centre in Mekele that provides prostheses and seed money for business development, training and counselling for those with disabilities. Also the international NGO Landmine Survivors provides a number of services to victims of landmine explosions including counselling and referrals to rehabilitation services. [3b]

5.100 An ICRC project called Patient Support Services (PSS) was also a major contributor to the war-disabled of Ethiopia. With an investment of \$530,000 they have managed to provide not only prosthetic limbs but also help in transport and associated needs. From September 2000 until September 2001 PSS have helped more than 2,000 war-disabled. [13b]

EDUCATION

5.101 Education in Ethiopia is available free of charge, and after a rapid growth in the number of schools, it became compulsory between the ages of 7 and 13 years. Since 1976 most primary and secondary schools have been controlled by local peasant associations and urban dweller's associations. Primary education begins at seven years of age and lasts for eight years. Secondary education, beginning at 15 years of age lasts for a further four years, comprising two cycles of two years, the second of which provides temporary education for entry to a tertiary level. In 2000 total enrolment at primary schools was equivalent to 51.0% of children of the appropriate age-group (60.9% of boys; 40.7% of girls); enrolment at secondary schools was equivalent to 10.3% (12.0% of boys; 8.5% of girls) of children in the relevant age-group. The 1999/2000 budget allocate an estimated 11.3% (2,304 million birr) of total expenditure to education. A major literacy campaign was launched in 1979. [1]

5.102 UNICEF state that in 2000, 44% of male adults could read and write. For female adults this figure dipped to 30%. [46] There are 21 institutions of higher education in Ethiopia with a total of 67,682 enrolled students in 1999/2000. There is a considerable shortage of qualified teachers, which is particularly acute in secondary schools, which rely heavily on expatriate staff. [1]

5.103 By law primary education is compulsory, free, and universal; however, despite efforts by the Government to increase the number of schools, there are not enough schools to accommodate the country's youth. The Government uses a three-shift system in all primary and secondary schools to maximize the utilization of classrooms and to provide an opportunity for working children to attend school. During the year, approximately 40 percent of primary and 67 percent of secondary schools operate in two shifts to maximize the utilization of classrooms. Most urban schools operate evening classes to provide an opportunity for working children to

attend classes. Nationwide the total enrollment of school-age children was 61.6 percent. Only 71.7 percent of male primary school-age children and 51.2 percent of female primary school-age children attended school. Girls attended school in lower numbers than boys, except in Addis Ababa, where girls' attendance was slightly higher at 52.7 percent. Government reports show that 31 percent of the children who attend school leave the system before they reach the second grade. Only 28 percent of children who began first grade completed eighth grade. **[3a]**

5.104 The literacy rate is approximately 20 to 30 percent, and only 17 percent of women are literate compared with 26 percent of men; however, it is difficult to estimate literacy rates accurately due to a lack of government statistics. Only 20.4 percent of boys and 13.7 percent of girls attended general secondary school (grades 9-10). **[3a]**

5.105 During 2002, the Government widened the implementation of its education policy that compressed 12 years into 10 years of general education for students not planning to attend college. Students planning to attend university continue to study for 2 additional years in what was a pre-university program (grades 11-12). Students in grade 12 continue to take the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Exam (ESLCE). Students in grade 10 also were required to take the ESLCE. There was space in institutions of higher learning for only a small percentage of graduates. **[3a]**

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6. HUMAN RIGHTS

6a.HUMAN RIGHTS : ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

6.1 The 1994 Constitution gives prominence to, and guarantees respect for, human rights. **[9]** In practice the Government's human rights record is reported as being poor. During recent years security forces have reportedly at times beat and mistreated detainees and committed extra-judicial killings. Arbitrary arrest and detention and prolonged pre-trial detention are ongoing problems. The Federal Government has difficulty in protecting constitutional rights at a local level. Local administrative, police and judicial systems remain weak in many areas. **[3a]**

6.2 The Constitution provides for freedom of the press and the independence of the judiciary. **[9]** In practice the Government restricts the rights of the press, continuing to detain and imprison members of the press. **[14r][3b]**

6.3 In the view of Human Rights Watch, human rights conditions in Ethiopia did not perceptibly improve in 2002. In southern Ethiopia they significantly worsened: police shot into groups of civilians and conducted mass arrests. Arbitrary arrests, however, were not confined to the south. Those who were arrested were subjected to prison

conditions that did not meet international standards and some prisoners, particularly in Oromiya regional state, were tortured. Courts rarely intervened to stop human rights abuses, parliament not at all. The print media was allowed to publish but was frequently harassed. The ruling coalition Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) led by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi maintained a firm grip over the federal and state governments. Local elections were subject to intimidation and fraud. The EPRDF also continued to exert control over the judiciary. [8c] However in August 2002 a regional court in Awassa ordered police to stop the beating of prisoners held in connection with the May demonstration. [6a]

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND THE MEDIA

OVERVIEW OF THE ETHIOPIAN MEDIA

6.4 The Constitution and the 1992 Press Law provides for freedom of speech and of the press. [9] However the Government uses legal and other means to limit these rights in practice. The Press Law contains provisions concerning publishing false information, inciting ethnic hatred and libel. These provisions are reportedly used to prosecute and detain journalists and editors. As a result some journalists practice self-censorship. Difficulties have remained in accessing government information and high licence fees for the private press. Despite the constant threat of legal action the private press remains active and often publishes articles extremely critical of the Government. Many private papers continued in 2000 to publish inaccurate information, unsubstantiated stories, and harsh anti-government articles without any official sanction. [3a] The Government has not banned any newspaper or publication. During the student riots in April 2001 some 60 newspaper vendors were reported to have been arrested, effectively interrupting the circulation of most private newspapers. The majority was released within two days after signing statements prohibiting them from working for an indefinite period. [24]

6.5 Foreign journalists are able to operate freely and often write articles critical of the Government and, with their local affiliates, have greater access to Government officials than local journalists. Some foreign journalists were allowed restricted access to the war front and about 10 Ethiopian affiliates of foreign news agencies were allowed to go to the war front in June and July 2000. Local journalists representing privately owned newspapers were not given access to the war front. [3b]

6.6 The state controls radio and television, but the print and electronic media have seen dramatic changes since Mengistu's demise. Deregulation has been on the cards for some years but potential radio and TV broadcasters still await the green light to apply for licences. A number of opposition groups beam radio broadcasts to Ethiopia, using hired short-wave transmitters. [4a]

NEWSPAPERS & JOURNALS

6.7 Journalism in Ethiopia is regulated by Press Proclamation No.34/1992, under which journalists can be jailed on vague charges such as criminal defamation, incitement to violence, or spreading false information. Many journalists face multiple charges and are

forced to remain in jail pending trial, or while serving multiple sentences. Massive fines sometimes accompany prison sentences, and non-payment of fines is punishable with more jail time and additional fines. [23c]. By the end of 2002 one Ethiopian journalist was still in prison. [23a]

6.8 There are approximately 30 independent political Amharic language weekly newspapers and six independent English language papers. There are five EPRDF coalition party newspapers publishing in Amharic, Tigrigna and Oromiffa. In September 2000 the first independent daily in Amharic began publishing. Most private and state newspapers are printed at one of the state-owned printing presses. In July 2000 the only 2 presses capable of printing tabloids raised printing costs due to increases in pulp and paper in the world market. [24] There was an unsuccessful protest as a result and some papers stopped printing for a few days in September 2000. [3b]

6.9 The number of privately owned newspapers has grown to more than 50, with the weekly Addis Tribune now available on the internet. The Walta website also hosts a few pro-government English-language newspapers. The independent press offers quite different reporting to the state-owned newspapers and is often critical of the Government. The relationship between the press and the authorities has sometimes been uneasy and human rights organisations have expressed concern about the jailing of journalists. [4a]

The Ethiopian Press consists of the following:

Addis Tribune - privately-owned English-language Addis Ababa weekly

Addis Zemen - state-owned Addis Ababa daily

Atkurot - privately-owned Addis Ababa weekly

Efoyta - privately-owned Addis Ababa weekly

Ilete Addis - privately-owned Addis Ababa daily

Mahlet - privately-owned Addis Ababa weekly

Seifenebelbal - privately-owned Addis Ababa weekly

Tobya - privately-owned Addis Ababa weekly

Tomar - privately-owned Addis Ababa weekly

Wonchif - privately-owned Addis Ababa weekly

[4a]

6.10 Ethiopian press groups and the United-States-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) have expressed alarm at a proposed new media law aimed at those that disseminate false information and incite people to political violence. The Information Minister Simon Bereket is quoted as saying that the journalists who publish “false” information would be punished – possibly with criminal sentences and “de-licensing”.

[4p] But at the end of 2002, journalists said that authorities appeared to have shelved the draft law. [23a]

TELEVISION & RADIO

6.11 Radio is the most influential medium in reaching people living in rural areas. The Press Law allows for private radio stations but the only 2 non-governmental radio stations, Radio Fana, which is controlled by the ruling EPRDF, and the Mekele Voice of

Tigray have close ties to the Government. The Government operates the only television station and news is controlled tightly. [3b]

6.12 There are no restrictions on access to international news broadcasts and private satellite receiving dishes; fax machines and modems are permitted. Internet access is provided through the government telecommunications company and is somewhat limited due to lack of capacity in phone lines although this is being improved. Private Internet service providers are required to obtain licences and none had done so by the end of 2000. [3b]

Known Radio stations in Ethiopia:

Radio Ethiopia - state-owned external service, broadcasts from Addis Ababa in English, Afar, Arabic, French and Somali

Radio Fana - Pro-government, broadcasts from Addis Ababa in Amharic, Oromifa and Somali

Radio Peace - Addis Ababa-based, UN-funded radio broadcasting in Somali to Somalia

Voice of Tigray Revolution - Tigray Regional State government radio, broadcasts from Mekele in Tigrinya, and recently in Afar as well

[4a]

Television:

Ethiopian Television (ETV) - state-owned, broadcasts in Amharic, Tigrinya, Oromifa and English

[4a]

RECENT EXPERIENCE

6.13 In July 1999 the Government issued a broadcast proclamation announcing the creation of a new broadcasting authority to review applications for private radio and television licences. [3a] Little was heard from this agency until March 2002 when it announced that it would start to issue licences for local radio and television broadcasters in the next two months. At least ten companies are gearing up to start FM broadcasting around Addis Ababa, one notable company being the Addis Broadcasting Company (ABC), led by the prominent economist and human rights activist, Dr Berhanu Nega. [37a]

6.14 The 1999 proclamation banned political and religious organisations and foreigners from owning stations, [3a][23c] although this may well be relaxed now with the BBC possibly interested in starting broadcasting. [37a] The official media are legally autonomous and responsible for part of their revenue production although they still receive Government subsidies. [3a] Only four countries in Africa namely Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Zimbabwe, have yet to deregulate their media. [37a]

6.15 In July 2002, the former editor of a weekly newspaper was sentenced to two years of imprisonment for defamation and disseminating false information. Early in 2002, the Government released another journalist on U.S.\$2,000 bail after ten months of incarceration. He had been accused of inciting violence after he had written articles about mismanagement at a Government-owned tannery and about a

former general's prediction of the Government's imminent overthrow. Other journalists were also briefly detained and then released on bail for articles they had written. In March 2002, one was fined U.S.\$1,400 for a 1997 article quoting a speech given in the United States in which the American speaker asserted that the present Ethiopian Government was as bad as the Derg. In each case, the Government invoked a Derg-era press law making defamation, the publication of false information, and incitement criminal offences. **[8c]**

