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Human Rights Abuses in Ethiopia

The Oromia Support Group is a non-political organisation which attempts to raise awareness of human rights abuses in Ethiopia. OSG lobbies governments to withdraw support from the Ethiopian government until it abides by its constitution which guarantees human rights and self-determination for all peoples of Ethiopia.

OSG has now reported 3,566 extra-judicial killings and 901 disappearances of civilians suspected of supporting groups opposing the government. Most of these have been Oromo people. Scores of thousands of civilians have been imprisoned. Torture and rape of prisoners is commonplace, especially in secret detention centres, whose existence is denied by the government.

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CRACKDOWN ON OROMO STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND INSTITUTIONS

Oromo students in secondary schools, colleges and universities across Oromia Region and in other areas, have protested against the dismissal of at least 380 Oromo students from Addis Ababa University (AAU). The frustration caused by discrimination against them and the move of the regional capital from Addis Ababa to Adama (Narareth) have also been important factors, as they were in the initial protests in Addis. From January to May, student demonstrations resulted in the deaths of at least 11 students and the arrest, according to the Ethiopian Teachers Association, of over 7,000 students and teachers. The secondary and higher education of Oromo in Ethiopia has been severely disrupted, with consequences for generations to come.

Dismissals from AAU

Since the 10 February report by the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) which detailed the detention and torture of 494 Oromo students at Addis Ababa University (AAU) in January, more names of the students who were subsequently dismissed have been reported and more arrests have occurred.

The names of 349 of the 494 students who were detained at Kolfe Police Training Camp on 21 January, in addition to those of the eight who were initially detained, are listed in the 74th Special Report by EHRCO. They were forced to run bare-footed and crawl on their knees on coarse gravel before spending the night on bare concrete floors. According to a press release from Abraham Mosisa, president of the Oromo Studies Association (OSA), on 13 March, some of the female students were raped. Fifteen were named by EHRCO as having been kept by the CID at Maikelawi. Together with the original eight, these are presumably the 23 who were suspended in addition to the 315 released the next day. These were let out after being photographed and videoed. They were given one piece of bread in 24 hours. The 23 whose detention is acknowledged have been subject to repeated 14-day remands, requested by the police.

The Ethiopian government announced it had released 315 students on 22 January and that it had suspended them and the 23 detainees from the university. Hundreds of students were forbidden from returning to their dormitories to obtain their belongings. They were forced to beg and sleep on the streets. Their ID cards had been confiscated and the media had portrayed them as OLF sympathisers, so they were afraid to return to their home areas, even if they had the means to do so. In addition to the 349 named by EHRCO, the following have also been suspended from the university, according to information sent to the Oromo Relief Association (ORA) office in London (released 7 February) and to a report from the students themselves on 14 February:

Ahmad Umar	3 rd yr Amharic	Arsi
Aberra Desalegne		
Alemayehu Fekadu	4 th yr English	E. Showa
Amin Abdulkarim	2 nd yr Law	
Birhanu Makonta	4 th yr Biology	E. Wallega
Daniel Daba	5 th yr Pharmacy	
Dawit Oda	3 rd yr Law	Borana
Gadisa Merga	4 th yr SISA	E. Wallega
Gamachis Haile	4 th yr Pharmacy	E. Wallega
Hassan Bulbuli	2 nd yr History	
Hassen Bariso	3 rd yr History	Arsi
Lelise Tadasa	3 rd yr Business	W. Wallega
Mekonnen Lenjiso	3 rd yr English	Arsi
Mekonnen Ifa		
Mesalach Tadasa	4 th yr Pol. Sci.	W. Wallega
Milkessa Dandana	3 rd yr SISA	W. Showa
Nesredin Tola	2 nd yr Maths	
Sabata Fufa	2 nd yr Geography	
Talila Bulbula	2 nd yr Pre-Eng.	W. Showa
Taye Anda'a	3 rd yr Law	
Takilu Bakala	2 nd yr Physics	
Talila Bulbula	2 nd yr Techno-Farm	
Tashoma Kabata		
Temesgen Wakjira		
Tesfaye Jamama	2 nd yr Technology	W. Showa
Tesfaye Lata	2 nd yr Technology	W. Showa
Teshale Gelana	2 nd yr Economics	
Tolesa Aberra	2 nd yr Pre-Eng.	W. Wallega
Wako Kabata	2 nd yr Psychology	
Worku Benti	4 th yr English	W. Wallega
Zerihun Ararsa		

Background

On 4 January, Oromo AAU students attempted to join 3000 other supporters of the Macha Tulama Association, in demonstrating peacefully at Meskel Square against the removal of the capital of Oromia Region from Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) to Adama (Nazareth). Students were prevented from leaving the campus by riot police, who beat them with clubs, causing many broken limbs, according to eye-witnesses. Macha Tulama officials were beaten and about 100 temporarily detained. They claimed over 150 were injured.

Around 5 January, 60 demonstrating students in Waliso, S. Showa, were arrested, according to local informants, and taken to Waliso police station and prison. There were similar disturbances in Adama, according to Amnesty International.

Dagim Wenchif reported 6 January that 15 students in Ziway were arrested and the school closed. The same newspaper reported on 20 January that a student from Jimma University, Zerihun Digafe, had been arrested and held incommunicado for supporting the AAU students' protest.

In their message of 14 February, the AAU students complained of threats and attacks at the university. Their repeated requests for permission to hold an Oromo cultural party at the university were dismissed by the Cultural Centre, University Administration, University Police and government political cadres. They were angered when the government Oromo party, the OPDO, was allowed to stage a politically sponsored Oromo cultural show on 18 January. Their protests at the show were peaceful but were taken over by *agents provocateurs* who threw stones and damaged property. That day, eight students were seized from their dormitories by security men and taken to Maikelawi. The students protested peacefully about these detentions, outside the University President's office on 21 January. Federal Police arrived and took about 500 students to Kolfe Police Training Camp.

Protest spreads

Mebrek reported at the end of January that the campus of **Alemaya** University was surrounded by special forces to prevent student unrest. Police were reportedly on guard at universities and colleges in **Mekele**, **Adama** and **Ambo**. *Tomar* reported Oromo university students at **Bahar Dar** to have gone on hunger strike. Two were arrested. Students protested in **Awassa**, **Dilla** and **Jimma**.

On 9 February, a **student** at **Tikur Hinchine** High School, 150 km west of Addis Ababa, (W. Showa) was **killed** during a demonstration, according to the Ethiopian News Agency (Reuters, 12 March).

Students in Addis Ababa (14 February) also reported five dismissed from **Dilla** University and imprisoned on 9 February:

Kadama Abdissa	4 th yr English
Haile Isayas	3 rd yr Physics
Haile Mekonnen	4 th yr (2 nd yr according to other source) English
Abay Gameda (Tesfaye, according to a second source)	4 th yr History
Fekadu Mosisa	2 nd yr English

The following day, all Oromo students (about 300) boycotted the university and have remained out, at least until the end of April.

Oromo students at **Mekele** University in **Tigray Region**, wrote on 15 February to say they had been forcibly prevented from staging a demonstration and were being forced to quit their education because of harassment and discrimination.

Security forces were reported to have beaten and arrested 29 secondary school students in **Ambo** and other students in **Guduru**. 'Many' secondary school

students in **Caliya** were said by one local informant to have been beaten and ‘thrown to prison’ on 27 February.

On 3 March, according to local informants, **Dodola** city was surrounded by security forces and 60 students taken to Dodola prison, including:

Jamal Aman	11 th grade
Mohammed Lote	10
Mohammed Jarso	11
Mootuma Hailu	9
Dibo Qute	11
Mohammed Wado	10
Madina Hebo	10
Zaytuna Hussein	10
Rabiya Girma	12
Tayiba Shafo	12
Furo Kire	10
Makiya Kaniso	10
Kadija Qubsa	12
Gishu Hussein	12

One of the informants concerning the detentions in Dodola also reported that parents were being detained for refusing to reveal where their sons and daughters had fled to, after being expelled from AAU.

On 4 March, peaceful demonstrations were staged by students in **Ambo, Tikur Hinchini, Kachisi** and **Gudar**, in W. Showa. Riot police entered the compounds, according to local sources, beating the students severely. Around 500 were detained. Local informants claim **four students were killed** that day.

The President of the Oromo Studies Association, based in the USA, and sources within Ethiopia reported that on Sunday 7 March security forces rounded up over 700 Oromo students at **Jimma** University. The students were protesting about the dismissal of students from AAU. The process was peaceful until police and security forces clubbed demonstrators and fired upon them from vehicles with mounted machine-guns, severely wounding many, including some female students. High School students in **Chiro, Hararge**, demonstrated on the same day. On 12 March (15 March according to one report), the library and records office of Dajazamach Geresu Dhuki High School in **Waliso**, S.W. Showa, were destroyed in an explosion. One of OSG’s informants wrote on 17 March that government forces were quick to use the explosion as an excuse to arrest more Oromo and accuse them of supporting the OLF. Local informants say the explosion was due to a grenade thrown by a government security man.

Also on 12 March, student demonstrators were beaten and detained at **Garba Guracha** (N. Showa), **Nekemte** (Wallega), **Hirna** (W. Hararge), **Waliso** (SW. Showa) and **Alemaya** (E. Hararge).

Student **Mohammed Yahiyen** was detained along with his family on 12 March at the Addis Ketema Police Station. His mother reported to *Lissane Hizb* newspaper

(25 March) that the other family members were released the same day. District 25 Police Station later told her that he **was found dead** and that she could retrieve his body from Menelik II Hospital in the capital.

In **Ambo** on 13 March, the secondary school principal and police tried to force students to return, but they and their families refused, demanding that all students who were detained without charge be released. The police then started beating students and residents. Student Gudata Lammi is reported by local informants to have lost his teeth and another student, Roba Bulo, was reported on 21 April to be still in hospital after severe beating.

Also on 13 March, students of **Kofale** Secondary School, **Arsi**, protested against the detentions. Over 50 were arrested, including three who were taken to an ‘unknown place’:

Habib Gero, Chairman of the Oromo Language Council

Hussein Ammu, Chairman of the Student Union

Sirajak Jimma, member of Oromo Language Council.

The three are alleged to have received US dollars from abroad.

Sometime around 13 March (10.7.96 Ethiopian calendar), the following students from **Burayu**, 20 km west of Addis Ababa, were taken to Holata Military Camp detention centre:

Gamachis Caali

Abate Malaku

Mezgebu Banti

Zakarias Malaku

Qabane Qano

Asfahun Malaku

Temesgen Tadassa

Lalise Ina

Hailu Dadi

Diribachu Amante

Desalegne Roro

Caala Galaye

Dereje Zewde

Diku Bifta

Masrash Hayo

On 14/21 March (reports differ, due to Ethiopian calendar), in **Dembi Dollo, Wallega**, more than 100 demonstrating students from Qellem Secondary School were fired upon with live ammunition, beaten and detained. The TPLF soldiers who surrounded the school **killed one female student**, according to one report and **shot more than one dead** according to another. Many were taken to hospital with wounds due to shooting or beating.

Students at **Nekemte, Wallega, and Waliso** (S. Showa), demonstrated again on 15 March. About 50 were arrested in Nekemte and some beaten and wounded.

Security forces broke into schools in Nekemte in order to beat students. Also on 15 March, students in **Chiro** (Asebe Teferi) and **Hirna** (W. Hararge) were detained, according to *Tomar* (16 March). The newspaper also reported that the body of a **student** from a Chiro preparatory school was **found dead** on the street. He had been severely beaten. The deputy director of the school was severely beaten and the leader of the student council, Tewfik Abdurahman, was arrested. On 16 March, students of Medhane Alam High School in **Harar** (E. Hararge) and **Bishoftu** High School (Showa), demonstrated. In **Alemaya** University (E. Hararge), Oromo and Tigrean students clashed on the campus and several were wounded. Local sources claim the Tigrean students were armed with guns and hand grenades. Defence forces (reportedly over 500) took control of the Alemaya campus. ‘Students are not allowed to go out except to the dining room or toilet’ according to *VOA Radio*. A student who was interviewed claimed that Tigrean students were deliberately provoking Oromo students so that security forces could retaliate by shooting. Searches had discovered weapons, but only in the dormitories of Tigrean students, he said.

Students of **Tullu Bollo** High School (Hibret Firre School), 45 km south-west of Addis Ababa in S. Showa, demonstrated on 17 March; students of **Burayu** and **Ambo** High School (again) on 18 March and students of **Holeta** College, 45 km west of Addis Ababa, and **Chalanko** (E. Hararge) and **Bako** (E. Wallega) high schools demonstrated and boycotted classes. Fifteen were detained in Holeta and the college closed. *VOA Radio* reported on 17 March that a student in Tullu Bollo was shot and seriously wounded. One student interviewed by *VOA Radio* said he had seen two students fatally wounded by police in Ambo on 18 March.

Eighth grade student, **Ahmed Kedir**, in **Chiro** (Asebe Teferi, W. Hararge) **died** from injuries in police custody on 22 March, according to *Ethop* newspaper (24 March). He was one of many injured in **Chiro** that day. Student protests were also reported at **Didessa** (SW. Oromia), **Galamso** (W. Hararge), **Wachu** and **Asebet**. Some teachers and the deputy director of the school are reported to have been detained.

