

January 1995

**PRESS RELEASE**

Sources of Information :-

1. Eight statements written by civilians and handed to Ben Thatcher in Hararge and Wallega provinces, November 1994. One of these statements is appended to this press release.
2. Urji, weekly Amharic newspaper, Addis Ababa, 26.10.94.
3. Urji, Oromifaa/English version, Addis Ababa, 19.11.94 & 3.12.94.
4. Clandestine Human Rights Group A, Addis Ababa, Special Report, 17.8.94.
5. Bakkalcha Oromoo, OLF publication, October 1994.
6. Direct communication from Oromo present in Oromia during October 1994.
7. Direct communication from Oromo present in Oromia during September/October 1994.
8. Addis Tribune newspaper, Addis Ababa, 28.10.94.

"Killings of innocent Oromos with allegations of" supporting "the OLF is stepping up at the moment in Oromia" (1.).

**E.Hararge**

Incident at Gaara-Gaafaa.

26 persons were taken by EPRDF soldiers and interrogated concerning the site of a suspected nearby OLF camp.

Mohamed Nagaye was beaten "day to day" from 12.10. to 7.11.94. He was then hung at Sattawwaa, where his body was found 3 days later.

Mohamed Adam Alii Mulluu had a stone put in his mouth and was bayoneted to death.

Abdulkarim Maammadii and Mahmud Bariyyaa died after having their legs amputated.

The whereabouts of the other 22 detainees is unknown. (1.).

**Other Killings**

Mustafa Mumade and Mohamed Kaato, Shashate Ramis village, Bedeno area, were killed (MK was hung), 17.11.94. (1.).

These killings, and the following two, occurred after "gunmen dressed in EPRDF uniforms" took these people from their homes (3.).

Ahmed Raabisa and Wanidu, Baraket Ramis village, Bedeno area, were killed 17.11.94. (1.). At least 3 other persons were taken at the same time in Bedeno and are feared dead (3.).

3 unnamed farmers, of Gabiba, Maata Hora village, near Dawe, were killed 15.11.94. (1.).

Shabi Umame and Zako, both drivers of Haro Maya town, were shot 10.11.94 and 15.11.94 respectively (1.).

4 unnamed men from Adela, Haro Maya area, were killed October/November 1994 (1.).

2 unnamed farmers, Huriyo village, near Watar, were killed 10.11.94. (1.).

Ali Muktar and Salihi Ahmed, Ananno Mitee P.A., Eferssa Gooro district, were taken about 1km from prison and shot at Gooro Wadajaa, 7.00am, 16.11.94. (1.).

One man was shot dead and another injured at Qoobo, 10.11.94. (1.).

Murwan Adam, Bakar Ahmed Ali, Muzayem Ali and Mustafa Ahmed, from Alemaya and Awadai areas, were taken from prison, their hands tied behind their backs, and shot dead at Walambo, Hamaresa at 4.00pm on 8.11.94. (1.).

4 unnamed men from Hamaresa were killed and thrown into a storm drain, 8.11.94. One was eaten by hyenas and the others were buried by villagers (1.).

Abraham Abdulahi and Mohamed Sheik Habbib (area omitted) were shot "in public in front of their houses" 10.00pm, 24.10.94. (1.).

16 unnamed persons, Koocar district, were shot while working, by EPRDF soldiers returning from fighting, 24.10.94. (1.).

Sufran Mussa, from Awadayai, was shot and "thrown into the open air", 10.00am on 17.10.94. (1.).

2 unnamed children, Awadai area, were killed while scaring birds from sorghum fields, October 1994, (1.).

Arrusa Adam Dawid Yusuf and Arrusa Mohamed Mussa Yusuf, from Ananno Mitee Peasants Association, Jarso district, were accused of supporting the OLF, had their hands tied behind their backs and were shot at 2.00am on 10.10.94. (1.).

Mohamed Abraham Abdulahi and Mohamed Imarre of Gurraa Mitee area, Eferssa Gooro district, accused of supporting the OLF, were taken from prison and shot "in the open air" at 3.00pm on 3.9.94. They were buried by the community (1.).