6.16 The editor of the only newspaper in Tigray State was arrested in December 2001. After a state court ordered her release and dismissed the criminal charges she closed the newspaper and fled the country. The Addis Ababa private print media had no circulation outside the capital, as a result of transportation problems. Human Rights Watch believe that this is partly because of intimidation by local authorities that regarded the possession of non-Government newspapers with suspicion. The government continues to own the only television and all radio stations except for one FM station owned by the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF), the lead political party in the Government coalition. Although the Government has periodically stated that it would permit others to enter broadcasting, implementing legislation has remained stalled. **[8c]**

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

OVERVIEW

6.17 The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, including the right of conversion. **[9]** The Government generally respects the Constitutional right to freedom of religion although local authorities have on occasions infringed this right. All religious groups must be registered with the Government, although two religions that have reportedly refused to comply with these regulations have suffered no problems. Religious groups with the exception of Jehovah's Witnesses are given free land but are not accorded duty-free status. The imposition of taxes has increased the cost of imported bibles, which has led to complaints and an interfaith campaign for duty-free status. **[3c]**

6.18 In the past there have been complaints that the police failed to protect Pentecostals and evangelicals during instances of inter religious conflict however there have been no such complaints in recent years. The Government retains an impartial role of arbiter in any religious disputes. **[3c][3a]**

6.19 The Constitution provides for the separation of church and state and as a result religious instruction is not permitted in schools. **[9]** Private religious school institutions that cannot teach religion as a course of study, and instead teach morals courses, have been criticised for religious influence by the Government Education Bureau in Addis Ababa. **[3c]**

6.20 The majority population is fairly evenly divided between the two main religions with over 40% belonging to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Tewahido) and about 45% being Muslims. There are also significant numbers of Evangelical Protestants, and Roman Catholics. It is estimated that 5% to 15% of the population follow animist rights

or beliefs. [3c]

6.21 The Government requires that religious groups be registered. Religious institutions, like non-governmental organisations (NGO's), are registered with the Ministry of Justice, and must renew their registration every year. Unlike NGO's, religious groups are not subject to a rigorous registration process. Under current law, a religious organisation that undertakes development activities must register its development wing separately as an NGO. [3c]

6.22 The Government officially recognises both Christian and Muslim holidays, and has mandated a 2-hour lunch break on Fridays to allow Muslims to go to a mosque to pray. The Government has also agreed to a request from Muslim students at Addis Ababa Commercial College to delay the start of afternoon classes until 1:30 p.m. to permit them to perform afternoon prayers at a nearby mosque. In most sections of the country Orthodox Christians and Muslims participate in each other's religious observances, and there is tolerance for intermarriage and conversion in certain areas, most notably in Welo, as well as in urban areas throughout the country. In the capital, Addis Ababa, persons of different faiths often live side-by-side. Most urban areas reflect a mixture of all religious denominations. Longstanding evangelical Protestant denominations, particularly the Mekane Yesus Church and Kale Hiwot Churches, provide social services such as health care and education to non-members as well as to members. [3c]

6.23 The Government has interpreted the constitutional provision for separation of religion and state to mean that religious instruction is not permitted in schools, whether they are public or private schools. Catholic, Orthodox, evangelical, and Muslim-owned and operated schools are not permitted to teach religion as a course of study. Most private schools teach morals courses as part of school curricula, and the Government Education Bureau in Addis Ababa has complained that such courses are not free of religious influence. Churches are permitted to have Sunday schools, the Koran is taught at mosques, and public schools permit the formation of clubs, including those of a religious nature. [3c]

6.24 In 2001, Muslim leaders continued to complain that public school authorities sometimes interfered with their free practice of Islam. Protestant groups occasionally complained that local officials discriminate against them when seeking land for churches and cemeteries. While the relationship among religions in society is generally amicable, there continued to be pockets of inter-religious tension and criticism between followers of evangelical and Pentecostal churches, on the one hand, and Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, on the other. During 2001 a violent conflict broke out between Christians and Muslims. There are no reports of religious prisoners or detainees [3c]

6.25 On January 19, 2001, in Harar, a riot broke out between Muslims and Christians after several members of a Christian procession entered a mosque and disrupted Muslim services. Both groups accused each other of destroying religious property. After the local police were no longer able to control the rioting, the army was called in to restore order and reportedly shot and killed five people; it is not known whether the rioters fired weapons in return. In January and February 2001, the EOC and the

Supreme Islamic Council worked together and with local, regional, and national level government representatives in Harar to restore relations between the two faiths. No action was taken against any of the army officers who were involved in the incident. **[3c]**

ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

6.26 Between 40 and 50 percent of the population adhere to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), the single largest religious group. The EOC claims 50 percent of the country's total population, or more than 31 million adherents, and 110,450 churches. The EOC is predominant in the northern regions of Tigray and Amhara. **[3c]**

6.27 There were reports of clashes between police and demonstrators at Addis Ababa's Lideta Mariam Orthodox Church on 26 December 2002. These clashes were sparked by a dispute between the Church of Lideta Mariam and the Addis Ababa Diocese. The community has been resisting attempts by the office of the Patriarch to appoint a church administrator. **[14y]**

6.28 The protestors demonstrated outside the Lideta church and the leader of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is reported to have called on the Ethiopian government to take forceful measures against the demonstrators. The following day scores of people were beaten up and 36 people were arrested by the Federal Police Special Force. They were taken to the Federal Police Special Force camp of Kolfe. Seventeen of those arrested were taken to Woreda 22 police station near the Lideta Church. Those arrested were reportedly ill treated by the police while in custody. **[6e]**

6.29 The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) reported that the demonstrators were forced to plunge fully clothed into a barrel of cold water. Deacons from the church who were arrested had their heads shaved and were forced to sleep in the open. Others were forced to sleep on gravel and run barefoot on stone grounds or walk along a road on their knees. **[14y][50]**

6.30 The dispute between Lideta Mariam Church community and the Patriarch's office has been going on for more than two years, despite the secular court of the church ordering the Lideta community to accept the appointee. EHRCO has called on both the Ethiopian Patriarch Abune Paulos – who heads the 25 million strong Ethiopian Orthodox Church - and the federal authorities to try to resolve the issue. **[14y]**

PROTESTANTS

6.31 Evangelical and Pentecostal Protestantism are the fastest growing faiths and now constitute more than 10 percent of the population. According to the Evangelical Church Fellowship, there are 7.4 million Protestants, although this figure may be a high estimate. Established Protestant churches such as Mekane Yesus and Kale Hiwot are strongest in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR), western and central Oromia, and in urban areas around the country. **[3c]**

6.32 On 29 December 2002, a riot broke out between Orthodox and Protestant worshippers in Mekelle, Tigray Region, at Adventist prayer service being conducted in a stadium. Some Orthodox followers, upset by the display of public Adventist preaching, reportedly sparked the clashes by first throwing stones at Adventist followers gathered in the stadium, then by looting Adventist offices in the city. Police intervened to break up the riots, which resulted in five dead and three seriously injured. The police reported that 10 people were detained, but independent sources placed the figure much higher. **[3a]**

ISLAM

6.33 Approximately 40 percent of the population is Muslim, although many Muslims claim that the actual percentage is higher. Islam is most prevalent in the Somali and Afar regions, as well as in parts of Oromia. **[3c]**

6.34 Muslim leaders complain that public school authorities sometimes interfere with their free practice of Islam. Certain public school teachers in the SNNPR, Addis Ababa, and in the Amhara region objected to Muslim schoolgirls covering their heads with scarves while at school. In September 1999, Muslim girls who had boycotted classes in Woldeia in the Amhara region over the issue of wearing headscarves to class, returned to classes with their scarves. Muslim leaders stated that in some schools, Muslim girls go without head coverings in order to avoid similar problems. **[3c]**

6.35 Leaders of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) struggled during 2002 with Wahibbist fundamentalism within their ranks. The growing influence of radical elements within Islamic communities in the country, aided by funding from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States for mosque construction, continued to concern the EIASC. **[3a]**

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

6.36 There are more than 6,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in the country. Following the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea in 1998 the Government decided that Jehovah's Witnesses of Eritrean origin, who might face persecution in Eritrea on account of their religious beliefs, would not be subject to deportation to Eritrea (**See [Eritreans in Ethiopia](#)**). **[1][3a]**

ETHIOPIAN JEWS

6.37 A phased emigration of about 27,000 Ethiopian Jews (Beta Israel) took place during 1984-1991 and in 1999 a further 4,000 were assisted to emigrate to Israel. In Addis Ababa and western Gondar in the Amhara region there remain very small concentrations of Ethiopian Jews and those who claim that their ancestors were forced to convert from Judaism to Ethiopian Orthodoxy (Feles Mora). Approximately 3,000 Feles Mora migrated voluntarily from the western Amhara region to Addis Ababa in 1991 at the time of "Operation Solomon," when a large number of

Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel. The Feles Mora also seek to immigrate to Israel. The number of Feles Mora in the country at the end of 2001 was approximately 23,000. Israeli officials evaluate the Feles Mora immigration claims on a case-by-case basis and estimate that by the end of 2000 approximately 100 individuals were immigrating to Israel under Israel's law of return each week. Approximately 2,000 claims are processed annually by the Israeli Embassy in Addis Ababa. All of the eligible Ethiopian Jews in the country had immigrated to Israel by December 1999 (see [ETHNIC MINORITIES](#)). [3c]

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

6.38 The Government has at times restricted freedom of assembly despite this being guaranteed in the 1994 Constitution. Security forces have on many occasions used excessive force to disperse demonstrations. The Government limited freedom of association, and while the non-governmental organisation (NGO) registration process continued to improve, the Government suspended temporarily the registration of a prominent NGO in 2001. In July 2001 the Speaker of the House of the Peoples' Representatives selected a nominating committee to elect members to the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the Office of the Ombudsman; however, neither entity was operational by the end of 2002. [6a] [3a]

POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

6.39 Although observers have reported that opposition participation in elections was possible, most opposition groups have at times chosen to boycott the polls, claiming that the Government impeded their ability to compete freely. The 1995 and 2000 elections were however judged to be generally free and fair by observers including the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Western donor states and domestic NGOs. [3a]

6.40 Political participation is however closed to organisations that have not renounced violence and which do not recognise the elected government as a legitimate authority. Such organisations include the OLF, MEDHIN, Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF), the EPRP and several Somali-based groups, including some elements of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). Radical Amhara groups, the OLF and al-Ittihad were responsible for a series of grenade attacks, bombings, shootings and ambushes that have resulted in a number of deaths and injuries since 1996. [3b][1][2]

6.41 In July 2002 the European Union (EU) demanded a public inquiry into disturbances in Southern Ethiopia earlier in the year, which left an estimated 128 dead. These people had died during an outbreak of violence in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State (SNNPRS) in March. This occurred during a dispute over the political rights of the minority Sheko and Majenger ethnic groups in the town of Tepi, capital of the Yeki district. Tepi is about 700 km south-west of Addis Ababa. EU sources say that the head of the local police spoke of 128 fatalities. The opposition claim that between 500 and 1,000 died. [4o]

6.42 Between 400 and 1,000 people were arrested after the violence. Most have since been released but 269 people were still detention at the time of the EU delegation's visit. **[4o]**

6.43 Regional police commissioner Yasin Muhammed said that the Sheko-Majenger People's Democratic Unity Organisation (SMPDUO) had incited armed people from its own zone to take control of Tepi by force, according to the Walta Information Agency. **[4o]**