The *Sun* newspaper reported on 22 March that clashes between Tigrean and Oromo students at **Adama** Technical College had been ongoing for four weeks and had resulted in heavy casualties. The campus was controlled and no-one allowed in or out, the paper stated.

Seife Nebelbal paper reported on 26 March that student Abraham Adamu was critically ill in Menelik II Hospital after fighting with another student.

Students of **Hinchini** Secondary School (**W. Showa**) clashed with security forces when their demonstration was dispersed. A number of arrests were made. Student unrest was also reported in nearby **Gindeberet** Secondary School. (*Asqual* newspaper, 30 March)

A local informant wrote on 30 March that two students, **Lema Anbese** and **Chala Tiko**, were **killed** at **Bishoftu**.

Students demonstrated and boycotted the Teachers Training College in **Adama** (E. Showa) and **Harato, Fincha'a, Shambu, Gimbi, Nekemte, Nejo, Dembi Dollo, Ayira** and several other schools across Wallega zone of W. Oromia Region on 29 March and following days. Students in **Dodola** and **Robe (Bale)** also demonstrated. Many students were hurt by government forces and many were detained at these demonstrations. According to *Dagim Wanchif* newspaper, 30 March, **Alemaya** University expelled three and suspended two students around this time.

Ethop (31 March) reported that the director of the Qellem Secondary School in **Dembi Dollo**, was arrested for giving a statement to *VOA Radio*. Defense forces dispersed students who went to the police station in Dembi Dollo to protest against the arrest of the director. Over 100 students and parents were reportedly wounded. In **South Oromia Region**, students from **Moyale, Hidi Lola, Mega, Yabello** and **Guji** staged peaceful demonstrations from 28 to 31 March. At least 50 were detained and many are reported to have been beaten and severely wounded. Some of those detained are named toward the end of this document.

Arrests continued in **Addis Ababa** but few names were available to OSG. One informant wrote on 31 March that Macha Tulama Association (MTA) Board Members, former secretary Leggese Doti and, retired civil servant, Dechassa Banti, had been detained in the capital. *Seife Nebelbal* newspaper reported (19 March) that armed men took Dechassa Banti from his home on 14 March and searched the premises next day without warrant. On 31 March, MTA President, Diribe Demessie, also named Board Member Shana'e Korma as being detained, as well as the other two members (*Addis Zena* 31 March). Their location had apparently been established but they were not being allowed visitors.

On 1 April, one teacher, Birhanu Bayana, and the following students were detained from **Adama (Nazareth)** Teacher Training College:

Godana Biyo
Bekama Dufera
Shalama Hacalu
Simale Ahmad
Bayisa Bakana
Abdi Yonas
W/Mariam Kudama
Asfaw Hangasu
Alamayo Dame
Alamayo Bayisa
Wandimu Daba
Urgessa Rafera
Simbo
Abdurahman Ca'o
Isheetu Obsi

Chala Diriba, is also reported by another informant (21 May).

Local informants reported also that over 20 students were taken from their residences at **Adama** Technical College to Kebele 18 Police Station at 10.00 a.m. on 1 April and detained there.

According to estimates by the Ethiopian Teachers Association and by the OLF, **about 7,000 students were detained from January up to 24 March** in Oromia Region.

Teachers and others also targeted

The protests continued across Oromia Region as March ended, with demonstrations in **Metu, Bedele, Gore, Kofale, Adaba, Robe** and **Asassa**. The market as well as the school in Bedele was closed.

The government then started detaining teachers, claiming that they were instigating the protests. On April 2 (or 7), **seven teachers**, of which two are pregnant, were detained from **Burayu High School**, including:

Mrs Alemitu Biru, 43, Elementary School teacher, single parent with five children and in ill health

Mrs Martha Magarssa, 32, High School teacher, 7 months pregnant with three small children and in ill health.

Boydo Fayissa, 51, Elementary School teacher.

The three were kept in Holata prison under harsh conditions. The informant wrote '[t]here are also many children, students and other Oromo nationals imprisoned and I have seen them with my own eyes in this prison'.

Another bomb blast occurred at Atse Libina Dingil School, **Bishoftu** (Debre Zeit), E. Showa, on 6 April, according to *Addis Zena* (7 April). The school was closed. A female teacher and four (one report claimed 12) students were wounded and taken to Bishoftu Hospital.

The next day, 7 April, the following were among 11 Oromo teachers and others to be detained without charge in **Bishoftu**:

Dajane Dandana, Oromo language teacher, Model Secondary School

Abdo Wariyo, Oromo language teacher, Central Bole Jnr High School

Alamayo Tusa, Director, Central Bole Jnr High School

Kabede Hurissa, teacher at Libina Dingil Secondary and Jnr High Schools

Cala Begi, employee of Lume School District (Mojo)

Hailu Taressa, Oromo language teacher, Central Jnr High (Kattaa)

Buttule, teacher and wife of Alamayo Qubee – 'taken in place of her husband, who could not be found'. In a separate report received on 25

April, Alamayo Qubee was reported as also detained.

On 8 April, students and residents of **Kofale, Arsi**, took to the streets again. Riot police from Shashamane, 50 km away, were sent in to disperse the protest.

Also on 8 April, the female dormitory of **Ambo** Agricultural College, W. Showa, was burnt down, by Tigrean students, according to one report, (Tigrean militias, according to others) and there followed 'indiscriminate mass arrest of civilians',

including Ashebir Oncho, a teacher of the Oromo language who has been detained on many occasions ‘for no other reason than teaching Afaan Oromo [Oromo language] and asserting himself Oromo’. Amnesty International, in Urgent Action 148/04 (AFR 25/005/2004 – 19 April) reported that Ashebir Oncho was detained on 9 April, together with ‘around 60 people’. They were reportedly held incommunicado in a police detention centre in Ambo palace and Amnesty International feared they may be tortured. Teachers who are among the 60 detainees, according to Amnesty International, include:

Teachers at **Gudar High School**

Abebe Chimdi,
Dinsa Serbessa
Mosissa Futasa
Tsfaye Teressa

Teachers from **Ambo Secondary School**

Merga Legesse
Woldeyesus Mengesha
Ashebir Oncho (see above)

The Urgent Action from Amnesty International reported that demonstrations by school and college students had occurred in many towns, including **Jimma, Waliso, Bishoftu, Ziway, Dembi Dollo** and **Harar** city, leading to the closure of most schools in Oromia Region. ‘Police used live ammunition in some incidents to disperse demonstrators, some of whom had reportedly thrown stones at police, and several students were killed or wounded’ they reported. Local informants claimed on 3 May that in Ambo **one female student had died after being beaten** by a TPLF soldier. The government claims that the demonstrations were orchestrated by the OLF.

‘Police commandos’ entered **Ginchi** on 10 April and conducted mass arrests according to *Ethio News* (15 April). Thirteen teachers, mostly from the secondary school, were among those arrested. Their homes were searched without warrant. On 13 April, it was reported by *Tomar* that 14 students, mostly under 13 years, were arrested from Fugoleleha Junior Secondary School, **Aledidu** District, **Illubabor**. Four were released shortly after.

Local informants reported on 21 April that at least 20 were detained from **Ginci**, a few kilometres toward the capital from Ambo and Gudar, on 10 April, including:

Lama	English teacher, Ginci Secondary School
Banti Kana’a	Oromo language teacher
Bekele	physics teacher
Baca Magarsa	Jnr High School teacher
Abara Bitima	driver
Ilaala Milki	businessman and students’ landlord
Tarekegne Garbaba	Director, Awash Gura Central Jnr High School
Zarihun Garba	Agricultural Office employee, Dandi district
Jamal	disabled Dandi Health Dept employee

Bayisa Tolosa	driver
Aman Eba	Health Worker
Tafari Dirirsa	visitor from other area
Dereje Dirirsa	visitor from other area.

On 22 April, 270 students and teachers at **Moyale** Secondary School (Borana) were arrested (*Tomar*, 27 April).

Dagim Wanchif (11 May) reported that 200, including many dismissed AAU students were being held in Karchale (Central) Prison in the capital. They give names and also name the following teachers being held in Maikelawi CID:

- Alemayehu Qube – teacher from Bishoftu (see above, 7 April)
- Kebede Hurisa – teacher from Libina Dingil (see above, 7 April)
- Bilisuma Alemayehu

The following students were reported being held in Maikelawi:

- Alemayehu Gerba
- Bilisuma Debere
- Gerbaba Gadisa Itissa
- Ephrem Takele Itissa

One local informant (21 May) also reported the following being held in Maikelawi:

- Bilisuma Dalasa
- Ebissa Melaku
- Abebe Abeshu
- Gamachis Wadajo
- Gesese Abetu

The place of detention of Temesgen Dibaba is not known, the informant states. Grenade explosions at **AAU** and **Dilla** on 29 April resulted in more arrests. One local informant reported 15 detained and another two sought following the AAU explosion.

Seife Nebelbal reported on 14 May the arrest of several students and employees of **Dilla** College on 12 May. Also arrested were people in Dilla who had sheltered Oromo students following the grenade attack on 29 April.

‘Senior officials’ of Oromia Region told *Tobia* (April 29) that the prison population was increasing, with more detainees than any other region. There were over 3000 detained in **Waliso** and over 1800 in **Dembi Dollo** prisons, the newspaper reported.

Macha Tulama Association, Hundee and other arrests

Radio Free Oromia reported on 15 April that **800** civilian employees of the development NGO, **Hundee**, had been **detained in E. Showa**. Hundee has been allowed to continue despite being the only independently run Oromo development NGO. This is because it has remained strictly non-political and is known and respected among western NGOs in the capital. Employees of **Hundee** - Ashebir

Kebede, Ms Lelisse Timkata and Fikreselassie Bulcha, **Finfinnee** Oromo Self Help organisation – Dirar Abdissa, and **Oromo TV** employees – Dabassa Waqjira and Shiferaw Insemmu, are also named by Amnesty International to have been detained incommunicado in March.

A correspondent reported on 18 May that the offices of the **Macha Tulama Association** in **Addis Ababa** were taken over by government security men and that the telephone lines to the executive committee members had been disabled. Another informant reported the detention of the Chairman, Diribi Demissie, and Vice-chairman, Gamachu Fayera, of the Macha Tulama Association on 18 May, the closure of the office and the confiscation of its contents. Office furniture was destroyed and all funds, ear-marked for development projects, were taken.



Amnesty International released an Urgent Action appeal (AFR 25/006/2004) on 21 May, naming the above two and MTA Treasurer, Sentayehu Workneh (who was detained on 20 May). The three prisoners of conscience are among 16 Oromo arrested on 18 and 20 May, believed to include university students. All are accused of having links with the OLF, which the government blames for a hand-grenade attack at AAU on 29 April, which killed

Diribi Demissie. MTA Chairman.

one student. Local informants claim that the MTA was targeted because it was helping some destitute students who were banned from the university and were frightened of the security apparatus in their home towns.

Sources in Addis Ababa reported on 14 June that 80 students being held in Maikelawi CID were dangerously ill from ‘epidemic disease’ and had been denied treatment since 11 June. One week later, the students were said to be receiving some attention, although not adequate for their needs.

The Addis Ababa office of the *Odaa* association was raided on 22 June.

Documents and a substantial amount of money were seized. The chairman, Nega Kefani, was detained briefly and his family was held in his house in Adama while it too was searched. (*Radio Free Oromia*, 25 June.)

Students returned from Kenya to face detention

Reuters reported from Nairobi on 26 April that over 400 Oromo students had fled to Kenya. UNHCR spokesman Emmanuel Nyabera said the students complained of being persecuted because they were Oromo and that on ‘the basis of our initial

investigations it would appear that these are genuine cases'. He said the students were mostly male and aged from 14 to 20, but included 12 girls and about 20 boys between 7 and 14. Reuters reported that the students fled from Moyale after protesting the billeting of Ethiopian soldiers in their dormitories at Moyale Secondary School. However, the students were from many schools and colleges throughout Borana zone and other parts of Oromia Region, including the capital, and final totals were over 600. They arrived in the last two weeks of April and camped in the police station compound on the Kenyan side of the border and at Oda refugee camp.

Ethiopian Information Minister, Bereket Simon, told IRIN (Addis Ababa, 30 April) that the students were safe to return. Meanwhile, arrests of students were continuing in Ethiopia and did so for at least the next two weeks (see above). The students were taken back to Ethiopia on 14 May. UNHCR told IRIN on 25 May that most of the 673 students had returned to their homes. It is unclear whether or not the students voluntarily entered the trucks sent to collect them. The private weekly, *Dagim Wenchif* (May 25), reported that 25 of the students who had returned from Kenya had been arrested. Eight were taken to Maikelawi CID, including Tesfaye Tola, who is accused of being involved in the grenade explosion at AAU.

Fleeing Addis Ababa University students have written to OSG from Kenya, Djibouti and Uganda, but the total number remaining outside of Ethiopia is unknown. All have written with tales of persecution, torture and subsequent destitution in their host countries.