Jamal Ali, Foatansa/Koocar area, was shot at Dawe, 29.6.94. (1.).

Adam Usman Salihe, Gurraa Mitee P.A., had his hands tied behind his back and was shot "in a miserable condition", 4.00pm, 29.6.94. (1.).

Mohamed Abdalla was shot dead by EPRDF official, Taarikuu Mengistu, who was breaking into his house in Baddeessaa town, 9.00am, 12.9.94. The demonstration of over 3,000 people which followed is noted in the January OSG Newsletter (5.).

### **Other Detentions and Disappearances**

15 civilians, mainly traders, at Kersa town, were detained following "fighting between two groups", 18.11.94.(1.).

4 prisoners, including two women, at Kersa police station were also "jailed with little food to die" (1.).

60 persons, mainly traders, at Bedeno town were detained, without charge 17.11.94. (1.).

20 men were detained in Chalaniqo town for two days from 15.11.94. Two of these disappeared (1.).

10 persons at Watar town were detained 10.11.94. (1.).

Sheik Muktar Mohamed, Bedeno town, disappeared after being led in public with his hands tied behind his back and being pulled by a rope through a hole which had been punched in his nose, 8.11.94.(1.).

Ahmed Umare, Imam of Bilal mosque, Laga Hare, Kebele 20, Dirre Dawa, was detained without charge 6.11.94.(1.).

Umar Waqo and Abdi, both bridegrooms in Dirre Dawa city, were taken and disappeared 4.11.94.(1.).

2 men from Guje village, Baruda, were taken and disappeared 20.10.94.(1.).

## **Other Provinces**

### **Killings**

Magarsa Bale, a teacher at Ambo, W.Showa, was shot dead by EPRDF soldiers near his home 11.11.94. No reason was given. He was released from Didessa prison camp in March 1993. (1.).

A Gimbi (Wallega) man was shot dead and his family were not allowed to move the body for several days. He has not been named because of fear felt by the townspeople, October 1994, (1.).

### **Detentions and Disappearances**

Only two of Ben Thatcher's informants gave information about detentions and disappearances known to them personally in Western Oromia. The following is therefore a small but representative fraction.

5 men, Aschelew, Arero, Abeya, Hundessa Kura and Solomon Wagessa from Dembi Dollo, Wallega, were illegally detained for four weeks and released 9.11.94. Arero and Abeya had been "seriously tortured and cannot walk". (1.).

Nebiyu Eliyas, Sagata and Tesfa from Haro Sabo, Atem Tegeri district, Wallega remain in prison from October 1994 (1.).

Abera Bedasa and Hunde Ledi, from Nedjo district were imprisoned early November 1994 (1.).

Getahun Mamo, Tesfaye Biyena and Soresa, from Gimbi, Wallega, were imprisoned 5.11.94 and are now missing (1.).

First names only were given of another 24 prisoners in Wallega and 43 in Showa (1.).

Prisoners in Southern (Kibba) Oromia include Asharee Bulee Dirree, Waaqoo Jaatanii, Duuba Guffu, Abdulkarim Bulee Dirree, Diimaa Faayyoo, Diid Areeroo, Jaasoo Waariyoo, Waaqoo Bal'aa, Jaarsoo Halakee, Hussein Abdi, Godaanaa Guyyoo Jaarsoo, Urgaa, Hussein Waariyoo, Goddanaa Waariyoo Galgalaa, Muluugufuu, Liiban Qaalicha Qoncorro, Kormaa Geedoo Xiqqaa, Numaa Dhaddachaa, Nyuukee Alii, Ali Goonjoo, Qan'aa Dabbassa, Kumaa Tussee and Huqqaa Garsee. There are "many more unnamed for fear of reprisals" (1.).

Zakir Hussein and 4 others were detained in Jimma in October 1994 (2.).

Of 295 persons imprisoned in August and September in Western, Eastern and Southern Oromia, 147 were taken in Meggaa area, Borana province. 60 are named (5.). All were arrested without charge.