6.44 The EU's call comes after Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi discussed the killings with EU head Romano Prodi. They also discussed the May shootings in Awasa in which 17 people were killed in clashes between demonstrators and police. The EU has also called for an inquiry into that incident. **[14w]**

6.45 Some 7,000 protestors gathered on 24 May before marching towards Awasa to demonstrate against a change in the town's status. Awasa is the regional capital of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State (SNNPRS), one of the country's nine federal regions. The town, at present, also acts as the zonal capital for the Sidama. But fears have circulated among the rural community that the zonal capital would be moved to Aleta Wondo – some 80 km away. **[14v]**

6.46 Federal government sources argue that the peasants clearly had been manipulated and told that Awasa was going to be sold. They say that the change in status will not affect the Sidamas and that they will not lose any lands. **[14v]**

6.47 The Ethiopian Human Rights Council claims that it was a peaceful march. The demonstrators asked permission before the march, but the day before there was an announcement on television and radio that the people could not march. It was said that certain political groups were involved and therefore the march was to be declared illegal. **[14v]**

6.48 In August 2002 some 90 state employees, including 41 police officers and 11 administrative officials, were arrested by the state authorities for their roles in the March riots and charged with human rights violations, instigation of violence and abuses of office. **[2]**

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

OVERVIEW

6.49 The 1994 Constitution and the 1993 Labour Law give the majority of employees the right to form and join trades unions and bargain collectively, **[9]** although only about 300,000 workers are unionised. Employees of the security and civil services and those in 'essential services', such as transport workers and bank staff, are not permitted to strike. The 1993 Labour Law forbids trades unions from acting in an overtly political manner. Unions are free to affiliate with and participate in international labour organisations. Ethiopia has not however ratified ILO Convention 180 on the Freedom of Association as it only recognises government approved unions. **[3a]**

6.50 The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) was formed in 1993. Individual unions are not required to belong to CETU. Nine federations, organised on the basis of industrial and service sectors rather than by region, comprise CETU. The Government de-certified CETU in December 1994 because of internal management disputes but officially re-established and re-certified it in April 1997. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) however have refused to recognise CETU until the outstanding case of former Ethiopian Teacher's Association President Dr Taye was resolved (he was finally released in May 2002). **[3a]**

6.51 The minimum number of workers required to form a union was 20. All unions had to be registered; however, the Government still retained the authority to cancel union registration. **[3a]**

RECENT EXPERIENCE

6.52 There was no requirement that unions belong to the CETU. According to the US Department report 2003, recently publicised allegations of widespread corruption within CETU's leadership ranks and of CETU's close ties to the Government have paralysed the organisation. A special meeting of CETU's General Congress was scheduled for January 2003 to try to resolve the impasse. **[3a]**

6.53 The law prohibits anti-union discrimination by employers against union members and organisers; however, unions reported that union activists frequently were fired. Unlawful dismissal suits often took years to resolve because of case backlogs in the labour courts. There were grievance procedures for hearings on allegations of discrimination brought by individuals or unions. Employers found guilty of anti-union discrimination were required to reinstate workers fired for union activities. However, according to labour leaders, a number of court cases in which workers were terminated for union activities still were pending after 4 or 5 years. **[3a]**

6.54 The Ethiopian Teachers' Association (ETA) has been a particular target for government harassment. The ETA formerly had a membership of 120,000; however, that number has decreased significantly due to government intimidation and restrictions on ETA activities. During 2002, the ETA estimated its membership at 110,000. The Government, in an attempt to influence ETA leadership, created a "new" ETA that drew its funding from mandatory contributions from teachers. Teachers were coerced to make payments of \$0.23 (2 birr) a month to the "new" ETA, which counted them as its members. **[3a]**

6.55 The ETA was denied access to a meeting hall in Sidama Zone even though a government official took its money for the hall rental. Several teachers were detained for participating in an ETA conference in Awassa during 2002 **[3a]**

PEOPLE TRAFFICKING

6.56 The law and the Constitution prohibit trafficking in persons; however, there are numerous reports that persons are being trafficked to, from, and within the country. Child prostitution remains a problem, especially in urban areas. The criminal code applies only to women and children trafficked for the purposes of prostitution; such

trafficking can be punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment and a fine of \$1166 (10,000 birr). Various laws prohibit trafficking and provide for fines and prison sentences of up to 20 years. During 2002, 80 to 100 persons were charged with trafficking; however, there were no reported prosecutions or investigations during the year, due in part to limited resources. **[3a]**

6.57 There are unconfirmed reports that children from the southern part of the country are being transported into Kenya by child traffickers operating adoption rings, and then adopted as other nationalities. The Government has closed down adoption agencies operating in the country that failed to observe proper rules and regulations. **[3a]**

6.58 There have been press reports of the large-scale employment of children, especially underage girls, as hotel workers, barmaids, and prostitutes in resort towns and rural truck stops. An investigative body, the National Steering Committee Against Sexual Exploitation of Children is chaired by the Children, Youth, and Family Affairs Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. NGOs reported that girls as young as age 11 have been recruited to work in houses of prostitution where they were kept uninformed of the risks of HIV/AIDS infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. **[3a]**

6.59 In 2002, no cases were reported of teenage daughters being sold to hotel and bar owners on main truck routes; however the practice was believed to exist. Social workers note that young girls are prized because their clients believed that they were free of sexually transmitted diseases. The unwanted infants of these young girls usually are abandoned at hospitals, police stations, welfare clinics, and adoption agencies. Pervasive poverty, migration to urban centres, early marriage, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and limited educational and job opportunities aggravated the problem of children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation. There were several NGOs that aid child victims, including the Forum on Street Children-Ethiopia, which provides shelter and protection for children forced into prostitution or commercial sexual exploitation. **[3a]**

6.60 There is evidence that children are being trafficked from rural areas to Addis Ababa, lured by false promises of employment. Although illegal, the abduction of women and girls as a form of marriage is still believed to be practised widely in Oromiya regions and the SNNPRS . **[3a]**

6.61 Private entities arrange for overseas work and, as a result, the number of women sent to Middle Eastern countries, particularly Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, as domestic or industrial workers has increased significantly over the past few years. These Ethiopian women typically are trafficked through Djibouti, Yemen, and Syria. In 2001 there were reports that Syrian border police shot three women, killing one and injuring two, as they attempted to cross the border from Lebanon. The Chief of the Investigation and Detention Centre in Lebanon reported that 20,000 to 25,000 Ethiopian women worked in Beirut, a majority of whom were trafficked. Approximately 50 percent of these women were not able to return legally to their home country. **[3a]**

6.62 There is reportedly a network of persons based in the tourism and trade sectors that are involved heavily in soliciting potential clients, recruiting young girls, arranging travel, and fabricating counterfeit work permits, travel documents, and birth certificates. There are reports from the EWLA that some domestic workers abroad are subjected to abusive conditions, including sexual exploitation. In addition, the employers of domestic labourers sometimes seized passports, failed to pay salaries, and overworked their employees. Some domestics are forced to work for their employers' relatives without additional pay. Domestics are forced to pay a monetary penalty for leaving their employment early. Reports of abuse have decreased after the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs began reviewing the contracts of prospective domestic workers and denying exit visas if the contracts did not appear satisfactory. **[3a]**

6.63 There have been some government initiatives during the year to combat trafficking, including government consultation with IOM to try to resolve the problem. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs have had limited success in regulating employment agencies that sent migrant workers to Middle Eastern countries. Many illegal employment agencies have escaped government scrutiny and continued to operate freely. There is a consulate in Beirut to assist women who were trafficked to Lebanon. The federal police's Women's Affairs Bureau, in collaboration with the media, have created a public awareness program on the dangers of migrating to Middle Eastern countries. **[3a]**

6.64 Training programs have been implemented for police officers on the criminal aspects of trafficking. These institutions however have limited resources and jurisdiction to protect or intervene in cases of prosecution of offending employers. Various laws prohibit trafficking and provide for fines and prison sentences of up to 20 years; however, there have been no reported prosecutions or investigations, due in part to limited resources. **[3a]**

6.65 Rakeb Messele, of the UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM) anti-trafficking unit, believes that there is a great deal of trafficking going on in Ethiopia. All long for a new life abroad with promises of high wages and a good job. Yet for most that dream becomes a nightmare as they are forced into prostitution or a slave-like existence as housemaids working 20 hours a day without pay. The IOM says it is almost impossible to tell how many girls are shipped overseas. Most become difficult to trace because once they land they have to change their Christian names to Muslim names. **[14ac]**

6.66 "Specifically the girls are sent to the Middle East, Lebanon, Dubai and Saudi Arabia. These are the main countries of destination. In Lebanon alone there are about 25,000 Ethiopian girls. In Beirut it is estimated a 1,000 Ethiopian girls are recruited monthly. We are talking about thousands of girls a year being trafficked," Rakeb said. The youngest girl was just 14. **[14ac]**

6.67 The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) says that women and girls could be subjected to sexual abuse after being forced from their homes because of the drought currently gripping Ethiopia. They have warned that under such circumstances, as women or young girls have few options, they are often taken

advantage of in return for support. **[14ad]**

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

6.68 The Constitution provides for freedom of travel and residence, both internally and abroad, and allows emigration and repatriation. **[9]** Exit visas are required but these are issued routinely, except to people with outstanding court cases or unpaid debts. While there are, in theory, no restrictions on where a person may live or work, the Government has restricted the rights of Eritreans and people of Eritrean origin to free travel and movement since the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea in May 1998. **[3a]**

6.69 The law includes provisions for the granting of refuge and asylum in accordance with the provisions of the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Government generally treats asylum seekers and refugees fairly and co-operates with the UNHCR in assisting them. **[3b]**

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6b. HUMAN RIGHTS: SPECIFIC GROUPS

ETHNIC GROUPS

6.70 Ethiopia has over 80 ethnic groups, or nationalities. Historically the Amharas and Tigrayans from the northern highlands have played major roles in the country's life. Some ethnic groups, including the Oromos, the largest single ethnic group, claim to have been subjugated during the nineteenth century by the dominant Amharas and Tigrayans. The present Government's policy of regionalisation attempts to address ethnic concerns. The new federal structure, with regional states based largely on major ethnic boundaries, has granted local populations much greater control over their own affairs, and due to this ethnicity and politics are almost synonymous with each other. **[3a]** The Constitution provides for equal recognition for all Ethiopian languages although Amharic is the working language of the Federal Government. **[9]**

ETHNIC DIVISIONS

6.71 Although many ethnic groups influence the political and cultural life of the country, Amharas and Tigrayans from the northern highlands play the dominant role. **[3a]**

6.72 The EPRDF ruling party is dominated by the Tigrayan ethnic group. Of 548 seats in the House of People's Representatives (HPR), 496 were held by the EPRDF or its affiliate parties. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), one affiliate party, occupies 40 seats. The EPRDF, its affiliates, and EPRDF sympathisers controlled all seats in the 108 member House of Federation, whose members were appointed by regional governments and by the federal Government. **[3a]**

6.73 In an attempt to address ethnic concerns, the Government has established a

federal system with political boundaries drawn roughly along major ethnic lines. With federalism, regional states had much greater control over their affairs. Political parties are primarily ethnically based. However ethnic clashes have been common in the past decade and 2002 was no different. **[3a]**

6.74 In January 2002, 92 ethnic Somalis were killed during regional clashes over grazing and water rights. Banditry and lawlessness continued to prevail in the region at year's end. **[3a]**