Other Detentions

Detainees reported on 21 April and 30 March, and several dates in between, from local informants include,

from **Yabello**, Borana (S. Oromia Region):

Madhicha Arero	Sintayehu Xunnee
Galmo Waqo	Mohammed Goduu
Guyyoo Duubaa	Durbee Jiru
Taarii Garbichaa	Lammeessaa
Mallicha Ukkaa	Roobaa Kabaa
Turale Waaqoo	Sooraa Tukkee
Utkennee Odaa	Xachee Huqqaa
Dambalaa Odaa	Mohaameed Kuulaa
Gumii Boruu	Husseein Alii
Jirmaa Godaanaa	Gammachuu Galmaa
Guyyoo Galgaloo	

from **Moyale**, Borana:

Nuuraa Gaayyoolee	Jatanii Duubaa
Kadir Gaangee	Danyachewu Kaasaa

Qurii Jiloo	Ayyaanaa Tegenee
Jataniiii Liiban	Godaanaa Daalaachaa
Waaqumaa Abarraa	
from Borana (town not specified):	
Boke Bilu	
Tujuba Gutama	
from Jimma University (Illubabor, S. Oromia Region):	
Birhane Gonfa	Badasa Fufa
Addisalem Negasaa	Adise Nagassa
Hailu Lalissaa	Girma Milki
Abebe W/Mariyam	Fayera Kabada
Alemayehu Tufa	Diresa Tilahun
Gurmesa Bare	Danga
Kalbessa Kana	Alemayehu Admasu
Yigezu Wolde	
Abiti Ibsa/Hirpo	2 nd yr Maths, detained before 21 January
Imana Qajela	2 nd yr English, pre - 21 January
Indalu Ijigu	2 nd yr Physics, pre - 21 January
Shamsudin Yassin	1 st yr Maths, pre - 21 January
Gabissa Insarmu	3 rd yr Biology, pre - 21 January
Belay Negussie	3 rd yr English, pre - 21 January
Alemu Iticha	2 nd yr Oromo language, pre - 21 January
Mootumma Cala	Student Cafeteria worker

from **Bishoftu High School**:

Dadi Galan	Abiyi Tadele
Sisay Bulbula	Seid Wariyo
Tadale Abo	Fikre Badada
Kafani Kumbi	Mangistu Babsa
Kafani Macha	Sisay Gabre
Hawi Bulbula	Hayyi Dinagde
Abdi Gari	Gutama Chala
Shishigu Eshete	Saboka Debele
Mangistu Alemu	Ashanafi Tolosa
Dachu Dabasa	Talila
Abdi Nagash	Enadale
Akililu Asfaw	Gazahagn
Berhanu Ketema	Malka Urgecha
Balda Abraham	Ayele Mamo (30 March report only)
Demisu Debebe	

from **Ambo High School:**

Workineh Saboka
Gadisa Reta
Kabada Gonfa
Tamiru Chalchisa
Tafari Ararsa
Asafa Marga
Olani Kumala
Jagama Badane
Zalake Shibiru
Duguma Chafe
Reta Bekele(AAU
student on his way
home)
Bekele Alemu
Kumala Hirpasa
Hailu Taka

Tamiru Taka
Badane Taye
Tsegaye Tadessa
Takala Dalassa
Hailu Dalassa
(critically ill)
Ambese Biru
Yitagazu Fufa
Kasahun Gurmessa
Mammush
Tamiru halchissa
(inAmbo hospital)
Jagama Getachu (AAU
student on his way
home)

The school was described by one correspondent on 4 March as being
'totally under control of the military'

from **Gudar High School** (W.Showa):

Nagassa Galana
Asafa Furgasa
Motuma Chalchissa
Takka

(Girma Abara, from Ambo, was taken with these as he was on his way
home from Jimma University)

from **Gedo High School:**

Zarihun Hailu
Tamasgen Damise
Solomon Tasew

from **Garba Guracha High School**, N. Showa:

Waltagi Lemma
Birhanu Badasa
Tadasa Garadaw
Taferi
Katama Seyum

Tasfaye Ketema
Amaha Getachew
Fikadu Molla
Bayisa Sanbata

from **Harato High School** (30 March report only):

Adugna Lamessa
Abdi Merga
Abdeta Sago
Moti Temesgen
Tadesse Zelalem
Takele Dima

Gemechu Bekele
Ms Takelu Gebaba
Ms Diribe Derqaba
Bule Gamachu
Mitiku Bekele
Mimi Zeferi

Meskele Mulugeta
Adugna Jabessa

Haso Teskere
Jamal Hassen

On 3 May informants wrote to OSG that the following students in **Bale** zone had been detained in April:

Jamal Aman Nure
Muhamed Lole Kadu
Tayiba Shafo Sinbiru
Makiya Kiniso Waabee

Mohammed Jarso
Furo Kiri Haso
Zeituna Hussein Kute

They are reported to have been accused of being OLF informants. They and others in custody are reported to be being mistreated.

In the same report, the following students from **Waliso High School** were named as detained:

Abiyu Wakamu
Aberra Shalama
Ayele Hailu
Alemayehu Deressa
Ayele Badada*
Ashenafi Fayissa
Aster Morada*
Dejene Kabata*
Elias Mulugeta
Degefa Bekilu
Gonfa Dandana*
Kumsa Ayana*
Mekonnen Lata*
Mili Urgessa
Magarsa Belama

Mengistu Ifa (Fufa) *
Mesfin Faji*
Namarra Bogale
Tamirat Mardasa
Teshome Ebbisa
Teshaye Rafa
Tolera Damasa (Hirpha) *
Tamiru Kumara
Teshale Borjasa
Teferi Guta
Mulatu Gebre Michael*
Wandimu Bekele*
Worku Bekele
Waqqaari Irensa
Yonas Lagasa

Shemlis Haile Michael and those marked * were reported on 30 March to have been sentenced to one year's imprisonment 'without debate or defence'.

Illubabor

Hussein Abdurahman
Mulugeta Buli
Mesfin Mengesha

Duguma Abdissa
Petros Mosissa

Information sent from Addis Ababa on 27 May included the following detentions of students.

Adaa Barga elementary school:

Eshetu Qurechaa
Faye Abule
Lema Alemu
Demeke Yelma

Teshaye Disassa
Dr Tole
Eshetu Kibeto
Lefaa Soni

Abooma Gallu
Diriba Gallu
Kifle Haile
Tanecha Tekle-Wolde
Alemu Idoo
Gadissa Qiriba
Gizaw Kiflu

Waraqaa Mamo
Girma Legesse
Dereje Gemechu
Fikre Gudissa
Gessee Balbala
Abebech Tulu
Abebe Qari

Addis Alem secondary school:

Abero Girma
Eebaa Gurmessa
Alemu Baqana
Terecha Kabada
Teshfaye Adugna
Bekele Barissa
Teshome Mideksa

Mekonen Birhanu
Kebede Bayechu
Addisu Morada
M..... Haile-Mariam
T..... Caalaa
Gadissa Taseba
Ismael Tadasa

Dobi school:Gada Fayissa

LaMacha Fayissa
Teshfaye Fayissa
Adugna Zewde

Begna Saboqa
Zewde Qinqime

Iffure school:

Mulissa Kabada
Teshfaye Adugna
Ketema Gemechu
Roba Kutama

Shabi Dida
Dejene Urgessa
Eshetu Gadissa

Sagno Gabaya school:

Reta Teshome
Mulugeta Jibre

Gezu Lama
Caalaa Hurgessa

Jacini elementary and high schools:

Amana Ababa
Caalaa Desta
Teshfaye Yaada

Adama / Nazareth Technical College:

Temesgen Goshu
Dame Gabana
Teshfaye Galata
Jemal Kedir
Mekonen Tola

Mulugeta Debela
Belachew Abebe
Teshfaye Dhufera
Amsalu Morga

Other detained teachers

(from local informants 30 March to 21 April)

Chiro Nibirat Kadir
Bekele Haile

Dembi Dollo Getahun Assefa
Dereje Mekonnen
Lencho Hordofa

Showa Zewdu Kana'a

Detainees in Maikelawi CID, Addis Ababa

The original eight students detained on 18 January and 17 others taken on 21 January remained in detention in Maikelawi CID in **Addis Ababa**, as of 3 May, according to local informants. They are named:

Habtamu Jimma Bayana	Desalegne Lagassa Ararso
Taye Danda'a Eljoo	Mokonnen Leenjiso Ida'o
Amin Abdulkarim Tasi	Dawit Oddo Dube
Tamirat Gadissa Fita*	Belina Mengasha Kana'a*
Imiru Gamachu Kadida*	Mesalech Tadassa Tafara
Temesgen Kabada Goboto*	Gadissa Merga Labate
Milkessa Dandana Kuma	Gamachis Haile Bobo
Terfessa Barsissa Naga'a*	Berhanu Mokonta Nono
Million Diriba Lamessa*	Alamayo Fakada Negussa
Getachu Gadissa Nagassa*	Talila Bulbula Tullu
Lalise Tadassa Gutuu	Hassa Bariso Eljoo
Tolassa Dabala Totoba	Merga Namu Atete*
Worku Banti Gudina	

Those marked * were the original eight detained on 18 January.

ADDIS ABABA AND CENTRAL OROMIA REGION

Killings

Lemu Dibaba died in detention in Maikelawi CID, Addis Ababa, after being tortured, on 28 July 1993. He had been detained on 20 June because he had supported the OLF during the transitional period, when the organisation was legal, from 1991-1992. His wife, **Jale Debaba**, was detained in Maikelawi on 2 July 1993, because she denied knowledge of the whereabouts of their son, Abdissa, when security forces came to their home. (Abdissa was an OLF supporter, like his father.) She became ill due to mistreatment in custody and **died in the Black Lion hospital**, where she used to work as a nurse, on 8 August 1993. Their son wrote to OSG with this information on 6 January 2004. He was detained on 5 July and described being tortured during his five months of detention.

Death sentences

On 18 February 1992, the Federal High Court condemned to death two Oromo, Dereje Deme and Fisaha Birasa. They also sentenced Berhanu Hailu to life imprisonment. Dereje Deme and Fisaha Birasa were convicted of the mass murder of 43 civilians in Mugi in 1992.

Dereje Deme was a wealthy businessman who owned a hotel in Addis Ababa. When the TPLF consolidated their power in 1992, they confiscated property worth millions of Birr, belonging to Dereje, from the port of Asab, claiming it to be the property of the OLF (who had just left the transitional government). He was arrested in 1993, on returning home to Addis from Jimma Bar. His property, including his money in the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, was taken. He was held incommunicado and his disappearance was reported by Amnesty International. Relatives sought his location in vain and it was feared that he had been killed. His mother and brother died before it was revealed that he was still alive, but sentenced to death. Although the OLF categorically deny that he has ever been armed or worked politically for them, he is accused of killing EPRDF supporters in Mugi, W. Oromia Region, in 1992.

Fisaha Birasa was a civil servant in the Coffee and Tea ministry when taken from his work in Mugi, Anfilo District, in 1992. He was initially held with about 10,000 other Oromo detainees at Didhessa camp, Wallega, until transferred to Ziway, S. Showa. In 1997 he was cleared by a mobile court which went to Ziway. His continued detention was ordered by the then Southern Commander of the armed forces, Major General Ayelom Arara. Arara accused the judges of OLF sympathies. One of the judges, Qasim Hussen, was killed. The other two went into exile. Fisaha again disappeared from Ziway, until discovered by ICRC in Maikelawi CID in Addis Ababa. He was returned to Ziway to face trial for murder. Although he worked full time for the Ministry of Coffee and Tea

Plantations in 1992, he was convicted of fighting for the OLF during this period and sentenced to death by Mr. Le'ul Gebre-mariam, the chairperson of the fifth bench of the Federal High Court who is a member of the executive committee of TPLF.

Berhanu Hailu is 74 years old and was detained for eight years under the previous regime. He was sentenced to 23 years imprisonment although there was no evidence against him.

Disappearances

The disappearance of **Mohammed Ali**, a 37 yr old psychology graduate from Addis Ababa University (AAU), was reported by his brother on 7 April. Mohammed was born in Shambu, Wallega. He qualified at AAU in 1990 and was working in Kemise, Wollo, before being dismissed because he was suspected of supporting the OLF. He therefore started studying for an MA at AAU. He was warned repeatedly and had to report regularly to security, specifically to a Tigrean, named Nebiyu, assigned to 'Oromia zone, Kemise, Wollo'. In May 2003, his room was searched and his research papers confiscated. According to his brother, he disappeared in June 2003.

The disappearance of two young men from Ambo, W. Showa, was reported via a single informant in the UK on 3 June. **Getachew Dugassa Iticha** and **Zelalem Tefera** disappeared at the end of April. Getachew's father had been harassed since the OLF were forced out of the transitional government in 1992 and had died as a result. Their house in Ambo had been 'continuously under Ethiopian government security forces'.

Detention, torture etc

Abdella Hassan Shonta, aged 47, was born in Asasa and was detained in the prison there by the Derg regime from 1982-3. He was detained by the present regime in Asella civil prison from 1.8.94 to 27.3.96, when he was transferred to Bilate military camp, from where he escaped. Six months later he was again taken and held at Malka Wakena camp, near the hydro-electric power station, for one year and five months. He was put before a public assembly in Asasa in September 1998 but returned to detention when the crowd claimed he was innocent. He was released in February 1999 on condition that he signed on at Asasa every day. He fled to Kenya in May 1999, from where he has been unable to gain resettlement and he now lives in fear in Nairobi. Twice, in September 1999 and October 2000, he has been arrested by Kenyan police and released only after the intervention of UNHCR.

AAG wrote from Kenya on 3 March. He used to distribute Oromo newspapers, literature and music in Arsi and provided financial backing and help with distribution to well-known Oromo nationalist singers such as the late Ebbisa Addunya, the exiled Umer Suleiman and many others.