The following have been detained at Matu detention centre, Illubabor, for two years without charge - Sheik Sado Yafa, Nasiro Abba Garo, Haji Abba Matcha, Sado Hussein, Badiru Umar, Awi Haji Abba Matcha, Siman Gutama, Ibrahim Abanesh, Gidi Abba Bilo, Awal Abba Dafar, Shamsu Asham, Nabiso Abba Wari, Siraji Abba Daba, Kamil Abba Didu, Manu Abba Diri and Karamu Yanfa - all from Matu district. Also at Matu, for one and a half years without charge are the following from Satama subdistrict - Sherif Abba Bulgu, Sheik Dawud Abba Gigsu, Garo Said, Tajudin Said, Abdu-Nur Kadir, Taju Kadir and Rashid Abdu. (1.).

Balayi Hunduma; teacher, Chimsa Galatu; businessman, and Kumsa Ayana; farmer, are being held without charge at Ambo, W. Showa (1.).

### **Discrimination, Confiscation and Fear**

Only a minority of informants felt that, amidst more gross human rights violations, common instances of discrimination etc were worthy of report.

### **E. Hararge**

Bedeno - 17.11.94, 5 vehicles destroyed, 1 confiscated; 3 Oromo fled in fear (1.).

Daawe - 15.11.94, 3 trucks confiscated, 2 men fled (1.).

Awadai - 17.10.94, 3 vehicles confiscated (1.).

Haro Maya - November, 1994, 30 private vehicles confiscated (1.).

Hamaresa - November, 1994, 2 trucks destroyed (1.).

Chalaniqo - Oromo merchants stocking Oromo music recordings "terrorized" (1.).

Qoobo - All property of exiled Seifu Mume (including furnished house, large shop and 40 goats) confiscated (1.).

- Two Oromo policemen, newly appointed by the TPLF administration, were "terrorized by the TPLF and fled" (1.).

Baruda - "One TPLF light vehicle at Baruda frequently crushes persons and goats on road. No one ask the driver for doing these crimes" (1.).

### **Wallega**

Civil servants, especially high ranking Oromo, are being pressurised to join the OPDO (TPLF puppet Oromo organisation) (6.).

At Gimbi, employees of the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Sport, and of Public Health have been warned individually and as a group to join the OPDO. Some, including high ranking officials, have left their posts because of this pressure (7.).

A successful Oromo businessman tried to set up a tanning factory in Borana but was denied permission (1.).

An Oromo businessman, based in Addis Ababa, convened a meeting to set up a share holding company to supply beans, seeds and grain. TGE forces surrounded the building and ordered participants to disperse (1.).

Dr Abiye Kiflee, President of Addis Ababa university and Dr Makonnen Dilgassa, Vice-President, have both been dismissed (1.).

Dr Efraim Mamo, of Alemaya Agricultural University, has been dismissed (1.).

Ambo Incident (see November Press Release)

56 named detainees following the September demonstration at the funeral of Deraaraa Kefana have been transferred to Waliso, S.W.Showa, not Homacho detention centre as thought at the time of the last press release (1.).

### **Other Ethnic Groups**

According to Amnesty International numerous members of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (against whom no violent anti-government activity has been proved) have been arrested in Region 5. At least 5 named high ranking officials are reported to have been killed in custody.

Amnesty International also report that up to 300 members, including acting Vice-Chairman Lemma Sidamo, of the Sidamo Liberation Movement, a legitimate political party, have been arrested without charge or trial.

The All Amhara People's Organisation held a press conference on 24.10.94 to complain about the arrest of 1,500 people outside Addis Ababa High Court during the trial of the AAPO leader on 20.9.94. Some were kept in poor conditions for up to 7 days. (8.).

Merid Abebe, Chairman of the Omo People's Democratic Union, was arrested without charge in Addis Ababa and taken to the Omo regional capital, Jinka, on 18.10.94. 17 other OPDU members were arrested without charge four weeks previously. (8.).

Amnesty International is reported to be very concerned about the detention of a few hundred officials and members of Southern Peoples opposition parties in recent months (8.).

### **Press Freedom in Ethiopia**

Private newspapers and magazines are being forced to close down because of imprisonment, fines and harrassment of staff (3.).

Reporters are usually forbidden outside Addis Ababa and, if allowed out, their movements are restricted (3.).