6.75 In March 2002 between 600 and 800 people were killed during clashes between the Sheko-Mejjanger and Manja and the Sheka and Bench-Majjii in and around the town of Tepi, capital of the Yeki District, in the Southern Region. Government officials reported 128 deaths; however, the opposition SEPDC reported more than 1,700 deaths. More than 2,000 homes were destroyed and 5,800 persons were displaced as a result of the violence. The clashes involved local officials and members of each of these communities, and resulted from the dissatisfaction of many Sheko-Mejjanger who had wanted autonomy following an unsuccessful attempt in 1993 to move the Shekicho zone from the Southern Region to the Gambella Region. The Government claimed to have arrested 41 policemen, 39 militia members, and 11 administrative officials for their involvement in the clashes. However, the Government refused to allow an independent investigation of the incident and put the Federal Police in charge of the government's internal investigation. **[3a]**

6.76 In April 2002 several people were killed and numerous houses were burned during fighting over a land dispute between the Deresha and the Zaise peoples. Local ruling party officials are said to have incited the violence between these previously peaceful groups. **[3a]**

6.77 In October 2002, 8 Amhara men shot and killed at least 31 Afar women in a village marketplace in North Shoa Zone, Amhara Region. Police detained seven of the eight suspected killers for questioning. The Chairman of the Kure Beret Farmers Association, who was also detained for questioning in relation to this case, was killed while in prison. **[3a]**

6.78 During 2002, there were numerous clashes between the Anuak and Nuer clans. In July, 60 people were killed and 41 were injured during ethnic conflict between Nuer and Anuak tribesmen in the Gambella region over political power sharing. The EHRCO reported that all houses in eight kebeles were burned to the ground, and 8,760 persons were displaced from their homes. **[3a]**

6.79 On 25 September 2002, a grenade was thrown into a student dormitory at the Gambella Teachers College. One person died and five were injured in the attack. The students were all members of the Nuer clan. **[3a]**

6.80 On 7 October 2002, four people were injured when a grenade exploded in the centre of Gambella town. The apparent target of the attack was a truck driver transporting ethnic Nuer to the area. **[3a]**

6.81 Unlike in 2001, there were no reports of killings in 2002 during ethnic clashes between the Oromo Borena and the ethnic-Somali Garre pastoralists, or between drought victims from Amhara and the Oromos in the Gida Kiremv district. **[3a]**

6.82 The military remains an ethnically diverse organisation; however, diversity was less common in the higher ranks among officer personnel. There are reports that soldiers re-deployed from the war front to other regions have abused civilians, particularly in the Amhara, Oromia, and the SNNPRS region. **[3a]**

6.83 There continue to be occasional reports of discrimination and exclusion of Eritreans, particularly by kebele level officials. Reports indicate that kebele officials sometimes deny indigent Eritreans access to free medical supplies. **[3a]**

LANGUAGES IN ETHIOPIA

6.84 Amharic, the national language, is spoken by about a third of the population, or approximately 20 million people. Tigrinya (4 million speakers) is spoken in the northern province of Tigre, Gurage (one million) southwest of Addis Ababa, and Harai (50,000) in the city of Harar. All of these languages are of the Semitic family and are descended from Geez, the classical literary language of Ethiopia. **[10]**

6.85 The other main languages are of the Cushitic family. The most important is Oromo (Galla) (20 million speakers), spoken in the west, south, and east of Addis Ababa. Sidamo (5 million) is spoken in the southwest, and Somali (3 million) in the southeast. English is widely spoken in official circles in Ethiopia, while Arabic and Italian are understood in a number of places (particularly in the trading community). **[10]**

OROMOS

6.86 The Oromo People account for 40% of the population, which makes them the majority group in Ethiopia. They are predominant in southern, south-eastern and south-western Ethiopia but also live in the highland areas. **[22]**

6.87 They are diverse in terms of their culture, social organisation and religion, although most retain some features of their unique and complex generation-grading system, 'gada'. In some areas they are too assimilated with the Amhara to be easily organised into a disciplined national opposition movement. **[11]**

6.88 Historically the Oromo have never formed a single state but were organised in small societies of clans and villages. There are four main groups: western Oromo, mainly in 'Wollegha', many of whom have been Christianised by missionary churches; northern Oromo, of Mecha-Tulam, modern Shoa and the area to the south, who are more integrated into Amhara culture than other Oromo groups, are mostly Christians of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and speak Amharic; southern Oromo, who often have semi-nomadic lifestyles and are not incorporated into any larger regional or religious unit. And Borana, believed by some to be the seminal branch of the Oromo because of their rigid observance of the 'gada' social system, and who live in an arid area of Ethiopia along the border with Kenya. Eastern Oromo of Haraghe include the Muslim

population of Harar and Dire Dawa, among others. This group has strong links to the Arab world and its local leaders have a strong Muslim orientation. The term Oromia, signifying an independent Oromo state, is important to the Oromo and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), allowing them to consolidate their various regional and related groups into one Oromo nation. [11]

6.89 Oromos are represented politically by the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO), which is affiliated to the ruling EPRDF coalition. This party is opposed to the OLF. [1][2][3a] An OPDO member Dr Negasso Gidada was President of the Federal Republic from 1995. In July 2001 it was reported that he had been expelled from the OPDO central committee although he continued as President of the country until October 2001, [14i][14j][14p][38c] when he was replaced by Lieutenant Girma Wolde Giorgis an ethnic Oromo.[4m] The OPDO won 178 seats in the House of Peoples Representatives in the May 2000 elections. [18]

AMHARAS

6.90 A people numbering 12 million people (1984) living in the central Ethiopian highlands of Gondar, Gjjam, western Wollo, and northern Shoa, and also found in other areas, both rural and urban, of Ethiopia. [12]

6.91 The Amhara are mainly Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, but there is also a Muslim Amharic-speaking population, the Jabarti. The Amhara are mainly highland agriculturalists who produce grains and use the plough. Although farming can be considered their traditional occupation, their dominant political position has always been linked to military and administrative exploits and careers. Considered the core population of Ethiopia, the Amharic people's culture has largely determined the image of the 'Ethiopians'. The formation of the Amhara was closely connected to the development and expansion of the Ethiopian Empire from the second half of the thirteenth century and the spread of vernacular Amharic as the royal language (together with the written Ge'ez of the church). The use of Amharic paralleled the military and political expansion of the imperial state. Since 1955 Amharic has had the status of an official language. The spread of modern education, including the literacy campaigns under the Mengistu regime, have contributed to the more recent processes of Amharisation, although a new strategy for mother-tongue teaching in primary schools are now underway. [12]

6.92 The social and political institutions of the Amhara had a crucial influence on the development of institutions, which linked the south of Ethiopia with the political centre of Addis Ababa. The tribal and clan structures and the way in which leadership was temporarily elected among some southern peoples, were alien to the Amhara. They installed dominant landholders and established the hereditary office of the local chief to represent the administration among his kin and people. Concerning the definitions of rights to land, the legal system of the Amhara became a strong incentive for the spread of the Amharic language. [12]

6.93 The Amhara and Tigray people account for 32% of the population between them, [22] but have traditionally been the most influential and powerful of Ethiopia's people. Amharas are mainly represented in the Government by the Amhara National

Democratic Movement (ANDM), [1][2] which won 134 seats in the May 2000 elections and is affiliated to the ruling EPRDF. [18] The ANDM was originally the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement created by the TPLF. [2] Other parties of note are the All-Amhara People's Organisation Party (AAPO) and the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP), which was formed in 1999 following a split in the AAPO. [1]

SIDAMA/SIDAMO

6.94 There are eight distinct groups of Sidama people living in parts of Shoa and Sidamo-Borana provinces. They speak Cushitic and have an 'ensete' (false banana) planting culture. Before Oromo migration, the Sidama inhabited almost the whole of southern Ethiopia. Oromos used the term, 'sidama' meaning foreigner, and one of the eight groups still retains that name. An interchange of Sidama and Oromo institutions took place during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Consequently some are animist, others Christian or Muslim. By 1891 the Sidama people had been incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire. [11]

SOMALIS

6.95 The Somali people account for around 6% [22] of the population and populate the Ogaden region in the east of the country. They are among the poorest in the region.[1][2] The Ogaden National Liberation Front is the largest of the Somali based armed opposition groups. Al-Ittihad al-Islam (Islamic Union Party) is a Somali based armed Islamic group, whose stated aim is to create a fundamentalist Islamic State in the region. This group claimed responsibility for bomb explosions at hotels in 1996 and for the attempted assassination of the Minister of Transport and Communications. [1][2]

BERTA ('SHANKELLA', BENI, SHANGUL)

6.96 The Berta regard themselves as descended from a single family whom they trace back to 1720. Islam was established among them by 1855. They were conquered 1897-8 by imperial forces while their leader, Shaikh Khojali, preserved their autonomy by regular tribute of alluvial gold. They and other Nilotic peoples have been labelled pejoratively as 'Shankella', although this was officially discharged by Haile Selassie. Many Berta were brought to the capital as slaves. Slave trading was a business which the Shaikh Khojali family conducted with Sudan-based traders as well as Ethiopians. Berta were much desired as slaves by raiders on both sides of the border. [11]

AFAR

6.97 The Afar make up only around 4% of the total Ethiopian population, [22] At the time of the inception of the state of Eritrea, the Afar Liberation Front (ALF) leader, Ali Mirah Anfere, declared that the ALF's goal would be to establish an independent Islamic State for the Afars. Its boundaries were to be decided by Afar ethnic habitation, including the Awash River Basin and neighbouring territories in the southern part of Eritrea. Mengistu's creation of an autonomous province of Assab did nothing to settle

the Afar issue, since the most fertile land in the Awash Valley remained in Amhara control. [11]

GURAGE

6.98 The Gurage people make up around 2% of the Ethiopian population. [22] There are 14 to 16 groups in the Gurage cluster. The western group formed a political federation in the mid-nineteenth century consisting of seven clans inhabiting an area around Lake Zway in Shoa. They are 'ensete' (false banana) cultivators like their neighbours in Sidamo. Some claim descent from a Tigrayan noble who came to conquer them in the fourteenth century. Eastern Gurage (Soddo) trace their origins to the Harar area from which they fled during the sixteenth century invasion of Ahmad ibn Ibrahim. An attempt at unifying the western Gurage under one leader was allegedly made by a Christian commander who came to relieve them of Oromo raids. Emperor Menelik II incorporated both eastern and western Gurage into the empire by 1889. Gurage men weave and market cloth. Certain sub-castes tan hides or smelt iron. Pottery is a woman's craft. The Soddo Gurage reportedly follow the custom of circumcising both boys and girls in infancy, while the western group are said to circumcise both boys and girls (clitoridectomy) at the age of eight and ten respectively. Christian, Muslim and traditional Gurage belief in the god Waq, co-exist to varying degrees depending on the area. In the country and in cities Gurage are adept at forming self-help societies and are active traders. [11]

ANUAK

6.99 Associated with Sudanese penetration of a vaguely defined 'Ethiopia', these people date from the first millennium before the common era with a culture preoccupied with cattle raiding and millet growing. The Anuak are hunters, agriculturalists and fishers living in the fertile Gambela forest region of south-western Ethiopia. At the end of 1979, their land was seized by the Government and there were attempts to draft them into the army and into forced labour on collective farms. Many Anuak fled to the bush in an attempt to reach Sudan and were shot or imprisoned. Their numbers have halved from a generation ago and they have been displaced from their traditional lands as northerners resettled in the area. [11] Scores of people of the opposed Nuer and Anuak communities were killed in Itang town in Gambela region in the southwest in July 2002. Some arrests were made in connection with the killings but no one had been brought to trial by the end of the 2002. [6a]