AAG was detained for a short period before moving to Shashemane. In October 2001, following a bomb explosion in Shashemane, security forces detained AAG's uncle and a friend of his.

The uncle's friend who was abducted from AAG's uncle's house led government security forces to his house, where they found and confiscated Oromo nationalist material. He was then detained and tortured before fleeing to Kenya.

AAG's family were persecuted by a local TPLF official, who blamed the death of two sons on AAG's uncle and the OLF. AAG wrote that his uncle had disappeared and that his uncle's son had been killed.

An OSG informant, based in Norway, wrote to OSG in May 2003, enclosing photographs of injuries of torture victims which he took in Nairobi in 2000. Among the photographs were two of whiplash marks on the back of **Reta Wayessa**. He was from Horo area and was detained in the Third Police Station, Addis Ababa. There, he was whipped with electric cable. This occurred around the time that his brother, Tana Wayessa, and his friend, Ebbisa Addunya, the famous Oromo singer, were shot dead in Ebbisa's house in the capital, on 30 August 1996.

F. Kormiti wrote from Kenya on 15 February of his periods of detention from 10 April to 30 August 1997, in Asella Xiyyo, Arsi, from 28 April to 30 June 2000, in Shimbero unofficial detention centre, near Asella (following the fires), from 9 May to 12 July 2002, in Asela prison, and again at Shimbero from 16 October to 15 November 2003. He was held incommunicado, beaten (at least once to unconsciousness) and denied medical treatment. He believes he was suspected of passing information on detention centres to ICRC, when he was employed with Ethiopia Red Cross in Asella. Having been threatened on the street, he describes great anxiety living in Nairobi, but greater fear prevents his going to Kakuma camp.

LEB, aged 29, wrote from exile in Africa on 14 June. Although he quit supporting the OLF after they were forced from the transitional government in mid-1992, he was taken from his home in Kofale, Arsi, on 1 August 1992 by 'two government agents and four armed soldiers' and held in Shashemane military camp in S. Showa for four months. After 'torture and beating', he was released with the usual warnings. On 26 January 2000, one day after fighting between OLF and government forces around Abaro mountain, he was again taken from his home, being accused this time of supplying the OLF with medicines and weapons. He was held 'spending a terrible time with torture' until 15 June at Ziway prison, S. Showa. He became ill after two cell-mates died and was released, after ten days in

Ziway hospital. After the large demonstrations by elementary and secondary school students in Kofale on 10 March, he was among those who were rounded up and accused of helping organise the demonstration. He escaped from detention during more disturbances that night and fled across the border to Kenya after learning that his family had been detained.

DSA, from Lemu Bilbilo, Arsi, wrote from another country in Africa on 14 June. Although he and his brother quit the OLF in 1992 they were taken to Melka Wakena military camp, near the hydro-electric station, where they were 'tortured, starved and beaten' from 14 July to 24 December 1993. After release with warnings, he resumed the running of his hotel and hardware shop. He and his employees were frequently questioned about Oromo customers and their activities. He was accused of supplying money, weapons and medicines to the OLF when fetching goods from the capital to his business in Bekoji. On 2 September 1999, five soldiers took him from his shop and held him until 22 October, when he describes being 'beaten, hanged upside down on a tree and tortured'. On 12 March, one day after he had gone to collect building materials from Addis Ababa, armed soldiers and security men surrounded his hotel. During their search, **they shot two customers dead. DSA's brother**, who came to the hotel in response to the gunshots, **was himself shot dead** by a non-uniformed security man. DSA returned from Addis Ababa to find that his shop and home had also been thoroughly searched and his family had dispersed. His hotel 'was completely robbed and destroyed' as was his house. A relative who was an official in Asella warned him to flee because he was accused of being involved in the demonstrations and targeted 'for elimination' by security forces.

Solomon T.W. sent the following account to OSG on 29 September 2003. He had joined the OLF in 1991 but avoided the mass detentions of 1992/3.

'In September 1994 the authorities arrested me while I was on my way to a relative's house. Two had civilian clothes and one was in military attire. I was taken to the Central Criminal Investigation Bureau [Maikelawi CID] and detained for 15 days in a cell with at least 30 other people. The cell was overcrowded and we barely had space to sleep.' He described being interrogated and beaten to unconsciousness. 'I was then transferred to the main central prison [Karchale] where I was kept for five years without being taken to court or being charged. In October 1999 I was released and warned that if I ever participated in any OLF activities, measures would be taken against my life.'

Solomon K wrote from Norway on 25 February, after being refused asylum there. He joined the OLF when he was a 2nd year student at Addis Ababa University, when the OLF was legal in 1991-2. He was first detained when working in W. Hararge for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment as a soil and water expert. He was kept for one month, accused of possessing an illegal weapon,

and released after payment of a 2000 Birr bond. He continued to communicate with OLF supporters when doing field work in Hararge and used to distribute *Radio Free Oromia* cassette tapes. In 1996, he complained that project cars and other vehicles were being taken from the project for use by the government party in the national elections; ‘the use of our vehicles for the party and political candidates would jeopardize our extension work and the rural community would not trust us as a true development agency’.

He continued his field work and also to report human rights abuses to *URJII* newspaper. In October 2001, there was a clash between OLA fighters and government forces around Haro Adi, Daro Labu Woreda, where he was working. The following day, he returned to Addis Ababa. At 10 p.m., six plain-clothed men came to his house ‘in a police wagon’. They searched his house and ‘took what they liked’. He was ‘seriously beaten’ and taken to Woreda 18 police station at Kotobe, where he was interrogated and tortured overnight before being transferred to Ziway prison. His torture continued there, where he was held with no access to family or lawyer for six months. He was released on the usual conditions but was refused his salary from the ministry and sacked from his job. He was refused asylum in Norway on the basis that he would not have been released from detention if he was likely to be persecuted in the future.

Radio Free Oromia reported on 22 June that two Oromo Federal Policemen were arrested in Addis Ababa and that students, farmers and residents from Ziway, S. Showa, had been taken to Maikelawi CID in the capital, accused of supplying weapons for the OLF. Among those taken from Ziway were:

- Adam Tibeso
- Chala Abu
- Abe Dabi and
- Barsa Tulu

EASTERN OROMIA REGION

Killings

An Oromo who now lives in exile in Norway gave the following information to OSG on 12 January concerning killings and other abuses against his close friends and relatives, in 1995 and 1996.

‘**Sadadin Jebril**, from Melkarafou, Kombolcha, E. Hararge, was arrested in 1995 for being an OLF supporter and was killed in detention. He was the only man for his family.

Sherif Yosuf Katei, Bilisuma village, near Melkarafou, was killed because he was seen outside his village and suspected to be an OLF guerrilla. After he was killed his body was transported to Kombolcha and laid for public in a Monday market.

Muktar Hasan, Melkarafou, a brilliant student, was arrested and imprisoned in Deder and died under torture for his connection to OLF.

Abdulaziz Gasro, Melkarafou, was killed by government soldiers in Dire Dawa. He was in Dire Dawa because he was engaged to marry and he was buying his house-hold materials for his new home. His mother and other relatives were wounded by the gunfire. He has one sister only and a mother.

Mohammed Busra, was killed in the streets of Melkarafou for his participation in the OLF Youth Association. His father and brother are mentally ill because of the harassment.

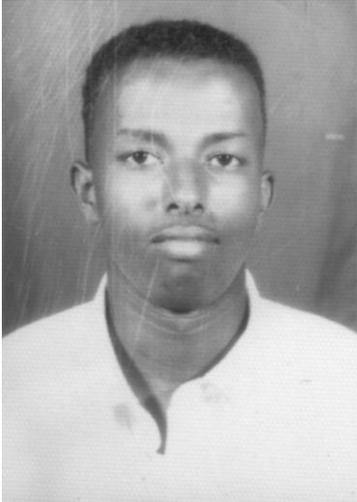
Abdulahakim Dawed Adem was killed at Fallana because he was seen outside his area and for supporting OLF.

Mohammed Sheka, a father to seven children was killed outside his home in the morning by security agents at his workplace. He was not liked because of his sale of nationalist music songs in 1995. His wife is in bad condition.’

Hassen Adem Hargayye, an OLF supporter before and during the transitional period, was harassed and under surveillance after the OLF left government in 1992. Government forces were taken to his house in Malka Jabdu by a ‘friend’ of his on 20 August 1996. OLF documents and a rifle were found and **Hassen was summarily shot dead**. (Family member, Djibouti, 25 December 2003.)

Disappearances

Mohammed Denta, Melkarafou, ‘was arrested for being OLF and participating in the OLF youth group. His family has not seen him after his arrest and were grieving twice in confusion over his death or not.’ (Acquaintance of victims, in exile in Norway, 12 January 2004.)



Mohammed Hassen Adem was taken from his parental home in Malka Jabdu on 23 August 1996, three days after his father had been shot dead (see above). The house and all its contents were appropriated by government forces and relatives have been unable to locate Mohammed since his abduction. (Family member, Djibouti, 25 December 2003.)

Detention, torture etc

‘Ibrahim Jerso, from Ijersa Goro, was arrested for he was friend to Ararsa Bekela, OLF leader of Melkarafou, when the OLF was part of the transitional government, and for his participation in the OLF youth wing Yousuf Hakima, a health worker from Kombolcha, was searched. His property was confiscated and his gas station is out of use now. He and his family have escaped to Kenya.’ (Acquaintance of victims, in exile in Norway, 12 January 2004.)

Dr Mohammed Ibrahim wrote from exile in Norway on 20 October 2003. Like many others in Norway he had been refused asylum. His experiences are typical of Oromo medical doctors who have written to OSG. His medical education was interrupted by the Derg conscription policy and he resumed his studies in 1991. Because he had openly supported the OLF when it was legal from 1991-1992, he was detained and tortured for two months in Dire Dawa, E. Hararge, but again resumed his studies. On qualifying he found it impossible to get a job in the capital because he refused to join the government Oromo party, the OPDO, and he began working among Oromo in Harar, E. Hararge. He wrote:

‘I was not free as I thought . . . I was forced not to help my people . . . and witness their suffering and death in front of my eyes’.

He claimed asylum after reporting, at a conference in Norway, the great discrepancies between health budget allocation to Tigray and other regions and between urban and rural areas, which he had researched in secret.

Abdi Hussein Ibrahim wrote from Kenya on 18 October 2003. He was just 15 when, on 17 January 1996, security men came to his home in Bale asking for his father. As his father was not at home, Abdi was taken in his stead (arbitrary detention of relatives of sought persons is reported in the current US State Department country report for Ethiopia, section 1.f.). He was held in Goro police station and made to write to his father to give himself up. After eight days in detention he escaped when OLF fighters attacked. He spent the next two months with the OLF before being wounded and losing his left eye in a battle with government troops. He was then kept in Sinja military camp, Goba, where he was

‘harassed, beaten and tortured’. After six years and visits by ICRC, he was released on 13 March 2002.

In May 2002, he was sought out for not attending the celebrations for the anniversary of the TPLF entering Addis Ababa. His mother was arrested in his stead, as he was at a friend’s house, and fined 20,000 Birr. He fled by foot to Kenya, arriving in July 2002.

Seyifudin AH wrote from Kenya on 15 May. Born in 1967 in Robe, Bale, he joined his father’s trading business. He joined the OLF in 1993. He was arrested from their business premises and his father was taken from his home on 20 December 1994. They were taken to Agarfa Military Camp, tortured and interrogated. SAH was released on 5 December 1994. He found his father was also released but partly paralysed because of torture. SAH was prevented from leaving his home town for one year. He then began working for the OLF, passing information about human rights abuses to media outlets in Addis Ababa. During the night of 15 October 1998, he and his wife were abducted by several armed soldiers. They were beaten and kicked and taken to Sinja Military Camp, where he was again tortured.

One year later, he was offered release for publicly denouncing the OLF. He was made to do this in Gasira, Ginnir, Robe, Goba and Dinsho before being released with strict warnings in October 2000.

His wife, who was four months pregnant at the time of arrest, **died** on 23 January 1999, at Malka Wakena detention centre (by the Hydro-electric station).

He kept away from OLF activity and remarried in February 2002. At his wedding celebration, he was approached by former OLF contacts. They were surrounded by government soldiers and arrested. With ‘the usual beatings and kicking and threat’, he and the others were taken to Arada Tarre military garrison.

He was severely tortured and had to be taken to a clinic in Ginnir for in-patient treatment under guard. He escaped during a toilet visit in April 2003. Before crossing to Kenya in May 2003, he learned from his father that **one** of the two OLF members with whom he had been abducted had **disappeared** in detention and that **the other had been killed** in detention.

SAH has tried unsuccessfully on two occasions to gain refugee status with UNHCR in Nairobi, since arriving in 2003.

T.D.A. wrote from exile in Norway, where he has failed to obtain asylum, on 6 January. He was arrested in 1995 in Melkarafou, E. Hararge, for his activity with the OLF youth program. He and his friends ‘were whipped by sticks, beaten and forced to sleep on a cold cement floor. They starved us by eating food which our families had sent’ he wrote. They were released after seven months on the usual conditions of secrecy, restricted mobility and frequent reporting to the security office. In 1996, he wrote ‘government soldiers came and started shooting at me

and my friends, saying you are spies for OLF and guerrillas of OLF. A friend was shot dead.’

He fled to Addis Ababa but his family were punished. His brother and brother-in-law were killed and his father was forced to sign a document admitting his son’s culpability.