Oromo magazines such as Odaa, Biiftu and Madda Walaabuu have ceased to exist.

In the final issue of Madda Walaabuu (April,1994) the puppet Oromia president is reported saying at a press conference that all Oromo journals were mouth pieces of the OLF.

Distribution of Urji is restricted to a few towns and regions. For example, in Dembi Dollo carrying or selling Urji leads to imprisonment (3.,7.). Urji's representative in Mettu town region was banned from distributing Urji two months after his shop was ransacked (3.). Yahya Ahmed was imprisoned in Jimma on the unfounded suspicion of being an Urji reporter (3.).

Zakir Hussein, a representative of Kuraz Printing Press in Jimma was arrested without charge on 21.10.94. His house was searched without warrant. Although no arms were

found, this was stated to be the reason for his arrest. On the day before, he was threatened by security men because he had been talking to people invited to his office. He had previously asked to be moved to another office because of harassment by EPRDF officials.(2.).

Keleme Bogale and Tewodros Kebede, journalists of "Zog", an independent Amharic weekly, were arrested and taken to Maikelawi Police Central Investigation Centre, 10.10.94. They had not been charged by 28.10.94. (8.).

Kumsa Burayu and Tolera Tessema, editor and deputy editor of Madda Walaabuu, an independent Oromo magazine, were detained at Maikelawi, 4.10.94, for citing an OLF military communique (8.).

Melaku Tesgaye, journalist of Muday magazine was sentenced to one year in prison, August 1994, for failure to pay a fine (8.).

Tesfaye Tadesse, chairman of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, was detained without charge at Addis Ababa Central Prison in October 1994. He was detained without charge for several weeks in 1993. (8.).

Other journalists detained or released on bail after several months include Meleskachew Amha, Berhane Mewa, Wolde-Giorghis Wolde-Michael, Goshu Mogas and Tefera Asmare (8.).

#### **Disagreement at Hurso Detention Centre**

Prior to August 1994 a group of public prosecutors, chaired by Tadesse Bayissa, were sent to Hurso to decide the fate of the 4,000 Oromo prisoners there. They met with Hassan Shifa, Deputy Minister of Interior, Zeru Melles, Head of the Public Prosecutor's Office and Aransh Gebre Michael, Head of the Special Branch for Investigation. These three officials tried to persuade Tadesse Bayissa to sentence the prisoners to death after seeing video recordings of prisoners at rehabilitation education sessions. Bayissa refused because such conduct contravenes several articles in the 1961 Criminal Procedure Code, under which the TGE is meant to be operating. He insisted that the police do more investigations. After two weeks argument Bayissa and the other prosecutors were expelled from Hurso and forced to make their way back to Addis Ababa by public transport.

When he arrived back in Addis, Bayissa was suspended without pay and ordered to repay expenses for the trip to Hurso.

He has not been seen at his office since then and it is feared that he and the two prosecutors who accompanied him are in danger of losing their lives. (4.).

#### **Conscription, Peace and Stability**

From 7.10.94 three (6.) or four (1.) young men from every Peasant's Association are being conscripted to the EPRDF army for fighting opposition groups. This is happening especially in Arsi, Illubabor, Jimma, Showa and Wallega provinces (1.).

The relative "peace and stability" in Ethiopia, reported by official media in Ethiopia and in the West, is also not consistent with UN Information Circular No 113 (14.11.94) restricting travel to Dirre Dawa and Harar, the suspension of CARE transport of food to the Garamuleta area in E.Hararge (CARE/RRC/no3875, 11.11.94) nor the advice on travel given in the US Consular Information Sheet (10.10.94).

### **Sibilo Dam**

This project is not being funded by the Canadian Government, as stated in the November press release. A Canadian firm (Associated Engineering International Ltd) won the design contract which has been funded by the African Development Bank. The 300 million dollar project itself awaits funding.

### **Booruu Guyyoo**



The Oromo sage Abba Gadaa (elected leader) of the Borana Oromo from 1985 - 1993 died suddenly and mysteriously on the night of April 15th, 1994.

His death was reported in the final issue of Odaa magazine (May, 1994). He was widely respected for his guidance and legislative skills. Local Oromo believe he was killed by EPRDF (1.).