ADARE/GEFU (HARAR)

6.100 The Oromo and Amhara residents of greater Harar call the inner-city residents Adare. There are about 30,000 in the old city, with a distinct language and culture. The Adare are distinguished for being the only people in Ethiopia to have developed a tradition centring on a large urban centre. In their own language the term for Adare is Gefu, literally, person of the city. Adare is also the language spoken in Harar and is written in Arabic characters. Harar is the premier Muslim city of Ethiopia, and is the fourth most holy Muslim city worldwide. An overlapping social network is divided into

kinship networks, groups and neighbours. The latter concerns itself with the expenses of weddings and funerals in a co-operative way. A school was established in 1972 to counter the central government effort to spread the Amharic language and restrict Islamic religious instruction. In 1975 the Derg regime imposed a 'kebele' system of local government, as the neighbourhood groups refused to be politicised. [11]

BETA ISRAEL

6.101 Also known as the Ethiopian Jews, and the derogatory name Falasha (meaning stranger or exile in Ge'ez), at their peak in the seventeenth century there were over 1 million Beta Israel in Ethiopia. Before mass migration to Israel in the 1980's they numbered approximately 30,000 and lived in Gondar province and the Simien Mountains in northern Ethiopia. [11]

6.102 The Beta Israel believe themselves to be Jewish, living a traditional form of life evolving from at least the fourteenth century, although some suggest that their origins are more ancient. Their ancestors were deprived of the right to hold land as a result of the northwest expansion of the core Abyssinian State. Beta Israel consider contact with Christians to be ritually impure, and this reinforced the self-identity of Beta Israel and allowed them to continue their religious and social life in the face of pressure to convert, while being excluded from positions of authority within the state. Their basic tenets are those of Judaism. [11]

6.103 Most Ethiopian Jews lived in small rural communities in Gondar and Tigre provinces, where they suffered from prejudice at the hands of neighbouring peoples. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church opposed the development of Jewish schools. After World War Two, they continued to face discrimination and suffer evictions, extortionate taxes and rents, and attacks on cemeteries. After the revolution of 1974, the Beta Israel were made a target of the counter-revolutionary Ethiopian Democratic Union, composed of the old nobility and landowners in Gondar. During 1977-79 they were forced to flee remote villages and move to areas of greater concentration. [11]

6.104 They were also attacked by the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP) for alleged Zionist tendencies. Substantial numbers of Jews were among the thousands tortured, imprisoned, and massacred in the 1978 'Red Terror' campaigns waged by the Derg. In March 1984, at the height of the famine in northern Ethiopia, thousands of Beta Israel began to move to Sudan by foot. Several thousands lost their lives in transit, children were orphaned and separated from their parents, and disease and malnutrition were rife in the refugee camps. At the end of 1984 Operation Moses brought many more to Israel, and others left in 1991 in Operation Solomon. [11]

ERITREANS IN ETHIOPIA

(also see Eritrean Report)

6.105 During the border war the Government detained and deported Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin without due process. There were no preliminary hearings to

determine the merits of deportation, no right to counsel was provided to detainees and they had limited opportunity to register protests. Although these detentions and deportations were prompted by security considerations they raised concerns about arbitrary arrest and detention, forced exile, the forcible separation of families and nationality issues, in addition those who were detained or expelled suffered hardships and financial losses. Heads of household were taken without warning, detained and often deported within 48 hours. Remaining family members were subjected to arbitrary deadlines to sell property and sometimes taxed on estimates of annual income and unpaid balances on government loans. Deportation orders originated from the Security Immigration and Refugees Affairs Authority (SIRAA) in Addis Ababa. By the end of 2000, as many as 75,000 Ethiopians of Eritrean origin had been compelled to leave Ethiopia, the majority were deported although a number left voluntarily. **[3b]**

6.106 In August 1999 all Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin who had voted in the 1993 referendum on Eritrean independence were required to register with SIRAA and complete residence application forms. After registration they received identity cards and residence permits valid for 6 months. **[3b]** In August 2001 the Immigration and Nationality Affairs headquarters announced that Eritrean citizens living in Ethiopia were now renewing their residence permits. They stated that Eritreans were required to renew their residence permits annually, as every expatriate living in the country does. **[21b]**

6.107 The Government modified its policy regarding the detention and deportation of Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin to Eritrea after it signed a cessation of hostilities agreement with Eritrea in 2000. In 2001 approximately 80,000 to 100,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin resided in the country. **[3a]**

6.108 It was reported that the Government stopped deporting Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin after signing the cessation of hostilities agreement in June 2000. Since the signing of the Algiers agreement in December 2000 and up until the end of 2002, ICRC has facilitated the repatriation of approximately 1,388 Eritrean POWs. **[3a]** However in June 2001 the ICRC refused to assist in the repatriation of a group of over seven hundred civilians concerned that they had not expressed their consent. **[14I]** The Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs also complained about this group claiming that the group consisted mainly of women, children and the elderly who had been detained for days prior to their deportation. **[39]**

6.109 Ethiopia identified the 772 people as Eritreans and so forcibly expelled from its territory without prior notification to the International Committee of the Red Cross as anticipated under article 2 of the truce agreement. Voluntary civilian repatriation between the two countries progressed more smoothly. During the war, about 345,000 civilians fled the fighting. Most escaped to internal exile but others were trapped behind enemy lines as the war front shifted. **[8b]**

6.110 The last group of approximately 200 civilian detainees of Eritrean origin who had been held at Dedesa internment camp were repatriated to Eritrea in November 2002 under ICRC auspices, and the Dedesa camp was closed. During the year, the Government transferred 219 Eritrean military deserters who also had been held at the Dedesa detention centre to a refugee camp in northern Ethiopia. **[3a]**

6.111 Detention and deportation is carried out only in conjunction with the ICRC. The ICRC now participates in all repatriations to Eritrea, and under ICRC auspices, 1,188 POWs and 774 civilians were repatriated to Eritrea during 2002. All registered prisoners from the conflict were released in 2002. **[3a]**

6.112 A total of 153 Ethiopian and 75 Eritrean civilians were repatriated to their respective countries under ICRC auspices in two separate operations on 13 and 17 June 2003. Each group was accompanied by ICRC delegates based in the country of departure. Once across the river, the returnees were met by ICRC staff working on that side and then placed in the care of their own country's authorities. Volunteers from the Ethiopian Red Cross Society and the Red Cross Society of Eritrea also took part in the operation, handing out food and water. **[13d]**

REPATRIATED ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES

6.113 During the reign of the military dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam between 1974 and 1991, hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians are believed to have left the country. Since he was deposed in 1991 many have returned. It is estimated that in the last decade around 800,000 Ethiopian refugees have been voluntarily repatriated from Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and other countries. This has led to a strain on the already stretched resources available in Ethiopia and NGO's have largely been the main source of help for these people. **[28]** Standard procedure for returns involves the co-operation of the ICRC who escort the returnees to an agreed border point and provide any food or medical assistance needed. **[13c]**

6.114 This return largely followed a statement in September 1999 from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He declared that a "fundamental and durable change" had taken place in Ethiopia with the end of the Mengistu regime and that most Ethiopian refugees who fled their country prior to 1991 no longer had a "valid fear of persecution". This then took effect in March 2000. **[28]**

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WOMEN

6.115 The 1994 Constitution provides for the equality of women, **[9]** however this provision is not always applied in practice. The provisions of the Constitution are often in conflict with the 1960 Civil Code and the 1957 Penal Code, which are still in force although under review by the Ministry of Justice. The 1960 Civil Code is based on a monarchical constitution that treated women as if they were children or disabled. Culturally based abuses including wife beating and marital rape are pervasive social problems. Although women have recourse to the police and the courts, societal pressures and limited court facilities reduce the availability of these remedies, particularly in rural areas. Discrimination is most acute in rural areas where 85% of the population live. In urban areas it is reported that women have fewer employment opportunities than men. **[3a]**

6.116 The traditional practice of abduction as a form of marriage is illegal under the penal code but is still believed to be practised widely in many rural areas particularly the

Oromiya region and SNNPRS. **[3a]** Women are often abused physically during abduction and forced sexual relationships accompany many marriages by abduction. **[14b]** On 29 July 2000 the Government adopted a new family law which took effect from 4 July 2000. Amongst other provisions this raised the legal marriage age for girls to 18. Family arbitration councils which in the past had the power to dissolve marriages can now only engage in arbitration and reconciliation counselling, only the courts have the power to grant divorces. Domestic violence is not considered a serious justification under the law for divorce. **[3a]**

6.117 In 1997 the Government adopted a plan of action aimed at enhancing the status of women. In 1999 and 2000 since the adoption of this program few improvements were noted. According to a study produced by the National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia (NCTPE) in 1998 certain harmful practices such as early marriage and marriage by abduction appeared to be declining. **[3b]**

6.118 With regards to political participation in 2002 of the 19 members of the Council of Ministers, 1 was a woman, 2 other women held ministerial positions, and a number of other women held senior positions. There were 42 women among the 548 members of the HPR, and 9 of 113 members in the House of Federation were women. Of the 14 members of the Supreme Court, 3 were women. **[3a]**

6.119 The majority of girls undergo some form of female genital mutilation (FGM) which is widely condemned by international experts. The ritual is practised on girls between the ages of seven days and 16 years old. It is often performed in unsanitary settings by a community 'specialist' using an unclean blade. FGM has terrible effects on the child or young girl's state of health, both at the time and in the future. Apart from potentially fatal haemorrhages, there is a risk of tetanus or septicaemia from the very basic instruments used and neighbouring organs are often damaged due to the girl's distress. **[45]**

6.120 The law does not prohibit FGM although the Government discourages it officially, supporting the NCTPE and educational programmes in schools. The NCTPE survey in 1998 indicated that in excess of 72% of the female population had undergone FGM, which was a reduction from the estimated figure of 90% in 1990. **[3b]**

6.121 Social practices obstruct investigations into rape and the prosecution of rapists. Many women are not aware of their legal rights under the law. It is estimated that there are more than 1,000 rapes a year in Addis Ababa however there were only 168 rape convictions nation-wide in the year ending September 2000. **[3a]** In August 2001 a demonstration was held in Addis Ababa during which protestors called upon the Government to withdraw bail rights from those charged with committing rape, it was estimated that some 3,000 people attended. **[14n]**

6.122 In September 2001 it was reported that over 500 charges were filed against rape cases in Addis Ababa in the preceding 12 months. The Ethiopian Women's Democratic Organisation estimated an average of about 84 rape cases per day in Addis Ababa which are never reported or brought to court due to social and cultural problems. **[38a]** The Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association, one of whose missions was to help women victims of violence, was suspended in 2001 by the Ministry of Justice for operating

outside its mandate. **[21a]** However the banning order on the EWLA and Ethiopian Human Rights Council was quickly rescinded by the new Justice minister following a government reshuffle. **[34]**

6.123 Human Rights Watch report a move towards enforcement laws protecting women and children, in particular by making greater efforts to arrest men who raped children and, when convictions were secured, by imposing prison sentences on some rapists. In Addis Ababa two policewomen were assigned to each district. However, women's groups claimed that police often did not investigate reports of adult rape, while prosecutors took over a year to bring charges and then only for infractions with the lowest possible penalty. **[8c]**