Radio Free Oromia announced on 27 June that government forces were arresting students, teachers and farmers in Obera, E. Hararge, accusing them of allowing Oromo Liberation Army (OLA – the military wing of the OLF) forces to move freely in the area.

WESTERN OROMIA REGION

Disappearance

On 24 March, a relative of **Dereje Geresu Biru** reported his disappearance when the OLF were forced to withdraw from the transitional government in June 1992. He was a biology graduate and a lecturer in Botany at the Jimma Institute of Health.

Detention

Radio Free Oromia announced on 27 June that 20 Oromo had been detained in Dembi Dollo, Wallega, during the previous week, allegedly for merely being Oromo nationalists.

SOUTHERN OROMIA REGION

Detention

On 28 April 2003, the following report was sent to OSG. It was written in Oromia Region and smuggled out of the country. The arrests have not been reported previously.

The report concerns ‘renewed mass arrest in Borana’, which began the week before the report was written, which was 8 April 2003.

The large scale arrests started ‘with detention of innocent Borana Oromo and other Oromo members in Yabelo town’ and ‘similar detention activity’ was said to be occurring in Mega, one of the other major towns in Borana zone. Among the numbers detained in Yabelo are:

Boru Bule Arero, civil servant, Southern Rangelands Development Project (SRDP)

Aschalew Sisay Galata, businessman, owner of Yabelo AGIP Petrol Station
Gayo Guyo Halake, civil servant, SRDP

Muluneh Mitiku, businessman
Nigusse Alemu Banti, teacher, Yabelo Primary School
Mohamed Qaturre Sora, civil servant, SRDP

Students were among those detained. All were taken from their homes at night by soldiers and held incommunicado at Yabelo police station and army barracks. Most had been detained previously and accused of supporting the OLF. They were accused on this occasion of disseminating leaflets denouncing the 13th anniversary celebrations of the OPDO on 25 March 2003.

Tufa Badhadha Dhinsa wrote from Kenya on 26 April 2004. He was detained, because he had been teaching Oromo literacy when a high school student, at Hidi Lola military camp from 10 August to 20 September. He was again detained at Hidi Lola from 2 March to 24 June 1996 and released on payment of 500 Birr. He was detained for a third time from 17 January to 14 August 1999 in Boku Luboma military camp.

AMHARA REGION

Disappearance

Benyam Shibiru



The chairman of the Oromo Community in South Africa, Shibiru Wondimu, reported the disappearance of his son, **Binyam Shibiru**, to OSG in September 2003.

Binyam was a 3rd year engineering student at Bahar Dar university, Gojjam. He had been detained in Bahar Dar and in Addis Ababa, and had been tortured in the past because of his father's alleged involvement with the OLF. He went on vacation to Addis Ababa on 12 September 2003 and has not been heard of since.

Teachers abducted

Local informants reported on 19 November 2003 that four Oromo teachers in Bichana Awraja in E. Gojjam were abducted as they attended their classrooms after allegedly objecting to conferences of the All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP – formerly the All Amhara Peoples Organisation) at their schools, from 3-9 October 2003:

Kitila Wabi Amuma, 50, Goncha Siso Jnr Secondary School, abducted 10 Oct.
Zewditu Abera Ejata, Dibisa High School, Ennemaay Woreda, abducted 6 Oct.
Shimelis Gasix GIRRISA, Dima Giorgis Jnr Secondary School, abducted 9 Oct.
Gabrewolde Yeneneh Jilcha, 53, Marxo-LeMariam Elementary School.

SOUTHERN NATIONS, NATIONALITIES AND PEOPLES REGION

SIDAMA ZONE

On 17 February, Sidama Concern (www.sidamaconcern.com/news.htm) reported the killings of:

Tadele Kawiso, Haroressa district, killed by security forces, 10 January
Asege Beyene, Cire, Haroressa district, killed by security forces surrounding his house on 6 February.

The group reported that many were detained in Haroressa district.

Widespread dismissals of government employees was also reported. About 600 Sidama were sacked and forced to work outside Sidama zone away from their families. Since the appointment of Michael Tobias, a Kambata, as head of Hawaasa (Awassa) municipality, no Sidama nationals are assigned to the municipality's newly structured six departments and five sectors.

Farmers from around Hawaasa are reported to be displaced without compensation. Landless and impoverished people in Sidama zone were taken involuntarily (as part of the 'voluntary resettlement' program) to the remote region of Bench Maji. The promised fertile land and facilities were not present and some are known to have risked the 1000 km return journey on foot, only to be detained on return. At least 20 were seen begging in Hawaasa.

Forced military conscription – 12 young men from each locality – was reported to be occurring since the last week in January.

MASSACRES IN GAMBELLA

Genocide Watch and Survivors Rights International report

'Two months after the massacres committed by EPRDF troops and Highlander militias in mid-December, 2003, the EPRDF government of Ethiopia continues to deny, minimize and mischaracterize violence that is occurring in southwestern Ethiopia. As documented in this report, there is abundant evidence that members of the EPRDF military forces and their allies-civilian "Highlander" militias-have perpetrated gross human rights abuses and that atrocities are continuing with complete impunity.'

On 16 February, Genocide Watch and Survivors Rights International published a report on the killings and other atrocities in Gambella in late 2003 and early 2004 (see www.genocidewatch.org). It is based on field investigations conducted in Pochalla, Sudan in January and February and the eyewitness accounts are corroborated in a report by the World Organisation Against Torture, (Geneva, 13 April) and reports from Gambella (see below). Excerpts are copied below.

‘The report focuses on five of six Anuak districts engulfed in escalating violence since December 13, 2003: Gambella (includes Gambella town), Itang, Abobo, Dimma and Gok (includes Pinyudo town). Interviews with Anuak survivors and leaders in exile focused on documenting eyewitness and personal accounts of the scale and nature of violence. Sources have not been identified herein out of concern for their security.

This report provides substantial evidence that serious human right abuses have been committed against Anuak civilians by EPRDF soldiers and ‘highlander’ (in Amharic ‘cefarioch’) militias in southwestern Ethiopia. ‘Highlander(s)’ herein refers to Ethiopians who are neither Anuak nor Nuer, the indigenous peoples of the region, but predominantly Tigray and Amhara people resettled into Anuak territory since 1974’

‘Soldiers using automatic weapons and hand grenades targeted Anuaks, summarily executing civilians, burning dwellings (sometimes with people inside), and looting property. Major massacres occurred December 13-16, 2003. Some 424 Anuak people were reported killed, with over 200 more wounded and some 85 people unaccounted for. Since December 2003, sporadic murders and widespread rapes have continued.’ (The website of Genocide Watch includes the names of the 424 killed.)

‘Reminiscent of the Interahamwe civilian militia involved in the attacks against Tutsis in Rwanda, victims shot or beaten by soldiers were typically then set upon by groups of Highlanders who mutilated and dismembered bodies. Such symbolic dehumanization is an early warning sign of genocide. Highlanders used rocks, sticks, hoes, machetes, knives, axes and pangas (clubs) to kill people; they also worked independently of soldiers. Several witnesses described hearing Highlanders chant slogans as they hunted down and killed Anuak people.

Witness #7 watched a gang of some 15 to 30 Highlanders armed with crude weapons attack and kill three Anuaks, including a student named Omot (grade 9), while repeatedly chanting: “Today is the day of killing Anuaks”.

Numerous assailants have been identified, including government officials, soldiers and civilians. There are accusations that lists of targeted individuals were drawn up with the assistance of Omot Obang Olom, an Anuak government official cited by several interviewees for his involvement. (Mr. Olom reportedly fled to Addis Ababa out of fear for his safety on February 5, 2004.) Massacres were reportedly ordered by the commander of the Ethiopian army in Gambella, Nagu Beyene, with the authorization of Dr. Gebrehab Barnabas, an official of the Ethiopian government. The Ethiopian Government continues to deny, downplay and mischaracterize the massacres as justifiable responses to an Anuak attack. The fact is that most of the victims have been unarmed Anuak civilians who were hunted down and murdered.’

‘Numerous eyewitnesses gave accounts of Anuak civilians being shot in the back while running away.’

‘Following early trends, mass rape continues in the region, perpetrated by EPRDF soldiers and Highlanders, often at gunpoint. Anuak schools were reportedly emptied of schoolgirls who were gang-raped in nearby huts or in the bush. In one case, eyewitnesses heard assailants express their intent to forcibly impregnate an Anuak girl to produce non-Anuak children. In the absence of Anuak males (killed or displaced), the vulnerability of women and girls has been grossly exploited. Reports from non-Anuak officials in Gambella indicate an average of up to seven rapes per day.

Recent reports indicate that pitched battles occurred in Dimma District when Anuak men retaliated for the unprovoked but brutal torture and killing a member of the Anuak community by EPRDF soldiers who openly taunted Anuaks about the murder. Retaliatory attacks and counter attacks from January 28 to February 3 reportedly claimed the lives of scores of EPRDF soldiers in Dimma. After January 30, EPRDF reinforcements reportedly arrived in Dimma with troops, artillery and tanks, and massacred non-combatant Dinka and Nuer refugees from the nearby Sudanese refugee camp; with many Sudanese refugees reportedly wounded. The massacre of noncombatant Sudanese refugees by the EPRDF not only violates conventions on the protection of refugees, but further adds to the potential threats to international peace and security.

First person reports from Gambella Region describe Anuak prisoners subjected to forced labor under armed guard by EPRDF captors. Significant numbers of Anuaks remain unaccounted for; "disappearances" of Anuak leaders have become frequent.

GW/SRI has received unverified reports that the federal government of Ethiopia has dispatched security and intelligence operatives to neighboring countries to assassinate exiled Anuak leaders including, for example, Mr. Okello Akway Ochalla, the President of Gambella, and Mr. Abulla Obang Agwa, founder of the Gambella People's Democratic Congress.

GW/SRI has also received eyewitness accounts of eleven uniformed EPRDF soldiers working under cover of night on February 1, 2004 (3:15 am), to exhume bodies from a mass grave in the Jabjab neighborhood of Gambella town. EPRDF soldiers were reportedly working with masks and gloves to dig up corpses for incineration in order to destroy evidence of the December massacres. The eyewitness also claimed that soldiers arrested and tortured innocent civilians, living near the site, who as of February 5, 2004, remained in detention.’

Background

‘The TPLF eventually assumed control of the central government, which is dominated by Tigrayan Ethiopians, in 1991. According to eyewitness testimony by an Anuak survivor, in the course of the ‘liberation’ of Gambella, non-Anuak TPLF forces devastated the Gambella region. The witness described the intentional TPLF bombing of the school he was attending at the time in Gambella, and the

subsequent death of some 2400 students who were locked inside. The TPLF claim at the time was that the Derg bombed the school, according to the witness, but the incident has never been investigated.’

‘The agriculturalist Anuak minority (also known as Anywaa or Anywak) number over 100,000 people in Ethiopia and Sudan. Anuaks are the predominant landholders in the Gambella region of southwest Ethiopia. Anuaks have a long history of sharing the land with the pastoralist Nuer people, even though their relationship has been intermittently problematic. Nuers were not involved in the December massacres, although they were blamed by the Ethiopian government, but they have been sporadically targeted by the EPRDF since. Ethiopians of other ethnicities, known as ‘highlanders’ because they come from the central highlands of Ethiopia, are predominantly from the Tigray and Amhara ethnic groups. They have increasingly encroached on Anuak lands since the Derg government instituted forced resettlement programs into Anuak areas.’

‘The current conflict was sparked by the killing of eight U.N. and Ethiopian government refugee camp officials whose van was ambushed on December 13, 2003, in the Gambella District of southwestern Ethiopia. While there is no evidence attesting to the ethnicity of the unidentified assailants, the incident provided the pretext for a major political pogrom against the Anuak minority carried out by EPRDF soldiers and Highlander militias.’

Government response and continuing atrocities

‘Answering inquiries about the violence in the Gambella region, the Ethiopian Government on December 17, 2003 issued a statement that discounted the numbers of dead and blamed the violence on groups that oppose the central Ethiopian (EPRDF) government:

“The conflict in Gambella town last weekend was triggered by members of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) supported by the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) and al Itihad al Islamiya,” Minister of State for Federal Affairs Gebrehab Barnabas said in a statement.’

[The Ethiopian government (IRIN, 5 April) claimed that the final toll of dead and wounded from the December massacre was less than 60 and that a ‘non-indigenous mob of hooligans’ committed the crime.]

‘Eyewitnesses recount an immediate mobilization of EPRDF troops on December 13, within an hour of the UN killings. Reportedly working with lists of names of Anuak people, EPRDF soldiers and Highlander militias proceeded to murder Anuaks, mostly targeting students and the educated class.’

‘Hundreds-and perhaps as many as 500-Anuaks arrested since December 13 remain in prison, or unaccounted for. One of the most egregious cases is that of the illegal arrest, detention and torture of Othow Akway Ochalla, the brother of exiled President of Gambella, Okello Akway Ochalla. Mr. Ochalla was last seen on February 27, 2004, by an eyewitness who visited him in prison and reported

that Mr. Ochalla had been tortured: his body and head were swollen, he was coughing blood, and he expressed his belief that he would not survive. Further requests to visit Mr. Ochalla have been denied, and it is believed by many that he has died.’