The ancient democratic social and political Gada system survived the Dergue era in Borana. The Abba Gadaa is now a Tigrean with an Oromo name (Odaa, May 1994).

### **Appeal by Oromo Relief Association**

The Oromo Relief Association (ORA) has appealed to authorities in Ethiopia regarding the forced closure of their project in Negelle Borana. After 5 months of harassment by zonal and district government authorities ORA has been forced to abandon the distribution of 5,000 quintals of wheat from Canada. In August 1994 a staff member was threatened and ordered to make "reports" on ORA staff and their activities. On 11th November 1994 ORA staff member Yousuf Alo was imprisoned without warrant or charge. Ahmad Badhaso district regional co-ordinator of ORA has been taken to the police station on several occasions and threatened. He has been forced to flee to Addis Ababa. Tolasa Gannati regional co-ordinator for ORA was imprisoned on December 24, 1994. He sustained injuries one day prior to his seizure and is imprisoned without charge and without receiving medical attention.

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The attached statement was given by its author to Ben Thatcher, of OSG, in Dirre Dawa, November 1994.

I would like to express the inhuman bad deeds of EPRDF's on OROMO peoples in Eastern Hararge, Garamusta areas, specifically on a place called Gola Oddaa as follow:-

Around an area called Gow-Gow district, in a settlement of peoples who are leading their lives on catthe breeding, who are taking care of their cattels, a fashisum endless major was taken on to these peoples by EPRDF's Militaries.

- The EPRDF's militaries confestigated 26 Oromo persons in an area called Gaura-Gadfaa, and said to them you are ABO's or OLF's supporters, therefore, you have to tell us their Camps, But because of these persons could not tell them as to where OLF Camps, they impsumented and on unplementing in human deeds on these OROMO peoples.

\* out of those 26 persons:-

1. Mohamad Nagayee was asked to show ABO's or OLF's camp and was bitten from day to day from 12/10/94 up to 7/11/94 in an bearable condition. Because of they couldn't get any Informations Secrecy from him they tied rope around his neck & hanged him at a specific place called Sattawaa & was found dead 3 days later & was buried by the community.

MULLUU  
2. Wihamad Adam Ali Musuu a dweler of the same area as above, in Gaura-Gadfaa, after making him suffer about, asking him to Show them the Camp of OLF; sticking



Stone in to his mouth injecting him with a knife fixed on a gun & biting him miserably brought his life to an end in the same area called 'Sattawara'.

3. Similarly two persons, i.e.

1. Abdulkasim Maammaji &

2. Mahmud Banixaa were chopped off their legs miserably & died due to that suffering. Even though they were left between life & death.

4. Similarly there were about 22 persons also is not known, of course it is unsuspectable that they are also killed by EPRDF.

Rounding up, the very bad & Suddy deeds of the above mentioned crimes on our people is increasing from day to day is intolerable.

Over frequently, the very bad effect of these men looking wild animals EPRDF, will rather strain our effort. Because really tells us that they are our enemies, because the hyena who bite the gray goat will also bite the black goat or the other way round.

In such a condition, the only alternate we both men's & women's dwellings will be Jangoh bush. That will be the only solution towards our freedom.

In spite of this, being deprived of our natural resources & yet exploited our economies & more than that threatened by the burner of gun the whole night & as a matter of fact, we having homes & children, have become homeless and aimless guests... Though we use to know that they were our enemy all the above mentioned

merciless deeds on our people magnifies more & more of their ultimate enemies toward our peoples. They are teaching us what enemy means, even though we know it before.

Though we can't come to an end concerning the sufferings of our people & yet you are not chanced to see these sufferings, we have let you know & hear so that you sincerely forward our peoples sufferings & appeals to the humanitarian humanitas world we remain.

Sincerely yours

N.B:-

A Seck by the name Muktar Mahamed, full name Seck Muktar Mahammad, in Gacisa Musataa, BADANO town was punched the middle cartilage between his nose holes & put a rope into the punched hole, and tied both his arms backward and pulled like an oxen in the vicinity of the community on Nov 8/94.

His whereabouts is still not known.  
What do you & WORLD humanise say about it??