6.124 An emerging problem is the trafficking of women. The IOM says that illegal traffickers who prey on women could make up to 7,000 Ethiopian Birr (more than US \$800) for each victim they send overseas. The IOM say women aged between 18 and 25 are targeted by traffickers at colleges and in poor districts in towns and cities. **[14am]**

CHILDREN

6.125 The Government supported efforts by domestic and international NGOs that focused on children's social, health, and legal issues. For example, local officials provided transportation and free facilities to NGO activities. Neither the Human Rights Commission (HRC) nor the Office of the Ombudsman was operational by the end of 2002; however, once operational, both organisations are expected to have a representative responsible for the rights of children. However, the Government had limited their ability to provide improved health care and basic education. **[3a]**

6.126 Child labour remained a serious problem in 2002. Under the law, the minimum age for wage or salary employment is 14 years; special provisions cover children between the ages of 14 and 18, including the prohibition of hazardous or night work. Children between the ages of 14 and 18 years were not permitted to work more than 7 hours per day, work between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., work on public holidays or rest days, or perform overtime work. While the Government made some effort to enforce these regulations within the formal industrial sector, social welfare activists, civic organisers, government officials, and employers agreed that child labour was pervasive throughout the country, especially in the informal sector. Child labourers are often abused; a survey published in 1999 indicated a figure of 70% of abuse among child urban labourers. **[3a]**

6.127 In December 2002 Ethiopia ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. **[6a]**

6.128 Child prostitution continues to be a problem and is believed to be increasing. There are no laws making prostitution or child prostitution criminal offences. There were reports in 1999 and 2000 that girls as young as 11 are recruited to work as prostitutes and kept ignorant of the risks of HIV/AIDS. In addition rural families sold teenage girls to hotel and bar owners on main truck routes although reports of this

practice are difficult to confirm. Young girls are prized, as clients believe they are disease free. **[3a]**

6.129 Despite a new family law setting the age of consent for marriage for males and females as 18, early childhood marriage particularly in rural areas is common. In the Afar region in the east the traditional practice of marrying young girls to older men continues but is coming under greater scrutiny and criticism. **[3b]**

6.130 In Addis Ababa's police stations, there are 10 Child Protection Units, which are staffed by members of an NGO and protect the rights of children by assisting them when they become involved in crime. Some police officers have completed training on procedures for handling cases of child abuse and juvenile delinquency. Nevertheless there is a clear need for reform of the juvenile justice system. Three federal judges sit on one bench to hear all cases of juvenile offences. There is a large backlog of juvenile cases and accused children often remain in detention with adults until their cases are heard. There is only 1 juvenile remand home with a capacity of 150 for children under age 15, and the juveniles who cannot be accommodated at the juvenile remand home are incarcerated with adults. **[3a]**

6.131 Juveniles aged between 15 and 18 are considered to be fully responsible for their actions and, with the exception of death penalty, face full penal responsibility. Juveniles who are 15-18 years old can be subjected to life imprisonment. **[45]**

6.132 Child prostitution in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa is “increasing at an alarming rate”, according to a study by Save the Children-Denmark (SCD). The NGO revealed that the lure of work brought many child prostitutes – some as young as 13 - to the city. The report, compiled with government officials and a local child rights organisation, urged immediate action to tackle the magnitude of the problem. **[14aj]**

6.133 There are unconfirmed reports that children from the southern part of the country are being transported into Kenya by child traffickers operating adoption rings, and then adopted as other nationalities. The Government has closed down adoption agencies operating in the country that failed to observe proper rules and regulations. **[3a]**

6.134 There have been press reports of the large-scale employment of children, especially underage girls, as hotel workers, barmaids, and prostitutes in resort towns and rural truck stops. An investigative body, the National Steering Committee Against Sexual Exploitation of Children is chaired by the Children, Youth, and Family Affairs Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. NGOs reported that girls as young as age 11 have been recruited to work in houses of prostitution where they were kept uninformed of the risks of HIV/AIDS infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. **[3a]**

6.135 The practice whereby poor rural families sold their young teenage daughters to hotel and bar owners on the main truck routes however no cases were reported in 2002. Social workers note that young girls are prized because their clients believed that they were free of sexually transmitted diseases. The unwanted infants of these

young girls usually are abandoned at hospitals, police stations, welfare clinics, and adoption agencies. Pervasive poverty, migration to urban centres, early marriage, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and limited educational and job opportunities aggravated the problem of children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation. There were several NGOs that aid child victims, including the Forum on Street Children-Ethiopia, which provides shelter and protection for children forced into prostitution or commercial sexual exploitation. [3a]

6.136 There is evidence that children are being trafficked from rural areas to Addis Ababa, lured by false promises of employment. Although illegal, the abduction of women and girls as a form of marriage is still believed to be practised widely in Oromiya regions and the SNNPRS . [3a]

CHILDCARE PROVISIONS

6.137 There are approximately 200,000 street children in urban areas, of which 150,000 reside in Addis Ababa; however, the figures are difficult to estimate, and observers believe the problem is growing. These children beg, sometimes as part of a gang, or work in the informal sector. Government and privately run orphanages are unable to handle the number of street children, and older children often abuse younger children. Due to severe resource constraints, abandoned infants often are overlooked or neglected at hospitals and orphanages. There are a few credible reports that children are maimed or blinded by their "handlers" in order to raise their earnings from begging. Following the April 2001 riots, there were reports that authorities rounded up street children; some children reportedly were as young as 7 years of age. [3a]

6.138 Street children often fall into two categories – children *of* the street and children *on* the street. The former spend their entire lives on the streets, while the latter work on the street and sleep at home. [14u]

6.139 In July 2002 it was reported that hundreds of street children and homeless people were forced from Addis Ababa and dumped in the Gofu forest, some 55km from the capital. Some of the children were reportedly only 11-years-old. The round-up took place during the World Cup. These children and homeless people were rounded up from the centre of the city where a huge television screen had been erected so that people could watch the football matches. [14x]. It is feared that hyenas may now have devoured some of those taken. [7c].

HOMOSEXUALS

6.140 Ethiopian law prohibits homosexual acts for both men and women. Penalties range from 10 days imprisonment, to 10 years where the offence involves violence, intimidation, coercion, transmission of disease, committing homosexual acts with a person under 15 or where shame or despair drives the victim to committing suicide. [15]

6.141 Ethiopia voted against International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)

having consultative status at the UN in January and on April 30, 2002. Berhane Meskel Abebe, the Ethiopian representative on the UN Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations, said his country voted against ILGA in January because homosexuality is a crime punishable by imprisonment in Ethiopia. "It doesn't go with our society's belief and general culture and practice." he is reported to have said. **[49a]**

6.142 On 27 May 2003 Behind the Mask stated that local government officials recently called meetings in the various suburbs and villages of Addis Ababa to warn parents about the hazards of homosexuality. Concerned that homosexuality is becoming more visible in the city, local authorities are reacting to a recent spate of people coming out as gay or lesbian in the city. Local officials also warned that the recent rise in homosexuality is due to parents not looking after their children properly. **[49b]**

NGO'S IN ETHIOPIA

6.143 Domestic human rights organisations operating within Ethiopia include the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), Human Rights League (HRL), the Peace and Development Committee, the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association, the Inter-Africa Group, the National Committee on Traditional Practices, the Society for the Advancement of Human Rights Education, Enway, the Centre for Local Capacity Building and Studies, African Initiatives for a Democratic World Order and Hundee. These and numerous other groups are primarily engaged in civic and human rights education, legal assistance, and trial monitoring. The EHRCO, a self-proclaimed human rights monitoring group, received legal status as an NGO in 1999 after a seven year campaign for recognition. **[3a]** In May 2001 the offices of EHRCO were closed down for ten days by armed police following the arrest of its former Secretary General. **[6b]**

6.144 Prominent Oromo civic leaders founded the Human Rights League (HRL) in 1997. In April 1998, on the grounds that some board members wished to use the organisation as a front for the OLF, the authorities closed the offices of HRL and confiscated the contents of the office. The HRL had been operating without a Government licence for three years despite having fulfilled all requirements for licensing. Government investigations into the HRL's alleged links to the OLF continues. **[3b]**

6.145 The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been operating in Ethiopia since 1997 and has a head office in Addis Ababa and 4 sub-offices elsewhere in the country. The Government allows the ICRC to visit detention centres and prisons throughout Ethiopia. In 1999 there were some problems visiting those detained by the police in Addis Ababa, however in 2000 visits resumed. The ICRC has not been permitted access to some military detention centres where OLF fighters are detained. During the border war involvement of the ICRC in the repatriation of POW's and civilian detainees varied. However in December 2000 following the signing of the peace agreement Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed that all POW repatriations would take place under the auspices of the ICRC. **[3a]**

REFUGEES IN ETHIOPIA

6.146 The law provides for the granting of asylum and refugee status in accordance with the provisions of the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Government generally co-operates with UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations in assisting refugees and returning citizens. **[3a]**

The country hosted approximately 138,816 refugees; most were from Somalia and Sudan. The Government, in co-operation with the UNHCR, continued to provide first asylum to refugees from Sudan and Somalia. Along the border of north-west Somalia, approximately 49,000 Somali refugees were resident in 3 camps at year's end, a decrease from 70,000 Somali refugees in 6 camps in 2001. Along the Sudanese border approximately 85,000 Sudanese refugees were resident in 5 refugee camps around Gambella and Asosa at year's end. The UNHCR reported that approximately 120 of the 450 armed rebels from Sudan awaiting transfer at the end of 2001 were admitted to one of the Sudanese refugee camps inside Ethiopia. The UNHCR also noted that some of those held at the end of 2001 returned voluntarily. **[3a]**

6.147 There were approximately 4,335 Eritrean Kunama refugees and a small population of urban refugees from other countries at year's end. During the year, government military forces took over a new refugee camp for security reasons, forcing the refugees to remain in a nearby camp with inadequate health, education, water, and sanitation facilities. **[3a]**

6.148 Ethnic clashes among Sudanese refugees in Fugnido camp in Gambela region in November 2002 left over 40 dead and scores wounded. **[6a]**

6.149 Two Sudanese refugee community leaders arrested in December 2001 in Fugnido refugee camp in Gambela region and allegedly tortured for protesting against the ill-treatment of refugees, were released in March 2002 without being charged. **[6a]** There also were reports that staff members of the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) physically abused Sudanese refugees at the Sherkole Camp. For example, in June ARRA staff members kicked and beat a refugee who was trying to collect rations during a revalidation exercise. By year's end, there were no indications that the Government had investigated these incidents. **[3a]**

6.150 There were no reports during the year of the forced return of persons to a country where they feared persecution. **[3a]**

6.151 The United Nations World Food Programme on 6 August 2003 gave a warning that food aid for 130,000 refugees in Ethiopia would run out by October unless contributions from international donors were received in time. **[7e]**

6.152 According to a joint assessment conducted in August 2003 by WFP, UNHCR, the Ethiopian Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) and the United States Bureau of Refugees, Migration and Population, the refugees will be unable to cope should their monthly food ration be reduced. "Generous donor

support is the clear reason for the refugees' good nutritional status," said Benedict Fultang, WFP Acting Country Director, and Ethiopia. "A major funding shortage and the resulting break in food supplies will most certainly lead to widespread malnutrition, and put at risk the lives of refugees, especially the women and children."**[7e]**

ANNEX A

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1930s Emperor Haile Selassie wrests power from old aristocracy and establishes modern autocracy.

