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Press Release

Students held illegally in Hararge

In the first two months of 1994 there were riots at Alamaya University of Agriculture near Harar, Hararge province. Following these, a court order was made for the arrest of several Oromo students of whom at least three have been imprisoned without trial for over three months. These three are named Gammadaa Dhugumaa Jaalataa, Mi'eessoo Gurruu Gadaa and Dassalany Qanaatee Garbaa.

Villagers shot dead by TPLF soldiers in Hararge

Two Hararge farmers were shot dead by TPLF soldiers in December 1993 for giving directions to men seeking to join the Oromo Liberation Front forces in the province. One, a man named Ciibsa, was killed in front of his family and fellow villagers. The other, a friend of Ciibsa, was shot a few days earlier.

Hurso Concentration Camp

Large numbers of suspected OLF sympathisers were imprisoned during the attempt to crush the OLF following the June 1992 sham elections. The ex-military training camp at Hurso in Hararge was used to house prisoners. Our informant referred to this as Hurso Concentration Camp. Most of the prisoners were released in February and March 1993. The number imprisoned in Hurso went down to about 1000 at this time. As of at least April 1994 there were approximately 11,000 prisoners at Hurso, mainly Oromo farmers and merchants suspected of supporting the OLF.

Our informant says "the overwhelming majority of the population of Hararge at least regard the Transitional Government forces as an occupying army and wish them to leave. If they say so they are imprisoned. The TGE is not tolerating any opposition, nor any support for the OLF.

Ma'ikalawi Prison

Ibsa Gutama head of the OLF's European Bureau, was a prisoner from 1980 - 1989 and again for three weeks in December 1993 at the Central Investigation Department at Ma'ikalawi in Addis Ababa. He reports that whereas under the Dergue prisoners were restricted to three compounds (upper, lower, women's) they now occupy office, storage and administration space too. He did not know the number of prisoners but "it is just as crowded and in more areas". The prison is dirtier than it was five years ago because the prisoners are no longer organised into cleaning parties. Torture was rumoured but he knew of no substantiated cases.