‘On January 28, EPRDF soldiers summarily executed Mr. Ochan Nigwo for attempting to challenge the soldiers who that day raped his 10 year-old daughter. On January 28, after being raped by six EPRDF soldiers in Pinyudo, a 15 year-old girl, Achlo Gilo, went home and committed suicide.’

The Dimma Gold Mine Massacre

‘On January 29, 2004, Anuaks in Dimma responded with violence to the torture and execution by EPRDF soldiers of an Anuak gold miner. Demonstrating the climate of gross impunity, the soldiers bragged to Anuaks about the atrocity they had committed.’

‘Informed of the murder, armed Anuak gold miners attacked an EPRDF contingent sent from Dimma to disarm them on January 30. EPRDF forces were defeated. There are conflicting reports of the numbers of soldiers and civilians killed, with estimates of some 160 total dead.’

‘The Anuak gold miners, armed with weapons seized from the EPRDF troops they had killed, descended on Dimma town and murdered a number of civilian highlanders. They left Dimma town and warned Anuaks to leave. Anuak women and children began to flee Dimma in fear of EPRDF retaliation and atrocities.’

‘An eyewitness reporting on February 2, 2004 estimated some 150-300 Anuak people arrested and detained at a military barracks in Dimma; the witness speculated that detainees were at risk of execution because they refused to talk.’

‘Anuaks arrested in Dimma reportedly have been tortured in attempts to extract information about the whereabouts of Anuak combatants, weapons caches, and the location of the President of Gambella, Okello Akway Ochalla (an Anuak).

GW/SRI received an eyewitness account from a Sudanese Nuer refugee of EPRDF beating people at military barracks.’

‘On February 3, 2004, EPRDF reinforcements reportedly arrived in Dimma. They first massacred thirteen Anuak government officials serving in the administration of Dimma District, including the Dimma District Governor. Two of these officials were believed by local Anuaks to have played some role in supporting the December pogrom against the Anuaks, and hence were reluctant to seek refugee protection amidst Anuaks in Pochalla, Sudan.’

‘The EPRDF troops killed over 40 Anuaks still in Dimma town, and then went to a nearby Sudanese refugee camp, and massacred non-combatant Dinka and Nuer refugees. Many other Sudanese were wounded.’

[Names of seventeen Anuak civilians reported killed in the Dimma are given.]

EPRDF troops may enter Sudan

‘GS/SRI has received reports that EPRDF troops are ready to cross the border into Sudan to hunt down GPLF rebels, and that the Ethiopian government has sent emissaries to Khartoum and Nairobi to appeal for assistance in crushing Anuak resistance groups.’

[IRIN reported on 19 January that 5000 Anuak had fled to Pochalla in Sudan and that 100 – 200 were arriving daily.]

Other reports

Killings on 12 March

Local informants sent the following report, via an OSG member in the USA on 13 June, concerning the killing of 17 people on 12 March, on the 50-60 km road between Gambella and Dembi Dollo (Wallega, Oromia Region). The report implicates a local government official from Gambella. The report was sent to the US State Department and to Amnesty International.

‘On March 12/2004 at 7:00 AM, on the banks of Goddarre river which is found on the road between Gambella and Dembi Dollo, a 3 ton truck belonging to Aleko Socrates Galanos and carrying about 26 passengers was attacked by a group of about six to eight armed people. The truck was traveling towards Dembi Dollo. They shot at the truck, which was traveling at a very slow speed due to the very bad road condition with more than a hundred bullets, and after the truck stopped they attacked the passengers at close range with machetes and bayonets. These six or eight people who did this were transported to the site of the atrocity by a pick up car that belongs either to the Women’s Bureau of the state of Gambella or to Mrs. Akwata who is the women’s representative of the state of Gambella.

It left Gambella town at around 4:00 AM of the said day carrying the group of these 6-8 armed men. The driver was Mr. Ujima Ujulu, husband of Mrs Akwata. The men were dropped at Goddarre river and the pick up waited for the men hidden at Solaan. After their mission was accomplished it took a number of them back to Gambella. Some of them did not go back to town as they took a number of survivors into the bush. Those who were taken to the bush have not been seen or heard of since then.

There were 17 dead. (9 from Dembi Dollo, 4 from Muggi and another 4 from Shebel). Two of these were settlers from Wollo.

Some of the dead were:

Aleko Socrates Galanos (aka Aleko Abbaa Caffee) driver and owner of the said truck
Mrs. Messelech
Mrs. Messelech's baby daughter (suckling)
Pastor Feqadu Nagarii
Mr. Tammirat (aka Tuulee) truck drivers assistant
Mrs. Sinqinesh Duula
Mrs. Ameleworq Emmanuel Iggu who was 8 months pregnant and was traveling to Dembi Dollo to give birth. She as well as a number of these were mutilated.

There were four survivors who managed to survive by lying down under the corpses or by hiding in the bush. . . . [Their names are omitted by OSG, in view of their security. Two of the killers were also named.]'

Killings in May

IRIN reported on 18 May that Ethiopian security forces had killed 20 'bandits' in Jewe, Gambella, who the government alleged were behind earlier attacks on civilians. The Ministry of Federal Affairs continued to deny government involvement in the December killings.

On 27 June, on *Radio Free Oromia*, the former president of Gambella, Mr Okelo Akuwai, reported that the Ethiopian government was carrying out 'ethnic cleansing' of the Anuak people.

World Organisation Against Torture report

In their press release, 13 April, the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) included the following additional information regarding the killings in December 2003 and up to April 2004 (omct@omct.org).

The following is an excerpt.

'Recent reports allege that killings and other acts of ethnic cleansing are continuing and it has been estimated that as of March 31st 2004, the total number of persons killed had reached 1,137. Reports indicate that entire villages have been burnt to the ground, sometimes with the occupants still in their homes, and that the Anuak's crops have also been destroyed. Many villagers have been forced to flee, and thousands have travelled to a refugee camp in Pochalla, Southern Sudan. Reports also indicate that this destruction is widespread, with hundreds of homes and crop-fields having been set ablaze, leaving thousands of persons without shelter or food. There are serious concerns that, due to the upcoming rainy season, these persons will be exposed to disease and starvation unless immediate

humanitarian action is taken. Most recent information received by OMCT indicates that around 5000 Ethiopian troops have been engaged in fighting against Anuak farmers at Tedo village since April 10th, 2004, and have burned down all of the village's houses and crops. There are concerns that they may now be moving towards Pochalla refugee camp in Southern Sudan in order to attack the camp's refugees.

Our sources estimate that between 5,000 and 9,000 persons are taking refuge in the Pochalla camp. 75 percent of the refugees are reportedly under the age of 20, with 12 percent under the age of ten. The camp is facing grave shortages of food and water and diseases, including cholera, have reportedly broken out. Since the refugees first started arriving five months ago, there have only been two food drops by the World Food Programme: one on January 28th and another on March 12th. On each of these occasions, the food has not been close to meeting the camp's requirements. The UNHCR has allegedly resisted setting up a more permanent camp in Pochalla, on the basis that the refugees should soon be able to return home. However, our sources indicate that continuing violence, the amount of destruction of Anuak homes, the confiscation or destruction of their property and the burning of their fields and granaries leaves little prospect for them being able to survive in the near future should they return. Furthermore, their overall health is so poor that they lack the physical stamina necessary to travel.

Certain groups are being specifically targeted: Anuak women and girls have been systematically raped. A regional police officer recorded 138 cases of women who were raped in Gambella town in December 2003, before being ordered to stop recording cases. Schools have reportedly been emptied of schoolgirls, who have then been gang-raped. In one case in Pinyudo, assailants allegedly shouted "we are going to kill your men and the next generation of Anuaks will be produced by us." Educated men are being subjected to selective, politically-motivated extra-judicial executions. Several hundred persons, including community leaders have been arbitrarily arrested, many of whom are being detained incommunicado and allegedly been subjected to torture.'

OGADEN/SOMALI REGION & SOMALILAND

In a press release, on 5 December 2003 (OHRC 12/03, Porrentruy, Switzerland), the Ogaden Human Rights Committee reported that the Ethiopian government, using its 'Ethiopian Interest Protection Office', has enjoyed the co-operation of Somaliland and its leader Mohammed Egal in the persecution of Somali people who are suspected of supporting the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). Excerpts from the report follow:

'On July 31st 1996, three ONLF central committee members were detained in Hargeisa, northwest Somalia by militias loyal to Mr. Mohamed Egal, while they were visiting their relatives in the area. . . . On 20 October 1996, they were handed over to the Ethiopian government against their will, in exchange for ammunition.

On April 10th 2002, a large number of Somalis from the Ogaden were rounded up and detained without charges, in Hargeisa, by Somaliland and Ethiopian security forces. . . [following] Egal's visit to Addis Ababa at the time.

To the best of OHRC's knowledge, the detainees were traders, residents and visitors, who were not involved any illegal activities.

Many of them were transferred to Baligubadle – a border village between the Ogaden and northwest Somalia – and were handed over to the Ethiopian government against their will, in exchange for ammunition and other materials.

Among them were: **Mukhtar Moalin Yusuf, Khadar Abdi Haji, Mustaf Sheikh, Hussein Moalin, Abdiaziz Ahmed, Badel Aw Ahmed, and Dahir Abdi Haji, all traders.** After repatriation they were transferred to prison in Jigjiga, and then to Harar, where they subsequently disappeared. Their families and relatives have no idea about their fate and whereabouts.

In November 2003, Dahir Riyaale Kahin, who is former head of the much feared and notorious secret service, known as National Security Service (NSS) in the port city of Berbera, declared all Somalis, who are not from Somaliland as persona non grata and ordered their expulsion within 45 days.

In 1990s, colonel Dahir Reyaale Kaahin was responsible for detaining and torturing to death many innocent Somalis, who were accused falsely of being members of Somali National Movement (SNM). . . .

On November 30th, 2003, 75 Somalis from the Ogaden were arrested and their property confiscated, in Hargeisa, Northwest Somalia, following raids conducted by Somaliland militia and Ethiopian Security Forces. The detainees were humiliated and beaten up, and are being held in incommunicado detention in overcrowded location. No charges have yet been laid formally against them and no trial date has been set.

To the best of OHRC's knowledge, the detainees were elders, traders, labourers, residents and visitors, who were not involved any illegal activities, and have no any political affiliation.

On December 04th 2003, two trucks carrying Ethiopian security agents and officers arrived in Hargeisa to prepare the ground for their hand over to the Ethiopian government against their will.

According to reliable reports received by OHRC, today (05.12.03) the repressive and indiscriminate measures against Somalis from the Ogaden are unabated, and are going on as of this writing.'

Names of the detainees and other details are in OHRC's report *Ogaden: Downtrodden and Disenfranchised People* ref: OHRC/13/03.

PRESS AND MEDIA

EFJA disrupted by government, another arrest

The proposed new press law was criticized by Article 19 and by the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFJA) at an international media law reform conference in Addis Ababa in late October 2003 (see www.article19.org/docimages/1513.doc for Article 19 report). The requirement to register all journalists and print media outlets would allow abuse and unfair restriction of the press, the conference concluded. EFJA reported that the sharp decline in independent publications over the past decade was due to constant attacks by the government – 150 journalists being imprisoned between 1993 and 1998, 35 fleeing the country and 46 awaiting court appearances.

Shortly after speaking out against the proposed law, on 10 November, the EFJA was ordered to cease its activities and on 2 December, its chairman, Kifle Mulat and three other board members were suspended. The government claimed that the EFJA had not submitted audited accounts for several years. The Justice Ministry had ordered a new leadership of EFJA to be established in January. In February 2004, fourteen members of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), including the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), International Press Institute (IPI) and Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), wrote condemning the Ethiopian government for interfering with the EFJA and attempting to replace its leadership [as it did with the Ethiopian Teachers Association].

Human Rights Watch joined in the criticism on 13 February, saying that government repression was a politically motivated means of tightening the grip on the free press and attempting to muffle it, violating freedom of expression and association.

The EFJA tried to get the government ban lifted and the former leadership returned, in the federal court. IRIN reported that the ban had been lifted ahead of the court case, on 23 February, but the former board members were not re-instated and the EFJA has remained in disarray since then (IRIN 5 May).

IFJ called for the reunification of EFJA on 13 April (IRIN) at the same time as the CPJ and Reporters Without Borders expressed concern over the imprisonment of a former newspaper editor, Merid Estifanos, for defaming Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

According to CPJ, another journalist is currently in prison in Ethiopia; he is Tewodros Kassa, jailed for two years for defamation in July 2002.

IPI was reported by IFEX on 25 May to have grave concerns over ‘deteriorating media freedom’ in Ethiopia and added the country to its ‘Watch List’, because it was not expected to honour pledges to open radio channels to private broadcasters before the 2005 elections.

See www.freemedia.at/protests%202003/pr_Ethiopia17.12.03.htm for IPI's report on the press law.

Ethiopian media and TV personalities detained and forced into exile

Mahammad Ahimad and Lemlem Fanta, who worked on an Oromo cultural program for state-run Ethiopian TV, and Keriyat Ismael, an actor in the program, were forced to join the tens of thousands of Oromo refugees in Nairobi around early April. They were being harassed and intimidated because of their refusal to work on a drama which 'defamed' the OLF, their inclusion of Ali Birra songs in wedding celebrations and their wearing of OLF colours. Despite their notoriety, UNHCR has ordered them to Kakuma camp.