1935 Italy invades Ethiopia.

1941 Allied forces end Italian occupation.

1952 Former Italian colony of Eritrea, which had become a UN mandated territory after World War II, federated with Ethiopia.

1962 Eritrea formally annexed by Ethiopia.

1970s Increased Eritrean resistance to Ethiopian control by ELF and EPLF.

September 1974 Calls for democratisation, army mutinies, Eritrean resistance, economic problems and famine culminate in overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in a military coup. Haile Selassie dies in military custody in 8/1975. The Derg takes control of Ethiopia and establishes Provisional Military Government (PMG) under Lt-Gen Aman Andom.

November 1974 Gen Aman assassinated. 57 former civil and military officials, including two former Prime Ministers executed without trial. Brig-Gen Teferi Benti, Chairman of the Derg, becomes Head of State. Major (later Lt-Col) Mengistu Haile Mariam one of two Vice-Chairman of the Derg.

December 1974 Derg declares Ethiopia a socialist state. PMG replaced by Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC).

1975 Col Mengistu emerges as most influential member of the Derg. PMAC embarks upon 'Ethiopia Tikdem' (Ethiopia First) reforms - nationalisation of land, financial institutions and large firms, literacy drive and establishment of peasant co-operatives. Power struggles within Derg, continuing into 1976, between supporters of MEISON and EPRP. Joint ELF/EPLF attack almost captures Eritrean capital Asmara. Severe retaliation taken against Eritrea. Tigrean support for Eritrea grows. TPLF formed.

February 1977 Col Mengistu assumes control as Head of State and Chairman of PMAC. Gen Teferi Benti and five other Derg members executed. "Red Terror" campaign launched against Mengistu's political and armed opponents, particularly the EPRP. Tens of thousands killed or tortured.

Mid-1977 "Red Terror" campaign turns on MEISON. EPRP and MEISON neutralised by end of 1978. Ethiopia under Mengistu moves increasingly closer to Soviet Union.

1977-78 TPLF grows stronger with EPLF support, defeating EPRP opponents in Tigre.

June 1977 Somalia invades Ethiopia's Ogaden region.

February 1978 Ethiopia counter-attacks with large-scale Soviet and Cuban support; Somalia withdraws in 3/1978.

June 1978 Large Ethiopian offensive launched in Eritrea; most towns recaptured and EPLF retreats to Nakfa.

1979 Mengistu sets up Committee for Organising the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE); all other political groups abolished.

1981 Civil war in Eritrea between ELF and EPLF.

1982 EPLF, with TPLF allies from Tigre, force ELF into exile in Sudan.

1984 Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE) established along Soviet lines with Mengistu as Secretary-General.

1985-6 Military successes against TPLF.

June 1986 Draft Constitution for eventual return to civilian government published.

February 1987 New Constitution endorsed by referendum.

June 1987 Elections held for new National Shengo (Assembly). First meeting of Shengo abolishes PMAC and renames country the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) under leadership of WPE; Mengistu elected President of PDRE.

1988 Serious military setbacks for Government in Eritrea and Tigre.

1989 Government abandons most of Tigre province to TPLF.

September 1989 TPLF establishes EPRDF as united front with Amhara-based EPDM. Unsuccessful peace negotiations between Government and EPLF.

1989-90 Unpopular 'villigisation' programme leads to fall in agricultural production, exacerbating drought.

November 1989 EPRDF forces close in on Addis Ababa.

February 1990 EPLF captures Masawa. Peace talks between Government and EPLF broken off.

March 1990 Peace talks between Government and TPLF collapse. Socialism effectively abandoned by Mengistu Government; WPE becomes the EDUP and open to non-Marxists. Moves towards market economy begin, but economy close to collapse.

January 1991 EPRDF announces moderate, non-Marxist programme, which wins United States support.

April 1991 Further gains by EPRDF forces near Addis Ababa. EPLF close in on Assab.

21 May 1991 Mengistu flees Ethiopia and goes into exile in Zimbabwe; Vice-President Lt-Gen Tesfaye Gebre Kidan assumes control of Government.

28 May 1991 EPRDF forces enter Addis Ababa, with public support of United States; EPRDF establishes interim Government. At the same time EPLF establishes provisional administration in Eritrea, effectively seceding from Ethiopia.

July 1991 National conference attended by 20 political and ethnically-based groups establishes Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE); TPLF leader and EPRDF Chairman Meles Zenawi becomes President, with Tamirat Layne Prime Minister. 32 political groups represented on Council of Representatives, including the OLF, which also holds four Ministerial positions on Council of Ministers.

August 1991 EPRDF and OLF supporters clash, although OLF remains in TGE.

November 1991 14 new autonomous administrative regions established, broadly reflecting ethnic boundaries.

1991-2 Relations between EPRDF and OLF deteriorate; clashes between rival EPRDF and OLF supporters in Oromo region. US and EPLF broker cease-fire between EPRDF and OLF supporters in 4/1992.

June 1992 OLF and other groups boycott regional elections. EPRDF and allies win over 90% of votes cast. OLF withdraws from TGE and goes into armed opposition. OLF forces capture Asbe Teferi but Government forces retake the town.

October 1992 Talks between TGE and OLF unsuccessful; hostilities continue.

December 1992 By mid-12/1992 Government holding 20,000 prisoners of war in conflict with OLF.

January 1993 Security forces suppress student demonstration in Addis Ababa; one student killed. Government Commission of enquiry, reporting in 1/1994, blames organisers for the disturbances.

April 1993 Referendum in Eritrea approves independence from Ethiopia.

24 May 1993 Eritrea achieves formal independence, with recognition from Ethiopia.

July 1993 Differences emerge within elements of EPRDF over regionalisation and economic reform.

June 1994 EPRDF wins large majority of seats in elections to new Constituent Assembly. Polls boycotted by OLF, AAPO and CAFPDE.

October 1994 Constituent Assembly inaugurated.

December 1994 Constituent Assembly approves new Constitution, establishing federal system of government with nine ethnically-based national states and the federal capital territory. Constituent Assembly replaced by bicameral Federal Parliamentary Assembly (FPA), made up of the Council of People's Representatives (CPR) and the Council of the Federation.

December 1994 Trial of Derg officials begins, including Mengistu. Trials held by SPO, created in 1992 to investigate and try cases of human rights abuses committed under the Mengistu administration.

May 1995 Elections to the CPR and national state assemblies, boycotted by most opposition parties, produce landslide win for EPRDF and allies. Elections deemed to be largely free and fair by international observers.

June 1995 Pro-EPRDF parties secure narrow victory in Afar and Somali national state elections.

July 1995 Ethiopian forces make raids into Somalia to attack bases of al-Ittihad al-Islamia terrorists; further raids made 1996-1999.

21 August 1995 Legislative power transferred to new FPA.

22 August 1995 TGE wound-up as new Constitution becomes effective. Country renamed the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). Dr Negasso Gidada, an ethnic Oromo, elected first President of FDRE by FPA.

23 August 1995 Meles Zenawi, President under TGE, elected first Prime Minister of FDRE by CPR.

September 1995 Government launches drive against corruption.

October 1995 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Tamirat Layne removed from office on suspicion of corruption.

September 1997 SPO trial of 5,198 accused of genocide and other war crimes committed under Mengistu administration commences at Federal High Court in Addis Ababa.

6 May 1998 Border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea leads to armed clashes along the border, centred on the Badme area.

5 June 1998 Eritrea aircraft bomb Mekele in northern Ethiopia, killing 44. Ethiopia launches air attacks on Asmara airport in Eritrea.

15 June 1998 Ethiopia and Eritrea accept a US-brokered agreement to halt air-strikes against each other.

December 1998 AAPO Chairman Professor Asrat Woldeyes released from prison and leaves Ethiopia for USA for medical treatment.

February 1999 Resumption of heavy fighting in border dispute with Eritrea; Ethiopian aircraft and helicopters used in violation of moratorium on air strikes agreed in June 1998.

April 2000 Ethiopia and Eritrea agree to attend peace talks in Algiers.

May 2000 Ethiopia launches all-out offensive against Eritrea to recapture land occupied by Eritrea since 5/1998; Ethiopia recaptures all occupied land by end May 2000.

May 2000 Ruling EPRDF coalition wins national elections but loses ground to opposition parties and independents in some regional elections.

18 July 2000 Ethiopia and Eritrea sign cease-fire agreement; Eritrea agrees to UN border monitoring force within its territory.

October 2000 Ethiopia and Eritrea agree to further talks in Algiers aimed at resolving border dispute and making June 2000 cease-fire permanent.

November 2000 Haile Selassie buried in Addis Ababa's Trinity Cathedral.

12 December 2000 Ethiopia and Eritrea sign peace agreement ending border war, which establishes commissions to mark the border exchange prisoners, return displaced people and hear compensation claims.

24 February 2001 Ethiopia announces it has completed its troop withdrawal from Eritrea in accordance with a United Nations-sponsored agreement to end the border war.

March 2001 Meles Zenawi says he has thwarted an attempt to cause political upheaval by a dissident group in the dominant Tigre People's Liberation Front.

April 2001 Thousands of demonstrators clash with police in Addis Ababa in protest against police brutality and in support of calls for political and academic freedom.

12 May 2001 Intelligence and security chief Kifle Gebre-Medhin - a key ally of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi - assassinated as he entered an armed forces officers' club in Addis Ababa.

21 May 2001 Ethiopia and Eritrea agree on a UN-proposed mediator to try to demarcate the disputed border.

Late May 2001 Approximately twenty heads of government institutions and businessmen are arrested on suspicion of involvement in corruption.

22 June 2001 Dr Negaso Gidada walks out of a meeting of the ruling coalition EPRDF. He later announces that he would continue serving as head of state despite a campaign to discredit him however in September 2001 Dr Negaso announces he had withdrawn from the OPDO completely.

August 2001 Almaz Meko Speaker of the House of Federation and prominent member of the OPDO states that she was applying for asylum in the United State. She felt the Oromo people were not being democratically represented by the OPDO and as a result said she would join the OLF.

March 2002 In Tepi, members of two minority ethnic groups, the Sheko and Majenger, clash with local officials and police over political rights. In the following days, more than one hundred were killed and villages razed on the order of local authorities, leaving some 5,800 homeless. Nearly one thousand civilians were arrested after the disturbance.

13 April 2002 The International Tribunal announces the border decision. Both government's declare victory. Confusion over which country controls Badme remains.

March/April 2002 Police shoot at unarmed students in Oromiya protesting government educational and economic policies.

24 May 2002 In the city of Awassa, soldiers using machine guns mounted on armoured cars shoot into a crowd of farmers protesting a change in the administrative status of the city.

June 2002 Police arrest several hundred students, teachers, and others whom it accuses of being supporters of OLF. The government claims the OLF had instigated the student protests.

August 2002 After international pressure, 90 state employees are arrested by the authorities for their role in the March riots.

Late August 2002 Eritrea repatriates 279 Ethiopian prisoners of war.

November 2002 Ethnic clashes among Sudanese refugees in Fugnido camp in Gambela region leave over 40 dead and scores wounded.

29 November 2002 1,130 POWs and 95 civilian internees of Eritrean origin are released by the Ethiopian authorities and repatriated.

March 2003 The Boundary Commission categorically rules Badme to be in Eritrean territory. Ethiopia voices its opposition to the ruling.

28 July 2003 28 South African tourists are allowed to cross the contested border from Ethiopia to Eritrea.

August 2003 The United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) is formed, a coalition of 15 opposition parties.

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ANNEX B

GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS, MAY/AUGUST 2000

PARTY	Abr	SEATS
OROMO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	OPDO	178
AMHARA NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT	ANDM	134
TIGRAY PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT	TPLF	38
WALAYTA, GAMO, GOGA, DAWRO, AND KONTA PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	WGGPDO	30
ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC FRONT	EPRDF	19
SOMALI PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY	SPDF	19
SIDAMA PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	SPDO	18
GURAGE NATIONALITIES DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT	GNDM	15
KAFA SHAKA PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	KSPDO	10
AFAR NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY	ANDP	8
GEDEYO PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC FRONT	GPRDF	7
SOUTH OMO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT	SOPDM	7
BENISHANGUL GUMUZ PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UNITY FRONT	BGPDUF	6
KEMBATA, ALABAA AND TEMBARO	KAT	6
BENCH MADJI PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	BMPDO	5
HADIJA NATION DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	HNDO	5
GAMBELLA PEOPLE'S DEMOCARTIC FRONT	GPDF	3
SOUTH ETHIOPIA PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC FRONT	SEPDF	3
COUNCIL OF ALTERNATIVE FORCES FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN ETHIOPIA	CAFPDE	2
DERASHE PEOPLE'S DEMOCARTIC ORGANISATION	DPDO	2
ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY	EDP	2
HADIJA PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	HPDO	2
SOUTH ETHIOPAN PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UNION	SEPDU	2
ALL-AMHARA PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION	AAPO	1
ARGOBA PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT	APDM	1
BURGI PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UNION	BPDU	1
GAMBELLA PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS	GPDC	1
KONSO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	KPDO	1
KORE NATIONALITY DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	KNDO	1
OROMO LIBERATION UNITY FRONT	OLUF	1
OROMO NATIONAL CONGRESS	ONC	1
OYDA NATIONALITY DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	ONDO	1

SIDAMA HADICHO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION	SHPDO	1
SILTE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UNITY PARTY	SPDUP	1
YEM PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UNITY PARTY	YPDUP	1
INDEPENDANTS		
TOTAL	--	546

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MAIN POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

All-Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP) – New name for the All-Amhara People's Organisation (AAPO). See AAPO.

Afar People's Democratic Organisation (APDO) - formerly the Afar Liberation Front, supports the EPRDF. Runs Afar military force set up in 1996 to combat attacks by ARDUF. Leader Ismail Ali Sirro

Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF) - armed opposition group seeking self-determination for the Afar people.

Al-Ittihad al-Islamia (Islamic Union Party) - Somalia-based armed opposition group seeking self-determination for the Somali-populated Ogaden district

All-Amhara People's Organisation (AAPO) - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination for the Amhara people. In August 2002 the AAPO changed its name to the All-Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP). President Ato Hailu Shawol

All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (MEISON) - see **COEDF**

Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) - formed as the EPDM by the TPLF to campaign in Amhara-populated areas, re-named the ANDM in January 1994. Formed the EPRDF with the TPLF in September 1989. Secretary-General Tefera Walwa

Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (CAFPDE) - formed 1993, broad based coalition of groups opposed to the EPRDF. Granted official registration July 1996. EPRDF pressure and influence over the media, as well as CAFPDE's own divisions, have limited the group's impact. Chairman Dr Beyene Petros (also Chairman of SEPDC)

Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF) - formed 1991 in USA by the EPRP with a faction of the EDU and MEISON, opposed to the EPRDF. Chairman Mersha Yoseph

Committee for Organising the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE) - set up by Mengistu in 1979, precursor of the WPE

Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) - fought in alliance with TPLF/EPRDF against Mengistu Government, formed provisional administration of Eritrea May 1991 and Government of independent Eritrea May 1993

Ethiopian Democratic Organisation - see **ENDP**

Ethiopian Democratic Organisation Coalition - see **ENDP**

Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) - formed in early 2000, Secretary General Lidetu Ayalew, legally registered party took part in May 2000 elections. Joined **EDUP** in July 2003 to create **UEDP**

Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) - see **COEDF**

Ethiopian Democratic Unity Party (EDUP) - replaced the WPE in March 1990 and abandoned the WPE's reliance on Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the sole legal party until May 1991. Secretary-General Lt-Gen Tesfaye Gebre Kidan. Joined **EDP** in July 2003 to create **UEDP**

Ethiopian Medhin Democratic Party (MEDHIN) - group that does not recognise EPRDF-led Government as a legitimate authority and therefore cannot participate in the normal political process. Leader Colonel Goshu Wolde

Ethiopian National Democratic Party (ENDP) - formed 1994 by the merger of five pro-Government organisations with members in the Council of Representatives: the Ethiopian Democratic Organisation, the Ethiopian Democratic Organisation Coalition, the Gurage People's Democratic Front, the Kembata People's Congress and the Wolaita People's Democratic Front. Chairman Fekadu Gedamu

Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) - see **ANDM**

Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) - formed September 1989 by the TPLF as an alliance of anti-Mengistu/WPE groups. Ousted Mengistu Government May 1991 in alliance with EPLF. Dominant party in the TGE from July 1991 onwards. Present governing party of the FDRE. Leader Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The EPRDF comprises the TPLF, the ANDM and the OPDO

Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) - see **COEDF**

Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL) - formed 1994 by the merger of 11 Ethiopian Somali organisations. Merged with other Somali groups June 1998 to form the Somali Democratic Party (SDP) - see **SPDP**

Gurage People's Democratic Front - see **ENDP**

Hadiya National People's Democratic Organisation (HNDO)- founded in 1991, a regionally-based party with wider alliances. Won 5 seats in the federal House of People's Representatives in 2000. Leader Beyene Petros

Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia - see **UOLF**

Islamic Unity Party - see **al-Ittihad al-Islamia**

Kembata People's Congress - see **ENDP**

MEDHIN - see Ethiopian Medhin Democratic Party

MEISON - see All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement

Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) - Somali organisation, elements of which are in armed opposition to the Government and, from July 1996, in alliance with the OLF; other elements merged with the ESDL to form the SPDP

Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) - became active in the 1980s, participated in the TGE until June 1992, since then it has been in armed opposition to the TGE and the EPRDF-led Government of the FDRE. In alliance with armed wing of the ONLF from July 1996. They advocate self-determination for the Oromo People and the use of Oromo language and culture. Chairman Katabe Mayu(acting), Vice Chair Abdulfattah A. Moussa Biyyo *See section on the OLF.*

Oromo National Congress (ONC) – Founded in 1996. Exists to oppose the OPDO through legitimate electoral channels. President Merera Gudina

Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO) - formed 1990 by the TPLF to campaign in Oromo areas, opposed to the OLF. Part of the EPRDF alliance. Leader Abedula Gameda

Oromo People's Liberation Front - see **UOLF**

Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF) - operates in the Bale district of the Somali National State, received military assistance from Somalia in the mid-1980s. Secretary-General Masurad Shu'abi Ibrahim

Somali People's Democratic Party (SPDP) - formed June 1998 by merger of the ESDL and elements of the ONLF. Chairman Mohamoud Dirir Gheddi Secretary General Sultan Ibrahim

Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition (SEPDC) – opposition alliance; Chair Dr Beyene Petros

Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Union (SEPDU) - alliance formed 1992 by 10 ethnically based political groups in southern Ethiopia, represented in the Council of Representatives, although 5 of the 10 groups were expelled from the Council in April 1993.

Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) - formed 1975 to fight for independence of Tigray province. Dominant group within the EPRDF, formed in 1989. Leader Prime Minister Meles Zenawi

United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) – formed August 2003 as a coalition of 15 opposition parties to challenge the current government in the 2005 elections. Chairman for 6 months - Dr Beyene Petros

United Ethiopian Democratic Party (UEDP) – formed in July 2003 and is made up of the EDP and the EDUP. Head is Dr Admasu Gebeyehu

United Oromo Liberation Forces~~ent~~**(UOLF)** - formed in 2000~~1995~~ by merger of Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia, Oromo Liberation Council (OLC), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Oromo People's Liberation Front (OPLF), Oromo's People's Liberation Organisation (UPLO) and United Oromo People's Liberation Front (UDPLF).
Chairman Waqo Cutu

Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) - invaded Ogaden district with Somalian Government backing in 1977, defeated in 1978. Maintains guerrilla force in Ogaden.
Secretary-General Issa Shaykh Abdi Nasir Adan

Wolaita People's Democratic Front - see **ENDP**

Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE) - formed 1984 by Mengistu, renamed the EDUP in March 1990, the sole legal party until May 1991

[1][2][7a][7d][14ak][14al][47][44]

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ANNEX D

PROMINENT PEOPLE*

Abdulfattah A. Moussa Biyyo - Vice Chair of the OLF

Dr **Admasu** Gebeyehu – Head of the UEDP

Ismail **Ali** Sirro - Leader of the APDO

Lt-Gen **Aman** Andom (General **Aman**) - Head of State and Chairman of the Derg September 1974, assassinated November 1974

Ato Hailu Shawol– President of AAPO, now AEUP

Dr **Beyene** Petros - Chairman of CAFPDE and the SEPDCU, President of the Hadiya National Democratic Organisation (HNDO). Dr Beyene is a Member of the Ethiopian Parliament and a Professor at Addis Ababa University. Head of Coalition UEDF for 6months from August 2003

Fekadu Gedamu - Chairman of the ENDP

Girma Wolde Giorgis – Current Ethiopian President; Born 1917 in Addis Ababa; ethnic Oromo

Katabe Mayu(acting) – Chairman of the OLF

Meles Zenawi - TPLF leader and Chairman of the EPRDF, President of Ethiopia July 1991-August 1995, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia August 1995 to the present

Emperor **Menelik** - Modernising and unifying ruler in late nineteenth century, died 1911. Founded Addis Ababa in the late 1880s, defeated the Italians in 1896

Lt-Col **Mengistu** Haile Mariam (Col **Mengistu**) - Doctrinaire Marxist who assumed power February 1977, Secretary-General of the WPE from 1984, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia from 1987 until he fled in May 1991; lives in exile in Zimbabwe

Merera Gudina – President of ONC

Mersha Yoseph - Chairman of COEDF

Mohamoud Dirir Gheddi- Chair of the SPDP

Dr **Negasso** Gidada - President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia from 1995 until October 2001, ethnic Oromo

Emperor **Haile Selassie** - Regent 1916, King 1928, Emperor from 1930 until deposed in 1974, died in military custody 1975

Tamirat Layne - Vice-Chairman of the EPRDF, Prime Minister of Ethiopia July 1991, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia until October 1996. Removed from office October 1996; tried on corruption charges and found guilty in February 2000 and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment.

Dr **Taye** Woldesemayat - Secretary-General of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, arrested August 1996 and held in detention until his release in May 2002

Tefera Walwa - Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the FDRE since October 1995, Secretary-General of the EPRDF-allied ANDM

Brig-Gen **Teferi** Benti - Replaced General Aman as Chairman of the Derg and Head of State November 1974, executed by Mengistu February 1977

Lt-Gen **Tesfaye** Gebre Kidan - Vice-President under Mengistu who briefly assumed control of the PDRE after Mengistu fled Ethiopia in May 1991; Secretary-General of the EDUP

[1][2][4m][14ak][14al][7b][7d][14ao][44]

* It is more usual for people in Ethiopia and Eritrea to be addressed by the first name. This is reflected in this list and at times in the text of this report.

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ANNEX E

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