On 6 May, *Radio Free Oromia* announced the detention of four media employees from 1 May in Maikelawi CID in Addis Ababa, where they are believed to be being tortured. They were detained during house searches, which were described as 'extremely threatening' to their families and which resulted in the confiscation of valuable property including recording equipment. They are:

Dhaabasa Waqjira, Senior producer and acting head of state-run Ethiopian TV news centre

Shiferaw Hinsarmu, Producer of Oromo cultural program, Oromo language service, Ethiopian TV

Andualem Gamada, state-run Ethiopian Radio employee

Tesfaye Dhibisa, 'an employee of the private press'

On 27 May, OSG was informed that two other Ethiopia Radio journalists, Dasu Dula and Habtamu Marga had fled to Nairobi.

On 14 June, S N Wako, a 28 year old reporter for Ethiopian TV and Radio from Kofale, Arsi, wrote from exile in Africa. Fifteen days after he filed a report on the drought conditions in Dallo, Bale, in April 2003, five armed security men broke into his home around midnight. They searched the house and they beat, interrogated and accused him of supporting the OLF. He was held in detention for seven months, during which he was tortured and forced to undergo hard physical labour. He describes the usual unsanitary conditions in detention and the conditions of his release, travel restriction, no meetings and to report to the security office every week. He had been sacked and his wife and adopted children had disappeared. He was warned that he was targeted for arrest after the 4th January demonstrations in Addis Ababa and therefore fled.

Radio Free Oromia reported on 22 June that Oromo radio journalist, Kasahun Feyisa and artist Tesfaye Dhima had recently fled the country and defected. Kasahun Feyisa had worked for the Oromo language section of Ethiopian state

radio and claimed that he had been persecuted because he had opposed the move of the Oromia Region capital from Addis Ababa to Adama and because he had supported students who had been thrown out of the university. Tesfaye Dhima was a member of the well known *Gada Band* and a director of *Urjii* and *Robale* bands.

RESETTLEMENT IN ETHIOPIA

'Settlers from Arsi were told not to carry any household utensils, hand tools or even clothing,' the World Bank said. 'They were promised that these would be supplied to them at their destinations, along with keys to their new houses. Tap water, health and school facilities were also promised to the new settlers. None of this was true, and many settlers we spoke to felt deceived.'

Malnutrition and deaths in resettlement sites

The government of Ethiopia continues to promote resettlement, ostensibly as a way of improving food security, despite protests by settlers, host populations, impartial investigators and respected international bodies. After announcing in 2003 that it would resettle 2.2 million people over three years, the government had moved hundreds of thousands before the rainy season in May. Agencies warn that it should stop or slow down the program.

Desalegn Rahmato, director of a local research institute, the Forum for Social Studies, complained at a conference in Addis Ababa on 27 February that the program was too large, inadequately planned and proceeding too quickly, repeating the calamitous mistakes of previous resettlement programs.

'Resettlement programmes have been tried in this country under various policy frameworks, but the result has been highly unsatisfactory,' he said. 'Voluntary or involuntary relocation of populations on a large scale is a complex, costly and, in the end, wasteful undertaking.' He also condemned the lack of public consultation over resettlement, arguing that current government officials were insufficiently experienced to implement the scheme. Development objectives were more likely to be met by urbanization of farmers, he claimed.

Farmers are promised food aid from the government for eight months, credit for buying tools and oxen and nearly five acres of land. But the people are dying from lowland diseases, especially malaria, and the cattle are dying of trypanosomiasis. Access to at least some of the sites is almost impossible in the rainy season, when most help is needed and malaria is at its worst. Medical facilities are non-existent or inadequate.

Because of the admission of failure, the government has been slow to ask for assistance from outside agencies. A World Bank assessment made in 2003 was critical of the program but aid agencies have only begun helping this year.

The World Food Program is delivering food to sites in Oromia Region, to supplement government food aid. UNICEF is delivering medicine and mosquito nets.

IRIN (Addis Ababa, 8 June) reported that 250,000 settlers were receiving food aid. Starving children were being fed in two therapeutic feeding centres in one resettlement area and 64,000 mosquito nets were being distributed in a situation of 'serious concern'.

The assessment by the World Bank found malnutrition and disease in resettlement sites and advised slowing down the program.

Many of the 80 resettlement sites were 'riddled with problems, including high death rates, lack of water, and widespread malaria and other diseases. Aid agencies have expressed particular concern over Oromiya State, where there are 55 resettlement sites with rising levels of malnutrition and even deaths among children.'

Paul Herbert, director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Ethiopia, warned of 'significant levels of mortality and morbidity'. Only in Tigray Region, where thousands instead of hundreds of thousands have been moved, has resettlement been successful (New York Times, 30 May).

Elsewhere, host populations have had their cultures destroyed and clearance of forest for resettlement, even at two hectares per family (about 1 million hectares) would remove about one third of Ethiopia's remaining forest.

Problems were reported last year. Infant mortality rates were 'catastrophic' at sites in Amhara Region, with 32 deaths in the under fives being reported from one site alone by Médecins Sans Frontières (IRIN 27 November). The Ethiopian Human Rights Council reported the deaths of 22 settlers in Bale and Gondor zones of Oromia and Amhara Regions respectively, in November. In February, the UN Country Team Support Office in Awassa, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) reported that further resettlement of Konso (see below) in Selamago had been postponed indefinitely because of lack of preparation of the host site. The transfer of 1000 families in Dawro zone to Esera was postponed for the same reason and the number of households to be transferred from Hadiya zone to Dawro had been halved to 250. The planned 'resettlers' in Hadiya had already sold their belongings and were migrating to towns. Another one thousand households who were expecting to move had begun to plant their old plots or sought work in towns. Eighty three had returned to Badwacho Woreda in Hadiya zone from their resettlement site. Six thousand households are planned to move from Gedeo zone to Bench Maji and Keffa zones. Of the 840 households which arrived in January, the host community has requested the return of 105 because of 'bad behaviour'.

Omo river valley

Informants within the area report the resettlement of 3000 Konso farmers to sites in lowlands of South Omo zone of the SNNPR. One reporter believed that 3000 families rather than 3000 individuals had been relocated.

By February, numbers were settled in the Salo-Mago Woreda, inhabited by 7-8000 Mursi and Bodi peoples, who are cattle pastoralists who also depend on settled agriculture. Six resettlement sites have been established around Hana, the Woreda capital. There has been conflict between the settlers and the host population, resulting in the killing of up to 100 people. Only six police men are present to prevent such hostility.

Konso settlers are suffering badly from lowland diseases; malaria, trypanosomiasis, bilharzia etc.

The nearest hospital is in Jinka, 130 km (one day's drive) away. Konso town has a hospital and is only two days drive from Addis Ababa, on relatively good roads, but the resettlements are five days away, traveling on poor and at times impossible roads. The dispensary in the resettled area is poorly equipped and has no anti-malarial treatment. Communications and educational services are much worse in Omo than in Konso areas.

The Konso mountainous homeland (1300-2500 m), 500 km to the East, is heavily farmed but not overpopulated. There is plenty of available arable land around the Segen river, which has water all year. The area of South Omo (6-900 m) is relatively barren and rocky. Agriculture depends on flood retreat of the Omo river and highly unreliable rainfall. This has resulted since the 1970s in 'more or less continuous food insecurity, especially for the Mursi'.

In February, Sorghum, maize and millet were one meter high in Konso but not yet showing in Omo. Attempts to grow maize and sorghum five years ago in South Omo were a failure. The plants dried out before producing grain.

At least some Konso have been observed making their way home on foot, avoiding government forces along the roads, giving reports of having been shot at by Mursi people.

The motive behind this resettlement is thought to be control and taxation of the Mursi and Bodi peoples and the destruction of their culture, the informants claim.

Haro Tatesa, Illubabor

According to sources reporting to *Radio Free Oromia* (27 June), hundreds of children had died at the resettlement site in Haro Tatesa, where settlers were dying from hunger and disease at a rate of 20 per day.

Baleti and Hare Chachisa

Reporter Benjamin Joffe-Watt visited this remote area in western Ethiopia, near the Sudan border, and filed his report on 13 June. He reports that about 350,000 have been resettled there from Hararge, almost 1000 miles away in Eastern Ethiopia. Posing as a researcher, he visited two resettlement sites, at Baleti and Hare Chachisa.

Instead of a fresh start on unpopulated, fertile land, the ‘reality is that thousands of people are dying in malaria-infested camps with little food and pitifully inadequate medical care’, wrote Joffe-Watt.

One young woman in Baleti told him that her six-month old daughter died three weeks previously. Inadequate food rations (33 lb of wheat) were given monthly but included no protein or fat. The settlers were emaciated and his interviewee said ‘at the end of the month, everyone is starving’.

She was forced to leave her home area. Local officials said ‘If you don’t go, we’ll burn down your house’. Her son was also now ill with fever and diarrhoea but her dying daughter had only been given out-of-date painkillers at the clinic, which had nothing else. She pointed out the site to which she walked to and fro for six hours each day to fetch water. Her husband was dying of malaria, without any treatment. All who could afford it had returned home, she said.

Yosef Mulugeda of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council told Joffe-Watt that settlers were threatened with the withdrawal of food aid if they refused to move and that former resettlement programs had all failed. Not until May did NGOs have access to the camps. A delegation of senior government officials visited Baleti but ignored the complaints and pleas of the settlers. Joffe-Watt was forced to pose as an academic because journalists were unwelcome.

At the larger resettlement site at Hare Chachisa, patients walk for over 20 miles to see a doctor. The nearest town is three hours drive away, if the weather is dry. The only water for 2100 families is a dirty stream, ‘smelling of burnt plastic and sour milk’. Settlers did volunteer to come here in 2003 but within one week 500 had returned. ‘There was no market, no well, no easy access’ he was told. Although the land was green, farmers had died or were too weak to work because of malaria. Six hundred had died from malaria or malnutrition in the first year.

When Joffe-Watt tried to arrange an interview with the commissioner responsible for the resettlement program, his laptop computer was taken from him and destroyed.

DJIBOUTI

Refoulement 2002 and 2003

In Press Release 39 (July 2003, p. 16) OSG reported the refoulement of about 40 Oromo refugees from Djibouti on 17 April 2003. Fifteen were named.

Further information was received from Djibouti on 22 April 2004 naming three other individuals who were subjected to refoulement in April 2003. They are all from E. Hararge and are named:

Abdulqadir Ahmed Ali, 28

Mohammed Sani Dawud Aded, 32

Jafar Ibrahim Abdurahman, 35

Also named, in further correspondence on 30 April are:

Afendi Sheik Taha

Najash Abdurahman, and

Hussein Mohammed.

Local informants reported the refoulement of 20 Oromo from Djibouti in July 2003. Ahmed Ali Mohammed was sent back to Ethiopia in mid-July and Halima Qamar, who was married to a Djibouti citizen, was deported along with 18 others on 22 July 2003. Enquiries made by OSG revealed that UNHCR was unaware of the deportations.

Ali Ibrahim Yusuf was subject to refoulement in October 2002, with about 60 others, and died from injuries sustained under beating and torture in detention in Sabatenya military camp, Dire Dawa, on 7 February 2003 (Press Release 39, p. 16).

Of eight who were deported on 23 July 2002, at least four returned to Djibouti the following year, after being detained and tortured in Ethiopia (ibid).

Although small numbers have been subject to refoulement on a yearly basis, large scale removal of refugees had not occurred since 5000 were forcibly returned in atrocious conditions in December 2000, when 28 suffocated or were shot dead (ibid).

Expulsion, registration and encampment

In July 2003, the Djibouti government announced that all illegal immigrants to Djibouti who were still present at the end of August would be taken back to Ethiopia. Thousands began to leave and 2000 were reported to have departed in July alone. More than 70 were being escorted by six Djibouti soldiers when their bus crashed at Ali Sabih on 23 July, killing 50 refugees and all of the soldiers. As the deadline approached, refugees reported that their properties were being looted and girls and women were being raped, but no details were given.

By 25 August, IRIN reported that 10,000 had already left the country and that the western military presence was to blame for the expulsions. US, French, German and Spanish troops are based there for the 'war on terrorism'. However, when President Ismail Omar Guelleh was interviewed by IRIN on 29 October, he said the large number of illegal immigrants was the country's biggest problem. 'There was not one street devoid of them. They were squatting everywhere, sleeping on pavements, taking all the small jobs – it became intolerable' he said. He blessed the military presence because of the revenue it brought but made no mention of the security risk posed by refugees.

The Djibouti government announced that those who would not return voluntarily should go to Djibouti stadium on 29 August. They extended the deadline for leaving Djibouti for two weeks from 1 September, because of lack of available transport. IRIN published a report that 42,000 had departed in the preceding four weeks.

Ten thousand or more overwhelmed the facilities at the stadium. There was a dangerous shortage of food, water and shelter and several fainted while one young child died in the heat. One local informant reported that Djibouti security personnel took Abbas Mohammed Ali from the stadium and that he subsequently disappeared. Three infants were born in the stadium.

UNHCR were expecting only 4000 at the stadium and said on 3 September to IRIN that all facilities at the stadium were paralysed because of the congestion. UNHCR told OSG that the stadium was emptied by 4 September and all refugees had been transferred to a former refugee camp at Awr Aousa, closed since 1999. Here, their refugee status would be determined by Djibouti's National Eligibility Commission and by UNHCR.

Many expressed fear that Ethiopian soldiers would be able to take who they liked from Awr Aousa, near the border town of Dawale. However, access was severely restricted, there was a large Djibouti army presence around the camp and refoulement from the camp was not reported. One report received by OSG, dated 8 September, identified an Ethiopian government spy acting as a visiting merchant from Ali Sabih among the refugees and brought to and from the camp by Djibouti military vehicles. According to this report and others, there was a severe shortage of water, food and shelter at the camp, especially initially. IRIN reported on 16 September that the camp held 10,000, more than three times its intended population of 3000. The 8 September report estimated 1500 Oromo among the thousands in the camp. OSG received a report from a visitor to the camp three weeks later (30 September) and he complained of severe heat in the day and rain at night, without adequate shelter or food.

By 15 September, 80% of the immigrants to Djibouti, some 70,000, had left the country. On 16 September IRIN reported that 5000 Djibouti soldiers and security men had combed two quarters of Djibouti city and 'netted' 100 illegal immigrants. On 10 October, IRIN reported 100,000 had left the country and malnutrition and poor sanitary conditions continued at the camp for the 7-9000 refugees. In March

2004, a visitor described refugees being given only a month's ration of 6 kg of rice and one litre of oil to last for two months and families having to manage with 20 litres of water for three days. Prior to the emptying of the camp in June, severe shortages of water and food were again reported.

Detention and attempted refoulement

Two Oromo refugees, Kadir Said and Salim Ahmed, were arrested following a disturbance at Awr Aousa camp on 16 November 2003, when refugees protested before visiting embassy delegates. Kadir is a well known singer who has been in Djibouti since 1998. He was a recognised refugee by UNHCR. Salim holds ICRC documentation of being a former detainee in Ethiopia and was awaiting status determination. About 27 others were arrested at the time but released shortly afterwards.



Initially, the two were imprisoned at Gabod prison in Djibouti but were transferred to Nagad on 21 January. Nagad is a transit centre from where many have been deported back to Ethiopia. UNHCR told OSG on 5 February that the men were not being held in the 'deportation row' at Nagad, when seen by them the previous day. Atrociously unsanitary conditions were described by other visitors to them. A visitor later in February described them as 'sleeping in sewage' and not having showered for 30 days.

Despite the attention of UNHCR, on 22 March the two were discovered being driven by Djibouti security men to the border to be handed over to Ethiopian forces, when their release was secured by bribery. UNHCR subsequently housed them at another camp.

Decisions and Deportations

According to UNHCR on 15 June, the determination of status of the refugees at Awr Aousa was completed by Djibouti's National Eligibility Commission (NEC) in March. They awarded refugee status to 109 (and their dependents) out of the thousands at Awr Aousa. A UNHCR staff member sat in on the commission and another 51 were given refugee status by UNHCR in its own right. Those with refugee status were to go to another camp, Ali Adde.

Most of the 3,000 Ethiopians, mainly Oromo, in Awr Aousa were rejected. All Eritreans were rejected. All 521 from Somaliland were rejected. All 4180 Somalis were accepted.

Even if all of the 109 awarded status by the NEC and the 51 recognised by UNHCR were Oromo, there may still be many who are returned to face persecution. Some have written to OSG protesting that only 30 out of 1300 Oromo were given refugee status and that many will face persecution on return.

Unknown numbers of refugees drifted back to menial jobs in Djibouti but most remained in Awr Aousa. The decision to remove unsuccessful asylum applicants from Awr Aousa followed shortly after a visit to Djibouti by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia.

According to one informant, the refugees thought they were being transferred to another camp when trucks arrived to deport them.

Trucks took 1300 each day to the border, accompanied by a UNHCR Senior Protection Officer, on 8, 10 and 12 June. No violence was reported at the border. Following and during the deportation, there were reports of heightened security, with the detention for several days of Oromo who were legal residents in Djibouti.

KENYA

Abdi Hussein Ibrahim wrote from Kenya on 18 October 2003 of his alarming experiences in Nairobi. He fled there on foot in mid-2002. On 30 April 2003, three Tigreans approached him on his way home from the Mosque in Eastleigh III. He was terrified when one of them greeted him by name and showed him a photograph which appeared to be of his dead body. On 22 June, three non-Oromo came at 8.00 p.m. to his residence pretending to be relatives with a message for him, since when he has changed sleeping quarters. Early morning on 12 August 2003, he was greeted by name on 10 Street, Eastleigh, by a man, Atakilet, who was one of the security forces who had beaten him severely when he was detained in Goba, Bale. Abdi fled in panic. He describes himself as being in need of counseling and in a state of 'tension, trauma and insomnia'.

Individuals concerned about their friend, A. Q., a 38 yr old who has been in Kenya since 1997, wrote the following on 1 December 2003 concerning his insecurity in Nairobi:

'He has been attacked by car whom he identified as the agents of wayyane [TPLF].

Secondly, recently two wayyane security came all the way from Addis carrying his pictures. And he was warned by friends not to show up anywhere in Nairobi till these people go back and he did that for two weeks.

Thirdly, some agents of wayyane traced where he stays and come to attack him. Unfortunately he was not around by that time and they left a message that they

will come back another time. . . .Therefore, because of such a threat he left the place and moved . . .’

On 10 November 2003, a group of Oromo refugees sent a list of 59 who had been detained and mistreated by the present regime in Ethiopia, most of whom had been held for several years. Many had been rejected refugee status by UNHCR. Those with status had been ordered to Kakuma.

At the beginning of December, after qualifying for emigration to the USA and passing necessary medical examinations, about 300 Oromo, Ethiopian and Somali families were told by US Immigration officials that they were no longer traveling. At least two people committed suicide, according to local informants.

Kakuma refugee camp

Five Oromo elders who were sent to Kakuma camp, in Northwest Kenya, near to the borders with Sudan and Ethiopia, in July 2002, wrote a report on 30 December 2003. They have been placed in a new area of Kakuma III with 8 other nationalities after spending one year in the reception area ‘because of security’. They describe new arrivals from Nairobi being beaten by Sudanese refugees in the reception area and themselves being stoned one evening. Previously, Oromo refugees had been beaten by Ethiopian nationalists, remnants of the Derg communist military regime. ‘There is no assistance’ they wrote, ‘only ration card . . . in the camp there is always robbery, violence, killings’. ‘On May 30, 2002, in the reception area, Amharas fought newly arrived Oromo refugees. On July 17, 2002, in the reception, we were beaten by unknown forces in the evening and confined by local police and LWF security [LWF – Lutheran World Federation, responsible for security at the camp].’

The elders report the shooting of four refugees (one Ethiopian and three Somalis) in Kakuma I, three Somalis in Kakuma II, an attempted murder by shooting of an Oromo on 15 October 2003 in Kakuma III and the attempted killing of a Ugandan family on 2 December 2003. They report machine-gun fire in the night at the end of December and state ‘We are writing this letter so that OSG has evidence for its claim that UNHCR is not assisting Oromo refugees in Kakuma. We wrote a letter to High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers on 28 August 2003 but there was no reply’. They described being discriminated against because Oromo are a minority in Kakuma. Their children are harassed on their way to school. There ‘are many incidents of abduction of our girls by other tribes’ and ‘this camp has many underground Ethiopian agents who pass information to the Ethiopian embassy’ they wrote.

Dadaab refugee camp

At OSG's request, an Oromo refugee at Dadaab refugee camp in Northeast Province, investigated reports of abuses and problems at Dadaab. He wrote a report to OSG on 28 January, which included the following information.

Dadaab has been accepting Oromo refugees since 1991 but the Dadaab sub-office of UNHCR has been particularly reluctant to accept their stories of detention and torture, despite their bearing ICRC certificates of detention. Somali people make up 98% of the refugees there and the minority Oromo are displaced in terms of gaining employment and in obtaining interviews with UNHCR. They complain of physical attacks by Somalis and Ethiopians, forcing several families to leave. OSG's informant reported:

- 1998 – Mr Alemu was killed in Hagdera camp
- 1998 – Mohammed Hussein was robbed in Dadaab
- 2001 – Awal Mohammed was abducted from Hagadera camp
- 19 July 2002 – Taye Tolcha and Zerihun Beru were badly injured in conflict between Somali and Oromo communities at Dagahel camp over access to a water tap
- 29 November 2002 – Robbers attacked Oromo community in Dagahaley
- 2002 – Mohammed Hussein committed suicide
- 2003 – Kenyan police raped a 12 yr old Oromo girl at Ifo camp
- 2003 – At Dagahaley, Jamal Chakiso severely beaten by Somalis, causing head and eye injuries; Ms Zeytuna Nure severely beaten
- 2003 – Israel Wakjira driven from camp because of his Christian name; Birhanu Girmaye attacked at water tap; Bayan Jaylan, Hailu Adugna, Ismael Mohamed, Mohamed Jamal and others went missing from Dagahaley refugee camp and are rumoured to have been abducted.

Since the re-screening of refugees began at Dadaab in September 2003, OSG's informant reported, Oromo have had to sleep at the office, subject to harassment, spitting and beating from other refugees while awaiting interview. None have been considered for resettlement.

Oromo refugees who have been sent for interview from Nairobi have been refused refugee status. After appealing, they have been again refused so they are now stranded without food or shelter and fearful of returning to Nairobi because of their illegality and the road checkpoints. The following are among those who have been rejected status:

Mohamed Nair	Waktole
Yassin Hassan	Malato
Bushura Mohamed Sulti	Dabala
Mustafa Abgara Abadiko	Bayan
Jamar Hirpho	Mekdes Zegeye

Sadiya (accompanied disabled
child)
Zellalem (Tiblet)

Teshome Simi'on
Adnan Ibrahim Jamal

These individuals carried ICRC certificates of detention, newspaper or other reports of their detention but received final rejections from UNHCR, nonetheless.

Kenyan army arrests suspected OLF sympathisers

The Kenyan *Daily Nation* (19 June), *Sunday Standard* (20 June) and *AFP* (Nairobi, 18 June) reported that 1200 (1500, according to the *Daily Nation*) soldiers of the Paratroopers Battalion, 1st Kenya Regiment, and police were deployed in Moyale and Marsabit along the border with Ethiopia during the previous 10-12 days. They sealed off border towns with roadblocks and conducted house searches. Gunfights, resulting in injuries and possibly deaths during the crackdown, were reported by the *Sunday Standard*. The soldiers arrested 63 Oromo from Ethiopia and Kenya according to *AFP*. According to the *Daily Nation*, 84 (all from Ethiopia) were arrested. *AFP* reported that the majority of detainees were Kenyan Oromo.

The action was precipitated by requests made by the Ethiopian government at the 3 June meeting of the Ethiopia-Kenya Border Commission. Officially, the move was in response to incursions by the OLF into Kenya, despite the OLF's often repeated claims of having no bases in the country.

The *Sunday Standard* quotes Moyale MP Dr Guracha Galgalo saying that the repeated incursions by Ethiopian troops were responsible for the abduction and torture of Kenyan Oromo (see for example OSG Press Release 33, May 2001, p.28, which records eight separate incursions of Ethiopian troops within a 10 month period, in which over 100 civilians were killed).

The *Daily Nation* wrote that the Ethiopian army was responsible for abducting, torturing and killing Kenyans who they suspected of supporting the OLF and that residents lived in fear of Ethiopian troops.

In a statement on 19 June, the OLF reported that Oromo collaborators, in Ethiopian army uniforms, were pointing out people whom they suspected of supporting the OLF to Kenyan soldiers, during the border operation. The OLF wrote that 'flushing out rebels' was an excuse for both the Kenyan and Ethiopian armies to oppress, harass and persecute any Oromo who sympathises with the aims of the OLF – self-determination for the Oromo people.

Claims of finding a significant arms cache at Walda trading centre were exaggerated. Apart from 70,000 bullets, three cartons of mines and six boxes of hand grenades were found.

YEMEN

The Oromo Refugee Community in San'a, Yemen, wrote on 23 August 2003 of the detention of Oromo refugees in Yemen, apparently in co-operation with the Ethiopian government. The detainees are named:

Abdurahman Hussein Ali
Ahmed Mohammed See'id
Abudujabar Ahmed Fato
Mohammed Abubakar Yaqob
Tadesse Gorshi Lamessa
Mohammed Ali Abdalla
Badhaso Mohammed Ahmed

The last three named were initially held incommunicado. Many Oromo refugees who are known OLF sympathisers went into hiding after these detentions and their families were reported to be facing severe hardship.

IRIN reported from Nairobi on 27 August 2003 that 30 refugees attempting to reach Yemen from Puntland were feared drowned after 85, including refugees from Ethiopia, were forced at gunpoint to leave the boat three miles from the Yemen shore. The acting consul for Somalia in Yemen told IRIN that 950 were drowned trying to reach Yemen in 2002 and that 250 had died so far in 2003.

Ethiopia's *Mail and Guardian* reported on 31 March 2004 that over 100 refugees had been drowned when their boat collided with a Somali vessel on their way to Yemen on 20 March. In a separate incident, another 100 lives were lost when a boat which set off from Puntland met with an accident, the paper reported.

Abbreviations

AAU	Addis Ababa University
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (government umbrella party)
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network (UN news agency)
MTA	Macha Tulama Association (Oromo self-help organisation)
OHRC	Ogaden Human Rights Committee
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo Peoples Democratic Organisation (government Oromo Party)
OSG	Oromia Support Group
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
TPLF	Tigrean Peoples Liberation Front (dominant government Party)
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees