Djibouti: destitution and fear for refugees from Ethiopia

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Dr Trevor Trueman, Chair of the Oromia Support Group, was funded by OSG and ORA UK to conduct research among refugees in Djibouti and Somaliland in November and December 2011. He is the author of this report, which details experiences of refugees in Djibouti, and of OSG Report 47, which recounted the experiences of refugees in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

The Oromia Support Group is a non-political organisation which attempts to raise awareness of human rights violations in Ethiopia. OSG has now reported 4407 extra-judicial killings and 992 disappearances of civilians in Ethiopia. Hundreds of thousands have been placed in illegal detention, where torture and rape are commonplace.

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Front cover:
Street scene, Djibouti city
Desert scene near Ali Addeh
Distant view of, from left to right, garrison, town and refugee camp at Ali Addeh

Djibouti: destitution and fear for refugees from Ethiopia

Summary

Refugees from Ethiopia and officials of NGOs and governments were interviewed in Somaliland and Djibouti in November and December 2011. Formal interviews with 43 refugees, including 26 in Djibouti, confirmed other reports that a high proportion of refugees from Ethiopia have been tortured.

Twenty one of the 43 interviewees (49%), including eight of the 26 interviewed in Djibouti, had been tortured. Every male former detainee (17) and four out of six female former detainees had been tortured - 91% of 23 former detainees.

At least four of the six female former detainees were serially and multiply raped. Three more, two when aged 11-14, were raped by Ethiopian security forces in or near their homes.

Interviewees reported 34 killings of close relatives and friends by Ethiopian security forces and the deaths of 94 in horrific circumstances in detention. One gave an eye-witness account of the Weter massacre, where he reported 1000 were shot dead in 1992.

There are several hundred registered asylum-seekers in Djibouti city and several thousand undocumented immigrants from Ethiopia. Registration, which was resumed for new applicants in 2010, affords a degree of protection from police roundups and the threat of deportation to Ethiopia. Refoulement of large numbers of registered asylum-seekers and UNHCR mandate refugees is now less common, due to better training of the Djibouti police by UNHCR.

However, refoulement of at least 25 Oromo and Ogadeni asylum-seekers and refugees occurred between November 2010 and January 2011. Eye-witness accounts corroborate claims that these men and women were abducted by snatch squads consisting of Djibouti and Ethiopian security forces.

UNHCR acknowledges that some were taken but believes reports by Djibouti police that only members of armed opposition groups were arrested and deported. Evidence provided by eye-witnesses and acquaintances of those refouled is not consistent with this belief. UNHCR does not appreciate the risk of abduction and refoulement for refugees who have no association with Ethiopian opposition groups, nor the associated fear that is part of their daily lives.

Asylum-seekers in Djibouti city lead a marginal existence, due to high unemployment and exploitation of cheap casual labour. Xenophobic and sexual violence is commonly reported in the city and in the area of Ali Addeh refugee camp, where most of the few hundred Ethiopian mandated refugees live. Two women reported three incidents of rape, including two of gang-rape in Djibouti city.

The sluggish refugee status determination process badly needs overhauling in Djibouti. Very few asylum-seekers achieve refugee status and therefore the assistance available in Ali Addeh camp or the slim chance of being considered for resettlement in a third country.

The factors that lead people to leave their homes, communities and lands in search of safety are complex. Repression, social violence, armed conflict, poverty and forced displacement co-exist and reinforce each other. The immediate cause of flight is almost always the danger of human rights abuse. . . .
The growing number of refugees is neither a temporary problem nor the random product of chance events. It is the predictable consequence of human rights crises, the result of decisions made by individuals who wield power over people's lives. If governments did their job - if they protected their citizens instead of persecuting them - then those in exile could return home safely, and no more men, women and children would have to gamble on an uncertain future in a foreign land.

Amnesty International. Refuge! Africa. In search of safety: The forcibly displaced and human rights in Africa. Index AFR 01/05/97. London. June 1997 (pp.1 and 6).

Acknowledgements

Especial thanks are due to the UNHCR staff in Djibouti city. The Country Representative Mme Marie-Antoinette Okimba, Senior Protection Officer Mme Myléne Ahounou and Protection Officer Hassan Said Mohammed were particularly considerate and generous with their time, despite their onerous work schedules.
Hassan Said also arranged my visit to the ONARS office and translated during my meeting with the Assistant Executive Secretary. Mme Okimba kindly arranged my transport to and from Ali Addeh camp and Dr Makou, UNHCR office manager at Ali Sabieh, helped smooth the way with the Djibouti authorities for my interviewing refugees at Ali Addeh. Mafud, who drove me to and from Ali Addeh, was not only an excellent driver, but a courteous and expert guide.
Senior Resettlement Officer Ms Ann Strandoo, kindly arranged for me to use UNHCR premises to interview refugees on my last full day in Djibouti.
I am most grateful to the refugees and asylum-seekers in Djibouti city and Ali Addeh who accompanied me and arranged and translated interviews, despite these activities raising their profile under the watchful eyes of the Djibouti security system.
I am most indebted to the individuals whom I interviewed. Their accounts form the backbone of this report. Although I was unable to offer them anything other than telling their stories, they gave me access to their lives and entrusted me with their, often harrowing, histories. Those who helped me and almost all of my interviewees cannot be named because it would compromise their security. Nevertheless, I give them my grateful appreciation.
Finally, two Oromo refugees in the UK, Anwar Abdi Roba and Leencaa Aba-Gero, maintained contact with me and the refugee community in Djibouti throughout my visit and were a great source of strength and security.

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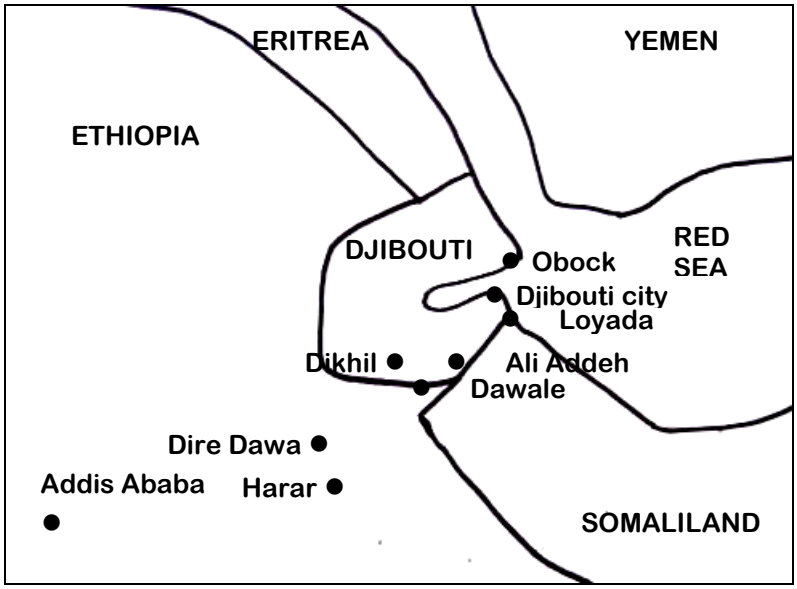
Abbreviations

CID	Central Investigation Department, Maikelawi, the site of the 3rd Police Station in Addis Ababa, notorious for torturing political detainees
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy political party
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front umbrella party, led and dominated by the TPLF
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network, the UN news agency
LDDH	Ligue Djiboutienne des Droits Humains, Djibouti Human Rights League
NEC	National Eligibility Commission, Djibouti government body responsible for refugee status determination
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONARS	Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistrés, Djibouti government immigration department
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
ORA	Oromo Relief Association
OSG	Oromia Support Group
SDS	Service du Documentation et de Securité, Djibouti's security service
TPLF	Tigrean People's Liberation Front
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Introduction

This report

I visited Djibouti and Somaliland between 22 November and 2 December 2011, to gather information from refugees about abuses against them in Ethiopia and to investigate reports of refoulement and insecurity in their host countries.



Map showing the borders between Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somaliland, separated by the Red Sea from Yemen.
The nearest large town to Ali Addeh camp is Ali Sabieh, 25 km to the west of the camp and 10 km northeast of Dawale.
The Awr Aousa valley, the site of a camp before 1999 and from September 2003 to June 2004, is 15-20 km west of Ali Sabieh (40-45 km west of Ali Addeh).

This is the second of two reports based on the research trip. Like the first (OSG Report 47, Persecuted in Ethiopia: Hunted in Hargeisa) this report includes summarised information about abuses experienced by 43 individuals who were interviewed in both Somaliland and Djibouti. The main body of this report is a record of the life and insecurity of refugees in Djibouti city and Ali Addeh camp.

There are two appendices. The first summarises some of the arrests, episodes of refoulement and attacks on refugees in Djibouti since 1980, especially since 1996, when the Oromia Support Group began receiving records from refugees there. Appendix 2 consists of accounts given by 26 refugees who were interviewed at length in Djibouti city (14) and Ali Addeh (12). Three other, less detailed, accounts are given at the end of Appendix 2 (see p.11).

Reasons for leaving Ethiopia

The EPRDF regime in Ethiopia,[1] now in its 21st year, has labelled the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), with which it shared power from 1991-1992, as a terrorist organisation.[2] Any opposition or lack of compliance shown by members of the Oromo majority (40% of Ethiopia's 83 million people)[3] is met with accusations of involvement with the OLF.[4] Members of legally registered Oromo opposition parties are tarred with the same brush.[5]

[1] Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front, the umbrella party led and dominated by the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF).
[2] http://*Ethiotribune*.com 31 October 2006.
[3] Estimated at 82 million by US State Department. 2010 Human Rights Reports: Ethiopia. 8 April 2011. Introduction; and 40% of population, in Section 6; population estimated at 85 million in Amnesty International Report 2011. The State of the World's Human Rights: Ethiopia. London. 18 May 2011. Introduction.

Resistance to complete EPRDF control of resources, economy and political space in all regions of Ethiopia is confronted with violence and coercion. Political opposition, given unprecedented opportunity to express itself before the 2005 election, was crushed when CUD and other party members and leaders were detained and charged with treason.[6] Reverting to type in the 2010 elections, the EPRDF claimed 99.6% of the votes.[7]

Using the rhetoric of the 'war on terror' the Ethiopian government has fought a brutal campaign against the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in its Somali Region, which has involved war crimes and crimes against humanity, according to Human Rights Watch.[8] Mass killings in Gambella, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region, have been classified as genocide.[9]

Reports of human rights violations are internally consistent and consistent with reports over the last 18 years published by the Oromia Support Group and yearly reports by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the US State Department.

Numbers leaving Ethiopia, destinations

Generally, three quarters of refugees seek sanctuary in neighbouring countries and four fifths are hosted in developing countries.[10] The majority (7.2 million) of the 10.55 million refugees recognised by UNHCR in 2010, were in 'protracted situations', having been refugees for more than five years.[11] The only way to find permanent safety for most of these is resettlement in a third country. Yet only 1% were resettled in 2010.[12]

There are now more Oromo and other people from Ethiopia living abroad than ever before. Ethiopia was ranked 23rd among refugee producing countries in 2010, with figures similar to Iran, and was second only to Colombia as the country of origin of asylum applicants at the end of the year.[13] The host countries of refugees from Ethiopia were not named in the 2010 report, but the report for 2009 listed Somalia, South Africa and Kenya as their top destinations.[14]

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[4] Human Rights Watch. Suppressing dissent: human rights abuses and political repression in Ethiopia's Oromia region. New York. 10 May 2005. pp.7-11.
[5] Amnesty International. Dismantling dissent: intensified crackdown on free speech in Ethiopia. Index AFR 25/011/2011. London. December 2011. p.10.
[6] Coalition for Unity and Democracy. See Human Rights Watch. One Hundred Ways of Putting Pressure. New York. 24 March 2010.
[7] Tronvoll, Kjetil (2011). Briefing: The Ethiopian 2010 federal and regional elections: Re-establishing the one-party state. African Affairs, 110:438, 121-136.
[8] Human Rights Watch World Report 2009. Ethiopia. War Crimes and Other Abuses by Ethiopian Military Forces. New York. January 2009.
[9] Genocide Watch and Survival Rights International report. 16 February 2004, www.genocidewatch.org, and Genocide Alert, issued 14 April 2004 by genocidewatch@aol.com
[10] UNHCR. Global Trends 2010. Geneva. 20 June 2011. p.11.
[11] *Ibid*. pp.11 and 14.
[12] *Ibid*. p.17.
[13] *Ibid*. Table 2, pp.42-46. Figures include national statistics which are not standardised and include some estimates made by UNHCR. Out of 837,478 asylum applications pending at the end of 2010, 48,856 were made by people from Ethiopia. Colombia was the only country with a higher number - 59,954. There were 68,832 registered refugees from Ethiopia and 68,795 from Iran.
[14] UNHCR. Global Trends 2009. Geneva. 15 June 2010.

Table 1 shows the number of refugees and asylum-seekers from Ethiopia among the totals in Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan and Yemen, according to the current Global Report by UNHCR. The many who are unable or unwilling to register as asylum-seekers are not included, nor are those urban refugees whose files are not kept active.

Table 1. Refugees and asylum-seekers from Ethiopia among totals in host countries.[15]

Host Country		From Ethiopia	Total
Djibouti	- Refugees	600	15,060
	- Asylum-seekers	370	740
Kenya	- Refugees	21,300	402,980
	- Asylum-seekers	14,100	28,020
Somalia*	- Refugees	1,900	1,960
	- Asylum-seekers	24,000	24,160
South Africa	- Refugees	3,400	57,900
	- Asylum-seekers	†10,700	171,700
Sudan	- Refugees	9,100	166,510
	- Asylum-seekers	3,200	6,030
Yemen	- Refugees	4,200	190,010
	- Asylum-seekers	1,800	2,500

* UNHCR did not distinguish Somaliland or Puntland from the rest of Somalia.
†UNHCR Global Trends 2009 (not available in Global Report 2010).

The majority of refugees in Djibouti (14,200),[16] Kenya (351,800) and Yemen (179,800) are prima facie refugees from Somalia. The majority in Sudan (103,800) are from Eritrea.

Methodology

Project and author of report

With a small amount of funding obtained through the Oromo Relief Association UK (ORA) and the Oromia Support Group (OSG), I visited refugees in the capital city and in Ali Addeh refugee camp in Djibouti and in Hargeisa, Somaliland, between 22 November and 2 December 2011.

I have been interested in the human rights situation in Ethiopia since helping to train ORA health workers among refugee populations in Sudan and in OLF-held areas of western Oromia Region between 1988 and 1992. Since 1994, as chair of OSG, I have written 47 OSG reports and many articles about human rights violations in Ethiopia.

In September 2010, I visited Oromo refugees in Kenya, at Kakuma and Dadaab camps and in two estates in Nairobi. My findings were published by ORA and OSG.[17, 18]

[15] UNHCR Global Report. Geneva. June 2011.
[16] See p. 28 for more up-to-date figures from UNHCR.
[17] Trueman, Trevor (2010). Ethiopia exports more than coffee: Oromo refugees, fear and destitution in Kenya. Oromo Relief Association UK and Oromia Support Group. London, December 2010. http://www.oromo.org/Ethiopia%20exports%20more%20than%20coffee.pdf

Timetable in Djibouti

22.11.11. Arrival. Meeting with five members of Oromo refugee committee.
23.11.11. Meeting with the late Jean-Paul Noel Abdi, President of Ligue Djiboutienne des Droits Humains (LDDH).[19]
Visit to refugees in Quartier 4.
Interviews delayed because of security concerns. Four interviews with refugees.
24.11.11. Meeting with UNHCR: Hassan Said Mohamed, Protection Officer; Mme Mylène Ahounou, Senior Protection Officer; Mme Marie-Antoinette Okimba, Country Representative.
Interviews delayed because of security concerns. Two interviews with refugees.
25.11.11. Flight to Hargeisa, Somaliland.
28.11.11. Return flight to Djibouti.
29.11.11. Journey to Ali Addeh camp. Introduction to Dr Makou (UNHCR, Ali Sabieh). Group meeting with 50 refugees. Three substantive interviews with refugees. Meeting with chairman of Oromo refugee committee and five other Oromo refugees.
Informal meeting with Church World Service Resettlement Officers, Ali Sabieh.
30.11.11. Nine interviews with refugees at Ali Addeh camp. Meeting with chairman of Ethiopian refugee committee, four other members of the committee and an Oromo teacher and translator.
1.12.11. Visit to Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistrés (ONARS), witnessing registration process, with Hassan Said Mohamed (UNHCR).
Meeting with Hasan Roble Barre, Assistant Executive Secretary, ONARS, with Hassan Said Mohamed.
Eight interviews with refugees conducted at UNHCR premises.
Meetings (morning and evening) with UNHCR (officers as on 24.11.11).
2.12.11. Flight to London.

Interviews and meetings with refugees and asylum-seekers

In the following paragraphs, asylum-seekers and undocumented migrants, i.e. those without recognised refugee status, are sometimes referred to as refugees if they or members of their families left Ethiopia because of persecution or fear of persecution.

Refugees were informed that the purpose of my visit was research and that I was not able to act as an advocate or promote individual cases for registration or resettlement. Interviewees were selected by the Oromo refugee committee in Djibouti city and by the Oromo and Ethiopian refugee committees in Ali Addeh camp. I asked to speak to individuals from different areas of Oromia and Ethiopia who had been in Djibouti for different lengths of time. I asked to speak to at least as many women as men. Individuals were not selected for interview on the basis of the severity of abuses they experienced in Ethiopia.
Twenty-six of the 43 substantive interviews conducted during the research period took place in Djibouti; 14 in Djibouti city and 12 in Ali Addeh. Two male translators were used in Djibouti city and two male translators (both teachers) were used in Ali Addeh. No female translators were available. Interviews lasted 40-80 minutes.

[18]Oromia Support Group. Human Rights Abuses in Ethiopia. Reports from refugees in Kenya, September 2010. Report 46. Malvern. December 2010. http://www.oromo.org/osg/pr46_1.html and /pr46_2.html
[19] Jean-Paul died on 13 April 2012.

After brief enquiries about age, place of origin, occupation and family, interviewees were asked about the problems they had in Ethiopia and were prompted to give more detail or explanation when appropriate. They were then asked about their lives since leaving Ethiopia.

All interviewees except two used pseudonyms. Each of their accounts, in as much detail as is safe for them and their families, is given in Appendix 2.

Meetings with groups of refugees and shorter interviews with individuals also took place. Five members of the Oromo refugee committee were met on 22 November in Djibouti city. Fifty refugees from Ethiopia attended a meeting in the Ethiopian community centre at Ali Addeh on 29 November. At Ali Addeh, six members of the Oromo community, including a teacher and translator, were met on 29 November and another six (five members of the Ethiopian community committee and another Oromo teacher and translator) were met on 30 November.

Yalew Lelesse, a deaf Eritrean man at Ali Addeh, communicated his sadness and isolation and his arrests following protests at the camp by displaying written information and pictures on garments and material, photographs of which are at the end of Appendix 2 (p. 84). Information gathered piecemeal from a refugee in Djibouti city is also added at the end of Appendix 2 (‘Abdusalem’), as is the record of a brief interview with a recently released detainee in Djibouti (‘Ali’) on the morning of my departure, 2 December.

Interviewees

Information given in the 43 structured interviews in Djibouti and Hargeisa is summarised in tables 2-4, below. Arbitrarily, mistreatment is not classified as torture if it is limited to beating (unless struck repeatedly with wooden batons, iron bars or rifle butts), kicking, forced labour, threats of execution (unless gun put in mouth or held to head) or intimidation.

Overall, the average age of interviewees was 36 years. The average age of interviewees in Djibouti was close to this (37 overall, 36 in Djibouti city and 38 in Ali Addeh). There was a greater scatter of ages in Hargeisa interviewees. Although in Djibouti the ages ranged from 28 to 63, whereas in Hargeisa the range was 22 to 48, the majority of interviewees in Djibouti (21 out of 26) were between 30 and 40, while only 8 out of 17 in Hargeisa were within this age-group.

The objective of interviewing at least as many women as men was met in Djibouti (14 out of 26), but only five out of 17 interviewees in Hargeisa were women.

Overall, most interviewees were Oromo (32 out of 43), mainly from Hararge (26). There were 7 Amhara interviewees, 4 from Hararge, 2 from Addis Ababa and one from Wollo, Amhara Region. The remaining 4 interviews were with refugees from Eritrea (one Saho Eritrean and one Ethiopian/Eritrean from Messawa), Tigray and Ogaden/ Somali Regions.

All of the 14 interviewed in Djibouti city were Oromo. Thirteen were from Hararge and one was from Jimma. Of the 12 interviewed in Ali Addeh, four were Oromo, at least three of whom were from Hararge. The others were Amhara (four from Hararge and one from Wollo), Saho Eritrean, Ethio-Eritrean and Ogadeni.

Table 2. Interviewees in Djibouti city

Interviewee	Age	Sex	Origin	Ethnicity	Year arrived	Detention	Torture	Rape	Comments
1. Asli	33	F	Hararge	Oromo	2007	2007-3 weeks	Y	In detention	Husband detained and disappeared
2. Halima	38	F	Hararge	Oromo	2005	No			Beaten at home, miscarried Husband detained and disappeared
3. Hana	40*	F	Hararge	Oromo	2006	No		In home	Husband detained and disappeared
4. Sara	30	F	Hararge	Oromo	1994	No			Brother shot dead
5. Abdi	36	M	Hararge	Oromo	1997	1995-1996	Y		Avoided refoulement 2004
6. Abdurahman	39	M	Hararge	Oromo	2005	2005-18 days	Y		Father detained and disappeared
7. Biftu	30	F	Hararge	Oromo	2005	2005-3 weeks	N	In detention	Sister-in-law also raped
8. Kadija A.	35	F	Hararge	Oromo	2009	No			Husband and brother detained
9. Caaltu	37	F	Hararge	Oromo	2002	No			Shot in leg; Father shot dead. Brother disappeared
10. Leenco A.	55	M	Hararge	Oromo	2006	No			Shot in leg
11. Raree	35*	M	Hararge	Oromo	2006	No			Brother and father shot dead
12. Abdata	32	M	Jimma	Oromo	2002 and 2007	No			Father shot dead Avoided refoulement 2002 Refouled 2004, shot in leg
13. Foole	42	M	Hararge	Oromo	1996 and 2008	1992-1996 2003-2008	Y Y		Coerced to return 2003
14. Abdulla	28	M	Hararge	Oromo	2008	No			Father died in detention

*Estimate by interviewee

Table 3. Interviewees in Ali Addeh refugee camp, Djibouti

Interviewee	Age	Sex	Origin	Ethnicity	Year arrived	Detention	Torture	Rape	Comments
1. Genet T.	30	F	Messawa	Ethio/Eritrean	1998	No			Home burnt, family scattered 1988
2. Gebre-M.	38	M	Hararge	Amhara	1992	1992-8 days	Y		Father and uncle detained
3. Osman A.	41	M	Hararge	Oromo	1992	1991-4 months	Y		Brother shot dead Avoided refoulement Jan. 2011
4. Unabor	50	M	Eritrea	Saho (Eritrean)	2003	1990-1991 and 1999-2 months	Y		Detained and tortured by EPLF Friend killed by hanging (PLF)† Detained twice in Djibouti, 2009
5. Habiba	39*	F	Ogaden	Ogadeni	1993	No			Husband refouled 2003; cousin refouled January 2011, after 15 Ogadeni refouled December 2010
6. Kadija	34*	F	Wollo	Amhara	1992	No		In home when 14	Mother detained and disappeared Sexually harassed in Ali Addeh
7. Amina	30*	F	Hararge	Amhara	1993	No		Near home when 11-12	Family taken, home destroyed; Husband sought by Djibouti police
8. Fatuma	40*	F	Hararge	Oromo	1992	No		In Djibouti	Father and brother killed 1992
9. Fatiya	30	F	Hararge	Amhara	2005	No		In Djibouti (twice)	Stabbed and mutilated during second (multiple) rape in Djibouti Brother detained, beaten to death
10. Asha	63	F	Hararge	Amhara	1991	No			Arrested, beaten in Awr Aousa
11. Osman B.	31	M	Hararge	Oromo	2002	2002-5 months	Y		Avoided refoulement 2004 Detained 25 days in Djibouti
12. Mohamed	31	M	?	Oromo	2001	No			Detained 7 days in Djibouti

†Detained after defecting from Derg army to Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF); later detained and friend killed by Popular Liberation Front, an opposition group to EPLF, backed by TPLF.

*Estimate by interviewee

Table 4. Interviewees in Hargeisa, Somaliland

Interviewee	Age	Sex	Origin	Ethnicity	Year arrived	Detention	Torture	Rape	Comments
1. Kalid	28	M	Addis Ababa	Amhara	2007	No			Saw 3 demonstrators killed 2005
2. Dagles	45	M	Somali Region	Oromo	2002	1995-2002	Y		6 cell mates died in prison and 2 were shot dead on release 2000
3. Addis-Hiyot	46	F	Addis Ababa	Amhara	2005	2005-1 month	Y	In detention and in Hargeisa	Rapists in Hargeisa (6) released after 24 hrs in detention
4. Zelalem	35	M	Arsi	Oromo	2007	1992-1994 2005-2006	Y Y		Shot in leg and abdomen Cousin and 3 friends shot dead; Avoided refoulement October 2011 when two abducted from his home
5. Akele G.	41	M	Tigray	Tigrean	2001	2001-11 weeks	Y		
6. Dursitu	32	F	Hararge	Oromo	1994 Djibouti 1996-2004 2004 Somaliland		Y	?	Of 17 refouled from Djibouti 1996 12 were shot dead, she was injured
7. Yaadatu	38	F	Hararge	Oromo	2003	No			Husband detained 1995-1997; He was refouled from Hargeisa 1998 and detained until 2002
8. Mulis	38	M	Hararge	Oromo	2003	1993-1994 2000-2002	Y Y		His friends, a couple and their two children, died when their home in Hargeisa was set on fire in 2010
9. Qiltu	29	M	Bale	Oromo	2007	2006-18 months	Y		Two cell mates died in prison Detained in Hargeisa 10-14 days December 2011 - January 2012

Table 4. Interviewees in Hargeisa, Somaliland, continued

Interviewee	Age	Sex	Origin	Ethnicity	Year arrived	Detention	Torture	Rape	Comments
10. Imee W.	42	M	Hararge	Oromo	2000	1994-1995 1996-1997 1999-2000	? Y Y		Reported that 1500 died in Hurso military camp from food poisoning Refouled from Saudi Arabia 1999
11. Karayu	28	M	Hararge	Oromo	2006	2005-4 months	Y		
12. Asiya	25*	F	Hararge	Oromo	2005	2005-25 days	N	In and on way to detention	
13. Saatu	31	F	Hararge	Oromo	2005	1997-1 year	Y	N	'Many' in her area died and disappeared in detention
14. Nantukini	31	M	Hararge	Oromo	2005	1999-2005	Y		2 cell mates died Detained 7 days Hargeisa
15. Yusuf	22	M	Hararge	Oromo	2006	No			Father detained and tortured 8 years; cousin killed
16. Hargayabor	35	M	Hararge	Oromo	2005	1999-2005	Y		
17. Mulata	48	M	Arsi	Oromo	2002	1993-7 months 1998-2002	Y Y		2 friends shot dead; wife tortured to death; 2 cell mates and 74 other prisoners died

*Estimate by interviewee

Reported abuses in Ethiopia

Overall findings from the 43 interviews, in Hargeisa as well as Djibouti, are given below. Incidents reported by refugees in Djibouti are referenced to individual interviewees in Appendix 2. As may be seen from tables 2-4, similar accounts were given by refugees from all ethnic groups and in each place where interviews were conducted. A group of 50 at a meeting in Ali Addeh camp was questioned about abuses experienced by them and their families. Their responses are summarised at the end of this section.

Killings, shootings and deaths in detention

The 43 interviewees reported the shooting to death of 34 individual relatives and acquaintances by government forces. Eye-witness accounts were given of 27 of the killings, including three demonstrators and three mourners at a funeral in 2005. Four brothers and four fathers of six interviewees were shot dead in 1992, 2001, 2002 and 2007. Another five relatives and family friends were killed in 2005 and 2006. The 34 killings include 12 who were deported with one interviewee from Djibouti in 1996, detained in the former cotton factory in Dire Dawa and taken from there to a ravine and summarily executed. They also include two health workers shot dead when trying to avoid capture in 1998 and two men on the day they returned home from detention in a military camp in Jigjiga in 2000. The 34 killings do not include other deaths of detainees within military camps and prisons. Those are considered separately below.

Raree recalled with difficulty the killing of his brother and father among the one thousand demonstrators shot dead by government troops in Weter in 1992. ‘They said everyone has the right to support the party they want’ he said.

Only two of those killed in the 1992 massacre at Weter, East Hararge, are included above. A farmer from a nearby village broke down when he gave an eye-witness account of the killing of his father and brother and over 1000 other demonstrators at Weter. Raree was about 17 years old at the time and remembers the day when a huge crowd demonstrated in support of the OLF after it was forced out of the transitional government. He was quite sure of the number killed and described how about half of the 150-200 soldiers fired for 30 minutes on the crowd. He had only been able to find his brother’s body because of minor deformities of his toes, which protruded from the piles of corpses. (See left and p.70.)

Four of the interviewees were shot and sustained serious injuries to their legs and/or abdomens. All four had relatives or acquaintances killed, three at the time of their being shot. Many of the interviewees also bore scars from beatings and torture.

Overall, the interviewees spontaneously reported 94 deaths in detention, due to injuries while being tortured and beaten and/or medical neglect. All but five of these deaths were eye-witness reports from co-detainees. They all occurred between 1996 and 2006.

Two former detainees at Hamaresa military camp, East Hararge, reported 74 deaths among 300 OLF fighters during an eleven month period in 1998-1999. Six died in one night alone. The disposal of the bodies is described at the end of the section on torture.

In addition, two interviewees who had been detained in military camps in Dire Dawa and Kombolcha in East Hararge reported 'many' others being killed and made to disappear in detention. A former detainee at Sebategna military camp in Dire Dawa described how a man in his twenties from Shashemane had managed to kill himself by applying a shoelace around his neck, rather than face further mistreatment.

Osman A was subjected to torture by mock execution, with a rifle pushed into his mouth, fired close to his head and near to his body after he was thrown into a shallow grave. He was beaten, whipped with electric cable and 'water boarded'. Once, when he collapsed after torture, a red hot iron pipe was applied to his abdomen, leaving the above scar. See p.75.

One other report of a large number of deaths in detention came from a former detainee at Hurso military camp between 1994 and 1995. He reported that 1500 had died from 'food poisoning', which may possibly have been dysentery or cholera. He was visibly upset when describing how their bodies were left out for hyenas and other animals to eat. 'Dogs ate their bones' he said.

Disappearances

Five disappearances of close relatives were spontaneously reported by interviewees. One man reported the disappearance of his father in detention in 2004. A woman reported the disappearance of her mother in 1991 and three women reported the disappearance in detention of their husbands in 1992, 2005 and 2007.

Beating and torture

All detainees were beaten at some stage, nearly all in each of their places of detention, and there were other reports of violence - against demonstrators or during the arrest of family members. For example, one street protestor in 1996 was left with an exposed broken collar bone after it was smashed with a rifle butt and one woman miscarried following severe beating at the arrest of her husband in May 2005 (Halima, p.64).

All of the 17 male former detainees reported being tortured, in almost all their places of detention. Four of the six female former detainees reported being tortured. Thus 21 (49%) of 43 interviewees (91% of 23 former detainees) gave a history of torture. Literature surveys, by academics and clinicians at the Minnesota Center for Victims of Torture and the University

of Minnesota,[20] showed prevalence rates of torture of 5-35% among refugee populations elsewhere. However, 69% of men and 37% of women among over 500 Oromo refugees interviewed in Minneapolis reported being tortured in Ethiopia. The present study corroborates the findings in Minneapolis and the author's findings in Kenya in 2010,[21] that refugees from Ethiopia are more likely to report having been tortured than refugees from elsewhere.

Most of those who were tortured reported being beaten with wooden staves, iron bars, gun barrels or rifle butts, and/or being whipped with electric cable. Several were held for long periods with their hands tied or handcuffed and some with their feet shackled together. For three interviewees, their torture was limited to these methods.

Six reported having the soles of their feet beaten with sticks or whipped with electric cable (bastinado). Another report of bastinado came from the wife of a former detainee. This was a favourite technique of the Derg and continues to be commonly reported from Ethiopia and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East.

Four interviewees had their arms tied tightly above the elbows, behind their backs, repeatedly for between three and 24 hours at a time. This form of torture was commonly reported from Ethiopia in the 1990s. It often caused paralysis and wasting of the forearms and hands. Some cases of gangrene requiring amputation were recorded by Amnesty International.[22] The four reports were from refugees in Hargeisa, who had been held in military camps in East Hararge (near Kombolcha-1997, Harar-ca2000, and two reports from Dire Dawa in 1996). Two reported having partial paralysis of their hands for several months and one year. A 31 year-old woman who had this done to her many times said 'Many had paralysed hands and were unable to eat. Many did not recover. I know five or six like this.'

Four were repeatedly threatened with a pistol or rifle placed inside the mouth or under the chin. Osman A, whose front tooth was damaged by a Kalashnikov barrel pushed into his mouth, was subjected to mock execution in Masala military camp, West Hararge, in 1992. A rifle was fired beside and just over his head and then into a shallow grave, said to contain a body. On another occasion, he was pushed, with his hands tied behind his back, into a shallow grave and a rifle fired near to him. (See insert, p.17 and Appendix 2, p.75.)

Water was used in four cases. Near drowning was reported by three methods; repeated immersion of the upper body in a barrel of dirty water, immersion of the whole body suspended by a rope into a river, and by water-boarding with running water over the face. Repeated drenching with cold water was reported by the fourth case.

Two men reported genital torture. Weights were suspended from the testicles of one 45 year-old man when he was held in a military camp in Somali Region in 1997. A 48 year-old described severe torture in his first 24 hours of detention at Imi military camp in Bale in late 1998. Before he was suspended in the Wabi Shebele river, his testicles were clamped with a device used to castrate bulls. His testicles and the tip of his penis were then beaten. He

[20] Jaranson *et al*. (2004) Somali and Oromo refugees: correlates of torture and trauma history. American Journal of Public Health. 94:4, 591-598. April 2004.
[21] Trueman, Trevor (2010). Ethiopia exports more than coffee. *Op.cit.* p.12. Almost all present at group meetings and 27 (47%) of 58 interviewees had been tortured.
[22] Amnesty International. Ethiopia. Accountability past and present: Human rights in transition. Index AFR/25/6/95. London. April 1995. pp.37-41.

fainted and regained consciousness while drops of hot molten plastic, from a sheet of plastic being held over a cigarette lighter, were being allowed to fall onto his genitalia, groin and upper thighs.

Two men described having their arms and feet tied together behind their backs when lying on their front ('rocking horse'). One was placed on sharp stones for 90 minutes three times in one month. Another was left in this position for four days, lying in his urine and faeces.

Electric shocks, severe enough to throw a man against the sides and roof of a small cage in one case, were reported by two former detainees. Another two reported being forced to eat faeces and one was subjected to forced exercise (squat jumps - when exhausted from other torture).

Torture was not limited to physical pain and intimidation. Two men described separate incidents of being made to stay in a cell with two dead bodies, for periods of two days. Disposing of dead bodies of colleagues was particularly traumatic. One man spoke tearfully of being forced to carry a body on his back and throw it into a river running through a ravine.

There were two separate reports from former detainees at Hamaresa military camp in East Hararge in 1998 and 1999. So many detainees had died that they were forced to reopen graves and put eight to ten bodies in the same grave. Both men who described the process had difficulty keeping their composure while doing so. They were forced to jump on the bodies which were already in the graves in order to create room for more bodies. One said 'It is a very bitter memory. I will remember it until I die. I dislike myself when I remember these things.' The other said 'Hyenas came and ate them. Dogs and cats were eating my brothers' bodies.' 'They are bad memories.'

Rape

Six women interviewees were detained. Four reported being raped in detention. Only one reported not being raped. The other interview (in Hargeisa) was interrupted because of security concerns.

Biftu, (insert and p.68) was detained in Dire Dawa police station, together with her sister-in-law, just after the May 2005 elections. She was raped by five policemen every night for 20 days. Her sister-in-law was also raped. She was told 'We will do this every day until you bring your brother.' She is now infertile because of a gynaecological infection.

Biftu, raped by five policemen every night for 20 days. 'We will do this every day until you bring your brother' they said.

One woman was about 19 when she was walked the 1-2 hour journey from her home to Deder military camp in 2005, while carrying her 13 month-old child. Each of the four soldiers accompanying her raped her at the roadside. She was then raped by one or two soldiers on each of the next 25 nights for which she was detained. She estimated that 12-15 different soldiers raped her in the military camp.

A 46 year-old reported that soldiers had raped her at Harar prison in 2005. 'They played with me - with different bad sexual intercourse with me. I'm afraid to tell you my secrets and show you the scars on my body.' In the month before she escaped, she was also raped by her interrogator every two or three days and by the guard who accompanied her to the toilet, about every second night.

Asli, shortly after her husband was taken and disappeared, was detained and raped by two soldiers every night for three weeks in 2007. She estimated 20 soldiers raped her. She became pregnant and delivered her baby in Djibouti. (Appendix 2, p.63.)

Asli, 33, spoke of being held for three weeks in illegal detention at Muti, near Harar, in 2007. She was raped by two soldiers every night after being beaten into semi-consciousness. Before her eventual admission to hospital, she estimated she had been raped by 20 soldiers. (Insert and p.63.)

Another three women reported being raped in or near their own homes. In late 1992, four soldiers broke into the home of Hana (p.64), in a village near Haromaya, and raped her. Shortly beforehand, she had been told to stop looking for her husband who had disappeared in detention.

Kadija (p.78) was only about 14 years old when three soldiers took away her mother in Kemise, Wollo, in 1991. Another soldier remained behind, threatened her with a pistol and raped her in her house.

Amina (p.79) estimated she was only 11 or 12 when, in 1993, soldiers took away her parents and three siblings from their home in Masala, near Chiro in West Hararge. Two soldiers took her into the forest and raped her. She was abandoned there and found by strangers from a nearby village next day.

Detention

Out of 43 interviewees, 23 (17 men and 6 women) had been imprisoned in Ethiopia. Six had escaped from detention.[23] All former detainees described poor conditions in detention in police cells, official prisons, military camps and other unofficial places of detention. Several made specific mention of infestations with lice and fleas. One told of his leaving detention after one year, still wearing the same shirt and trousers as when he was arrested. He had been

[23] Two women and four men escaped. Asli (see above) was helped by a nurse in hospital, where she had been admitted following severe beatings and multiple rape. The other woman escaped after duping a prison guard with the promise of sex. One man scaled a fence while guards rested after beating and torturing him (Gebre-Mikael, p.74). Another broke out through the roof of a hut. One man fled when being transferred, while his convoy was attacked (presumably by OLF fighters - Osman A, p.75). The fourth man was a dissident TPLF soldier who overcame his guard at a military hospital after feigning illness.

able to wash his body only once during the whole year. Four spontaneously reported being held in solitary confinement, usually in dark, cramped underground cells, for long periods - 30 days, two months, three months and 50 days.

Four others reported being held in conditions so confined that there was insufficient room to sleep. One woman described being held with 300 others, clad only in shawls, with only enough room to squat. Three men described being in spaces 3-5 metres square with 30-50 others, so that they had to all turn at the same time when lying down at night. Osman A (p.75) described how guards had to physically push the prisoners to get them all in his cell.

Loss of family, property and businesses

Interviewees described the destruction of their families and livelihoods. Farms, animals, trading businesses, restaurants and shops were abandoned or commandeered by government officials.

For example, Halima (p.64) described how soldiers abducted her husband, who disappeared in detention, and then took 'everything' from their house and farm, including 10,000 Birr and their one ox. She left her two year-old with her brother and took her one year-old to Djibouti, where she now lives with other unaccompanied women.

A 39 year-old from Machara, West Hararge, described how elders negotiated his release from detention in 2005, but the large family shop was taken by government officials.

Abdata (p.71), returning to his large family coffee plantation in Jimma when deported from Djibouti in 2004, found that half of it had been taken over by the authorities.

Halima (p.64) was pregnant with their third child when soldiers took away her husband in 2005. One week later, they returned and took 'everything' including 10,000 Birr and their one ox. She miscarried due to being beaten during her husband's abduction. He disappeared. She fled to Djibouti after leaving their two year-old with her brother.

Three women interviewed in Ali Addeh related losing their homes. Genet (p.74) became mentally ill, having lost her family as a child when her home was burnt down in Eritrea and then losing touch with her husband during the 1998-2000 war with Ethiopia. Amina (p.79), who was raped in 1993 when she was 11-12 years old, was taken back to her home six months after being taken in by nearby villagers. Her house had been burnt to the ground and she never again saw her parents or siblings, most of whom had been taken away by government forces. Fatuma (p.80) described how her family home was burnt down after her brother and father were shot dead in 1992.

Fourteen of the interviewees and one other refugee with whom I was in contact recounted having left children in Ethiopia. Nine or more interviewees had left children in Ethiopia since

2005. At least seven children were under ten years old, three under five and one only nine months old when abandoned by their fleeing mothers to be cared for by relatives in Ethiopia.

Several men and women complained that their lives as refugees made marriage impossible. Two in Hargeisa reported how being ostracised after periods in detention in Ethiopia affected their prospects. A 31 year-old from a village near Kombolcha, East Hararge, was unable to marry a local man after a year in detention at the nearby military camp in 1997-8, because she was branded as unsuitable by local officials. A 42 year-old cattle trader from Harar reported that his wife's family forced her to divorce him after he was released from detention in 1997.

The significance of loss of family was summed up by Asha (p.81), the 63 year-old wife of a former Derg officer who was taken away and disappeared in 1991. She had been a refugee in Djibouti for 20 years when interviewed in Ali Addeh camp. She said 'I am alone here, without husband or children. I am frightened and I suffer from headaches and disturbing thoughts about my safety. I worry about dying here.'

Straw poll of rates of abuse among 50 at Ali Addeh camp

The group of 50 who were surveyed at a meeting in Ali Addeh camp included teenage children and spouses of political refugees. Nonetheless, they reported high rates of abuse in Ethiopia.

Out of the 50 present, more than half (26) had a relative who had been killed by Ethiopian government security forces. In more than one third (19) this had been a first degree relative (spouse, child, sibling or parent). Two thirds (35) had a relative who had been made to disappear by the government; a first degree relative in more than one third (21).

Fifteen had been detained by the current Ethiopian regime and all but one of these had been tortured in detention. Eight knew a woman who had been raped and four knew of whole villages razed to the ground.

These figures are similar to those obtained at interviews with 101 refugees in Kenya, Djibouti and Somaliland,[24] to several straw polls among Oromo audiences in Europe and the USA since 1996,[25] and an audit of 200 asylum cases in the UK.[26]

The journey to Djibouti

The 12 who were interviewed in Ali Addeh had been in Djibouti longer than those who were interviewed in Djibouti city. Seven at the camp came to Djibouti during 1991-3 and all but one arrived before 2003. By contrast, 12 of the 14 interviewed in the capital made their final journey to Djibouti in 2005 or later.

Three had made the journey to Djibouti city twice. Sara (p.65) had come with her husband in 1994 and had returned briefly to Hararge to attend the funeral of her brother in 2007. Foole (p.72) was coerced to go back to Ethiopia in 2003 and had returned to Djibouti, after five

[24] OSG Reports 46, 47, *Op. cit.,* and this report.
[25] At least six audiences of 50-400 at Oromo Studies Association and Union of Oromo Students in Europe conferences.
[26] Trueman, Trevor (2009). Reasons for Refusal: An Audit of 200 Refusals of Ethiopian Asylum-Seekers in England. Journal of Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Law, 23. 3.281-308. 2009.

years in detention, in 2008. Abdata (p.71) was deported to Ethiopia in 2004 and returned in 2007 after being threatened and shot at his farm. Thus there were 17 journeys made by the 14 interviewed in Djibouti city. Journeys back to Djibouti city and Ali Addeh from Awr Aousa camp and the border town of Dawale during the attempted repatriation in 2004 are described in the section on refoulement and repatriation (see pp.49-50).

Information about 21 of the 29 journeys was recorded (12 out of 17 to Djibouti city and 9 out of 12 to Ali Addeh). Most made their way by rail or road to the border town of Dawale, from where they went on foot, taking one, two or more days to walk to Ali Sabieh or Dikhil (see map, p.7).

Countryside between Ali Sabieh and Ali Addeh, similar to that crossed on the way from Dawale.

Most then went by road (bus, truck or car) to Djibouti city or, in the early 1990s, to Awr Aousa camp.

Four went on foot all the way to Djibouti city or Ali Addeh. Three crossed into Somaliland and then into Djibouti through the border town of Loyada near the Red Sea coast. Three at Ali Addeh had crossed into Djibouti from the Afar Region.

Three travelled with nomads when walking over and from the border without being asked to pay. One man paid 800 Ethiopian Birr (about $80 at the time) to be taken by cattle drovers from near Dire Dawa to Dikhil. One woman paid an agent to take her across the border at Dawale, before walking for two days to reach Ali Sabieh. A woman from Wollo paid to be taken by an agent over the border from Afar Region, before taking the ferry from Tadjoura (59 k south-west of Obock) to Djibouti city.

At least one travelled with a group of other refugees from the border to Awr Aousa in 1991. In 2006, Leenco (p.70), a 55 year-old from Haromaya, hired a camel which took eight days to carry him from Dire Dawa to Dhikil. He was unable to walk due to being shot in his right thigh seven weeks previously. Halima (p.64) described being given a lift by Djibouti soldiers from the border post at Loyada. She was carrying her one year-old child and the soldiers were acting purely from altruistic motives.

None of the interviewees reported theft, rape or other forms of violence during their journey, although refugees were reported in the past to have experienced such problems when crossing into Djibouti.[27]

[27] Bruna Fossati, Lydia Namarra and Peter Niggli (1996). The New Rulers of Ethiopia and the Persecution of the Oromo: Reports from the Oromo refugees in Djibouti. Epd-Dokumentation Nr. 45e/96. Evangelischer Pressedienst, Frankfurt am Main. 5 May 1997 (English translation of original document in German, 21 October 1996). Referred to hereafter as Niggli *et al*. 1996.

Djibouti

Background

Djibouti is a small, sparsely populated country with about 650,000 of its 900,000 population living in the capital, Djibouti city. The city and its port were developed by French colonists from 1888, as the capital of French Somaliland. Before then, small ports at Tadjoura and Obock were of minor significance in the Ottoman empire. Although choosing by referendum to remain as the French Territory of the Issas and Afars in 1967, Djibouti's population voted for independence in 1977.

Early in its history, the country's economy was dependent on French military presence. Djibouti port assumed its present significance after Ethiopia's 1998-2000 war with Eritrea, since when it has carried the lion's share (90%) of Ethiopia's imports and exports. Near the capital, at Camp Lemonier, is the headquarters of the US-led Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa. Djibouti's economy has been boosted by the presence of 1500 troops at the US base, enlarged in the 'war on terror', together with 2700 French soldiers, a German military contingent and Japanese, UK and other European naval forces based in Djibouti to combat Somali piracy.

Street market, Djibouti city.

The president of this tiny country is said to be one of the richest in Africa. The population is one of the poorest. Despite this, the cost of living is high because the Djibouti Franc is tied to the US dollar. Expatriates report it is one of the most expensive countries in the Arab world: a monthly bill for domestic electricity (imported from Ethiopia) is $500.

In the last decade, Djibouti has been severely affected by its worst ever drought. Between 40 and 70% of its livestock was lost between 2004 and 2008. At least 80% of food (97% according to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office) has to be imported, mostly from Ethiopia. Nearly 52,000 citizens depend on food aid. In 2008, the UN reported that food security, health and livelihoods of 120,000 were 'severely compromised'.[28] The country ranks 165 out of 187 in the 2011 UN Human Development Report.

The population is predominantly Issa Somali and Afar, with a slight preponderance of the former, possibly due to a favourable immigration policy for Issa people from Somaliland and Ethiopia, encouraged by President Aptidon in the late 1970s. Less than 25% belong to Issaq, Gadabursi and other smaller clans. Issa Somalis from Somaliland form the majority of refugees, but numbers from south/central Somalia are growing, while Issa people from

[28] UN Joint Appeal - Response plan for drought, food and nutrition crisis: Republic of Djibouti. United Nations, July 2008.

Somaliland are tending to return home. After Arabic, Somali, Afar and French, the most commonly spoken languages are English, Oromo and Amharic.

Djibouti has known only two rulers. Hasan Gouled Aptidon was replaced by his nephew in 1999. Ismail Omar Guelleh pushed through constitutional change to legitimise his continuing presidency in 2010, and he was voted in for a third term in April 2011. Afar opposition to Issa dominance, fuelling a civil war from 1991-1994, has been neutered by their incorporation into the ruling coalition and, according to critics, financial inducements.

Human rights advocates say that the regime is becoming increasingly authoritarian and that opposition political space is shrinking. On 22 November, the Ligue Djiboutienne des Droits Humains (LDDH) reported the arrest of two of its members and a judge. The judge had released 20 political prisoners from unlawful detention at Nagad detention centre. The director of LDDH and several journalists had been detained one year before for criticising the government.

President Ismail Omar Guelleh, one of the richest presidents in Africa, engineered change in the constitution in 2010 to enable his third term of office, which began in April 2011.

The overall human rights situation remained fairly stable for a while after a peace accord with the Afar opposition was signed in May 2001. But since 2003 there has been increasing oppression of political opposition members, labour unionists and immigrants. According to a local activist 'The constitution is no longer respected.'

The police beat protestors when 15,000 demonstrated on 18 February 2010. They arrested 180 and killed three. The international NGO, Democracy International, was expelled after the demonstration and one of its local employees was killed.

The US International Republican Institute, which used to fund street theatre productions, has been forced out of the country. There is no independent press and the only radio station is run by the President, who commands a loyal army, security system, gendarmerie and police force.

Students are without employment prospects and have taken to the streets in demonstrations. Medical students, demonstrating about inadequate teaching, were arrested in November 2011 and their faculty was closed down. Another 200 students were arrested in demonstrations on 23 November. I saw police wielding batons and taking students away in their vans.

Djibouti has regional clout. It is the base for the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and it hosted the fragile, UN-sponsored peace agreement which was signed by the transitional administration of Somalia in 2008. It has a working relationship with neighbouring Somaliland, although this does not extend to full recognition.

Djibouti's cooperation with Ethiopia reflects their shared support by US and European administrations and extends to their common political, security and economic interests. An excellent road, the N-1, which connects Djibouti port to Dikhil and thence to Addis Ababa,

has been upgraded with EU money. Almost all of the traffic along this road consists of trucks carrying goods in and out of Ethiopia.

Almost all traffic on the recently upgraded trunk road, the N-1, consists of trucks carrying goods to and from Ethiopia.

The ebb and flow of refugees in Djibouti

During the 1977/8 war between Ethiopia and Somalia, 47,000 refugees arrived - more than 13% of the 350,000 population of Djibouti at the time. Thousands more refugees came from Ethiopia in the 1980s, fleeing from forced conscription into the Derg army. Few were induced to return under pressure from Djibouti police during 'voluntary' repatriation programmes encouraged by the Derg. However, nearly all Oromo and other nationalities from Ethiopia (about 15,000 in all) returned when the communist military dictatorship was toppled in 1991. Some 49,000 soldiers and civilian supporters of the Derg came in return, fleeing reprisals from the victorious rebel forces; another 34,000 came in 1991 from Somalia as Siad Barre's regime collapsed.[29]

Many returned to Ethiopia within a few years, encouraged by conciliatory treatment of the majority of Derg minor functionaries. UNHCR encouraged voluntary repatriation, without police pressure this time, in 1993-6, when about 40,000 returned.

The exodus of Oromo from Ethiopia to Djibouti began again in mid-1992, when the OLF were ousted from the transitional government of Ethiopia. The influx included many who had fled to Djibouti under Mengistu and returned to Ethiopia in 1991.

In 1996, Peter Niggli concluded there were 10-25,000 asylum-seekers having to survive in Djibouti city without assistance. UNHCR acknowledged only 10,000. There were 20,000 Somali refugees and 1000 former Derg officials and soldiers in refugee camps.[30]

UNHCR reported that from 1996 to 2003, there were between 20,000 and 27,000 recognised refugees in the country. The number of registered asylum-seekers varied. In most years, 4-500 were recorded but there were peaks of over 1600 in 1996 and in 2003.[31] The peak in 2003 was presumably due to the Djibouti government's announced intention of expelling those without documents.

In its Global Report 2001, UNHCR reported only 250 Ethiopian refugees in Djibouti city. Local informants to the Oromia Support Group, claimed many more asylum-seekers were

[29] Niggli *et al.* 1996. *Op. cit.*
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] 2005 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook, Country Data Sheets, UNHCR, Geneva, 30 April 2007. pp.312-3.

present. One wrote in early 2001 that police had found 5000 Oromo with attestation papers of seeking asylum in one district alone and that 10,000 with papers and 20,000 without papers were in the city. The Oromo community organisation reported over 20,000 seeking asylum in the city and that thousands had arrived in February 2001, fleeing fighting between the OLF and government forces in Hararge.[32]

In 2002 and 2003, 20,000 prima facie refugees were voluntarily repatriated to Somaliland, after President Egal had agreed to accept them, allowing the closure of Holl Holl camp.

In July 2003, the government ordered unregistered immigrants to leave the country by the end of August. 70,000 had left by the extended deadline of 15 September and another 30,000 went before 10 October. Those who insisted on staying, about 10,000, were gathered in the city football stadium and taken to Awr Aousa refugee camp.

At Awr Aousa, they were put through a rapid refugee status determination exercise by Djibouti's National Eligibility Commission and UNHCR. Most of them, except those on the 4180 Somali files, were refused refugee status and taken to the borders of Ethiopia (about 4000 individuals) and Somaliland (521 cases plus families). Awr Aousa camp was then closed down again.[33]

Repatriations to Somaliland continued through 2004 and 2005. Over 16,000 refugees were returned and only 10,500 recognised refugees were in Djibouti at the end of 2005. This was almost exclusively the population at Ali Addeh camp, which had been established to accommodate Somali refugees decades before and remained open throughout the determination and deportation exercise in 2004. Because of a halt in the registration process, no asylum-seekers were recorded in the country by UNHCR in 2004 and only 19 were recorded in 2005.[34]

Ali Addeh. The great majority of refugees in Djibouti are prima facie refugees from Somalia and Somaliland.

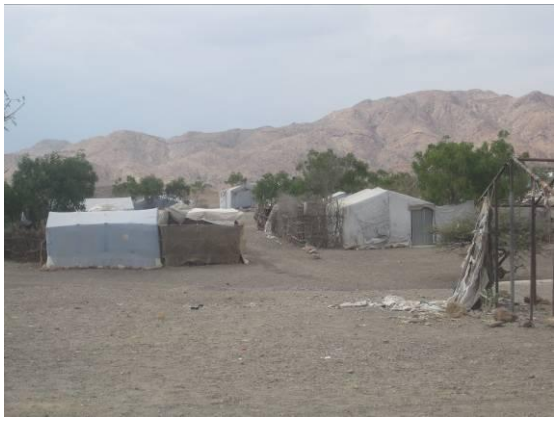
The inward flow of refugees from Somalia continued, exacerbated by Ethiopia's invasion at the end of 2006 and the escalation of violence by al Shabaab in response. Voluntary repatriations to Somaliland in 2008 and 2009 were more than matched by arrivals from south/central Somalia, despite the month-long interruption of admission of adult Somali males after the July 2010 suicide bombing in Kampala.

[32] OSG Press Release 33, May 2001, Malvern, UK. p.31.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] 2005 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook, Country Data Sheets, UNHCR, Geneva, 30 April 2007. pp.312-3.

According to the Djibouti Human Rights League, LDDH, the Ministry of Interior announced on radio the return of 5000 undocumented migrants, mostly Oromo, to Ethiopia in 2009. In March 2010, 500 Ogaden Somalis were returned to Ethiopia.[35]

According to UNHCR,[36] at the end of 2010 there were 15,810 refugees and asylum-seekers in the country. The recognised refugees included 14,200 prima facie Somali refugees, 600 from Ethiopia and 260 others. Registered asylum-seekers numbered only 740: 370 of these were from Ethiopia, 360 from Eritrea and 10 from elsewhere.

There were substantial increases during 2011. Figures prepared by UNHCR at the end of October 2011 showed that Somali prima facie refugees had increased to 18,746 (all except 533 at Ali Addeh camp). The number of other, non prima facie, refugees remained fairly stable at 913. This consisted of 606 from Ethiopia (517 in Ali Addeh and 89 in Djibouti city), 282 from Eritrea (56 at Ali Addeh and 226 in the city) and 25 others, all in Ali Addeh. There were over 600 more registered Ethiopian asylum-seekers than there were in 2010 (total 1110, all but 5 in Djibouti city) and 180 more Eritrean asylum-seekers (total 541, all in the city).[37] The increase reflects the resumption of the registration process in late 2010 (see p.34).



Nearly all at Ali Addeh are mandated refugees. Only 30 families of asylum-seekers are there.

Many urban refugees remain undocumented. During our meetings, refugees estimated there were 5000 Oromo and 6000 Amhara men, women and children in Djibouti city.

In Ali Addeh camp, the 250 Ethiopian files included 517 refugees. The majority (about 380) were Oromo. The remainder were Amhara, Gurage, mixed Amhara/Eritrean (18 families in all) or Ogadeni (two families). Although it was not apparent from the official figures, there were 30 families (files) without refugee status in the camp.[38]

Refugees reported that admission to Ali Addeh is now limited to those with refugee status; the 30 families without this arrived before this stipulation was put in place. However, if there are severe security concerns, asylum-seekers without refugee status may be taken to Ali Addeh by UNHCR. Ethiopian and Eritrean arrivals from Somaliland in February 2012 included eight without refugee status (see p.36).

Traffic to Yemen

Refugees transit Djibouti, Puntland and Somalia in attempts to make the dangerous sea crossing to Yemen, and thence to Saudi Arabia and beyond. Young Ethiopian men are

[35] Personal communication with Jean-Paul Noel Abdi, President of LDDH, 23 November 2011. LDDH had informed Amnesty International about 200 of the March 2010 deportations before the final figure was known.
[36] Global Report 2010, Djibouti, UNHCR Geneva, 20 June 2011, p.79.
[37] Figures provided by UNHCR Protection Unit, Djibouti, 24 November 2011.
[38] Figures provided by UNHCR Protection Unit, Djibouti, 24 November 2011, and by Dr Makou, UNHCR Field Officer, and refugees at Ali Addeh, 29 November 2011.

particularly likely to try the route through Djibouti, some dying of thirst or hunger on the way, or of diseases such as cholera after reaching the coast.[39]

Between 300 and 400 were reported to have died crossing Djibouti in September 2011.[40] Thousands have perished on the sea journey; many have been raped, held hostage and tortured by smugglers; and several hundred have survived only to be returned later to Ethiopia. Despite this, the traffic continues and is increasing.[41]

In 2007 and 2008, nearly 80,000 were said to have made the journey to Yemen from Djibouti or Somalia, with the loss of over 2000 lives.[42] IRIN reported on 15 November 2011 that 60,000 made the crossing in the first eight months of that year, twice the figure for the same period in 2010. Over 12,000 arrived in Yemen in the month of September 2011 alone, nearly three-quarters of whom were from Ethiopia.[43]

Despite the increase in hardship and insecurity faced by refugees in Yemen due to civil unrest during 2011, the human traffic has grown because Yemeni security patrols are less likely to prevent boats from landing.

Most asylum-seekers in Djibouti city live in the African quarter, in shacks like the one on the right, without water or electricity, for which they pay $30-70 per month.

By February 2012, over 340 per day were arriving in Yemen from Djibouti. The 60% increase from 2011 was due to increased traffic of people originating from Ethiopia.[44]

The route to Yemen from Obock (and points a little further north), on the north side of the Gulf of Tadjoura, has been used more often since 2007, and now accounts for over 80% of arrivals in Yemen.[45] In 2008, the journey cost 10,000 Djibouti Francs ($60). Although the

[39] IRIN, 15.11.11 reported that 60 corpses were found near Lake Assal, about 120 km west of Djibouti city, in September 2011, and an unstated number of deaths from cholera at Obock.
[40] Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, RMM Monthly Summary, September 2011. http://www.regionalmms.org/fileadmin/content/rmms/monthly/summaries/RMMS/Mixed/Migration/Monthly/Summary/September/2011.pdf
[41] Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, RMM Monthly Summary, February 2012. http://www.regionalmms.org/fileadmin/content/rmms/monthly/summaries/RMMS/Mixed/Migration/Monthly/Summary/February/2012.pdf
[42] UNHCR Briefing Sheet, May 2010.
[43] Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, RMM Monthly Summary, September 2011. *Op. cit.*
[44] Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, RMM Monthly Summary, February 2012. *Op. cit.*
[45] *Ibid.*

Djibouti navy intercepted boats in 2008 and arrested 500 attempting the crossing,[46] it has since turned a blind eye to a process beyond its control.

UNHCR has an office in Obock. It attempts to warn travellers of the dangers of the crossing and encourages them to apply for asylum in Djibouti.

Living as a refugee in Djibouti

Background

The Oromo Relief Association used to have an office in Djibouti, providing assistance in self-help initiatives, promoting community projects and organising cooperatives and volunteers to provide schooling, medical care and help for the dying. The office was closed by the authorities, bowing to pressure from the Ethiopian government, in June 1995. The Oromo community organised itself to continue some activities, as noted by the ORA delegation in July/August 1996.[47] However, overwhelmed by need and under-resourced, organised community assistance ground to a halt in the following months.

The interior of a superior dwelling in Djibouti city, with access to water and electricity.

Social and mental wellbeing

There have been some changes for the better and some for the worse since the ORA visit in 1996. Peter Niggli described street children from Hararge in gangs, sniffing glue and engaged in under-age prostitution, on the streets of Djibouti.[48] I witnessed neither of these activities during my short visit.

The mental state of Oromo refugees in Djibouti, despite the cheerful and welcoming disposition maintained by many, remains characterised by chronic anxiety and a sense of having been ignored and forgotten, as it was fifteen years previously. One man, a member of the Oromo community committee in Djibouti city, wept and cried out in despair when I explained that the purpose of my visit was not to help individual refugees. Despite this level of despondency, refugees maintained self respect and they and their children were clean and dressed in clean, if old, clothes.

Most of the refugees with whom I spoke in Djibouti city said they would prefer to live in Ali Addeh camp but were unable to do so without status as recognised refugees.

[46] UNHCR Djibouti National Programme: Fact Sheet. 2008.
[47] Niggli *et al.* 1996. *Op. cit.*
[48] *Ibid.*

Duration of stay in Djibouti

Twelve of the 14 interviewees in Djibouti city had arrived in 2005 or since. The other two arrived in 1994 and 1997. Two had first arrived in 1996 and 2002 but had been refouled or coerced to leave in 2003/4 and had returned to Djibouti in 2007 and 2008. However, all five Oromo community committee members who gathered to meet me on the evening of my arrival in Djibouti city had been in Djibouti since 1994-6.

The twelve interviewed in Ali Addeh camp had been in Djibouti for 6-20 years. Seven arrived in 1991-3, one in 1998 and four in 2001-5.

Accommodation, employment and standard of living

There has been little change since the ORA visit in 1996, in terms of living and working in Djibouti city. Even for citizens of Djibouti, unemployment is at least 60% and may be as high as 90%, according to local Djiboutian sources. Much of the available work is therefore informal and casual. UNHCR reported few job opportunities in 2010; refugees lacked avenues for self-employment, hindering self-reliance and integration into the local community.[49] Oromo refugees claimed that Amhara refugees were better connected and more liable to obtain employment, but I had no access to objective evidence of this.

A minority of asylum-seekers in the city live in Issa-style tents such as these.

Most men performed unskilled work as labourers on building sites (or on farms if in Ambouli, southwest of the city), or as garbage collectors or watchmen, and were usually only able to get work for 10-15 days each month, earning 5-15,000 Djibouti Francs ($30-90) in one month. The minority with skilled work - I spoke to an electrician, carpenter, tailor, car mechanic, two traders and one man giving private French lessons - earned 10-20,000 DF ($60-120)/month, usually by working for 15 days.

Women tended to get work for 20 or more days each month as cleaners and/or washing clothes. Two sold home-made food, samosas and *budeena* (*injera*, the relatively unleavened staple), every day. Women generally earned 6-12,000 DF ($35-70) per month, despite usually working more days than men.

These earnings contrast sharply with those of local people. The sister-in-law of one of my interviewees, a Djibouti citizen, earned 45,000 DF ($270) per month as a cleaner in Djibouti port.

Refugees from Ethiopia are concentrated in Quartiers 1-7, in the African Quarter of Djibouti city, south of and adjacent to the central and relatively affluent European Quarter. Generally,

[49] 2011 UNHCR Country operations profile - Djibouti. Geneva, 2010.

the homes are dilapidated shacks built from wood or brick, with a single main room. Almost none of the refugees had running water or electricity. Most paid 5-12,000 DF ($30-70) per month. For example, one couple with one child paid 5,000 DF ($30)/month and 7 sharing adults paid 12,000 DF($70). One house, costing 9,000 DF ($54)/month was shared by 7 adults and 5 children. Another large house, costing 30,000 DF ($180)/month was occupied by several families (5 men, 3 women and 5 children).

After paying rent, most had little spare cash for food, clothing and other necessities. Several told me that adults in families were sometimes forced to go without food for 24 hour periods.

Quite apart from the large number of young men in transit to Yemen reported at Obock, I was told that many refugees regularly sleep on the beach to the north of Djibouti city. I did not find out the number sleeping there or at Mosques.

Health care

The Association of Medical Doctors of Asia was the heath provider for UNHCR in Djibouti city and ran the clinic in Ali Addeh camp until just before my arrival at the end of November. CARE took over health provision, but not until the beginning of 2012.

At least one refugee died without medical attention during the period without a contracted health provider. He was a destitute Somali refugee in his thirties who had been sleeping at the Mosque and had been chronically unwell. He presented at the UNHCR office with breathlessness on the morning of 1 December but there was no cash fund available to pay for his being seen at the local hospital. In the absence of a contracted health provider for UNHCR, he had simply lain down on a piece of cardboard opposite the UNHCR compound and died a few hours later.[50]

A refugee wrote on 12 January 2012, saying that since CARE took over, the NGO is only providing health care for refugees with mandate status, not for the majority of those in Djibouti city who only have attestations of seeking asylum.

Latrine, built by refugees at Ali Addeh.

Education

I was told that no Oromo child went to school in Djibouti city but a child of one of my interviewees did attend Qoranic school, which was free.

Ali Addeh refugee camp

UNHCR described the camp as overcrowded in 2010, with deaths due to poor water supplies, sanitation, health and nutrition. Increased water supply and better health facilities were provided during the following year.

[50] I was interviewing refugees in the UNHCR compound and was asked by a distraught Protection Officer to confirm that he was dead.

The Ethiopian block is separate from the Somali blocks, and is fenced off. The dwellings are rectangular metal-framed tents, some canvas-walled and some with corrugated metal walls. The tents are supplied by UNHCR, but some refugees prefer to build their own accommodation.

A few refugees are helpers at the clinic or teachers at the school, earning 40,000 DF ($230)/month.

The Lutheran World Federation runs the school, which teaches children up to Grade 7 or 8 (accounts differed), free of charge. There are over 2000 students and 52 teachers, of whom 8-9 are Ethiopian.

Ali Addeh camp is less crowded than camps in Kenya. Refugees are not confined to the camp and there is no curfew, unlike in Kenyan camps.

The World Food Programme issues the rations at Ali Addeh. These consist of 12 kg of wheat flour, 1.5 kg soya beans, 1.5 kg beans, 750 ml oil and 300 g sugar. They are due to be issued to each individual, together with a bar of soap, every month but are sometimes delayed. By the end of November 2011, nine distributions had occurred in the year.

In contrast to the camps in Kenya, there is no curfew and refugees are not confined to the camp at Ali Addeh. They are free to come and go to Djibouti city.

Registration of asylum-seekers

UNHCR has written repeatedly since 1996 of the importance of establishing a registration and status determination process in conjunction with a National Eligibility Commission (NEC) of the Djibouti government. A system with an adequate functional capacity has never been achieved. Refugees have had to rely on the protection afforded by papers attesting to their registration as asylum-seekers, their 'Demander d'Asile', which must be renewed annually if they are to avoid risk of deportation as illegal immigrants.

In 1996, UNHCR was failing to register asylum-seekers satisfactorily. Applicants reported difficulty obtaining application forms. Niggli reported that guards were turning applicants away from UNHCR, which was issuing only 20 forms per week.[51] Reports were received by OSG that the registration of asylum-seekers had stopped altogether by December 2000.

Possibly in response to letters to foreign ministers from Lord Avebury, of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Human Rights, concerning deportation and death of refugees in December 2000, and following an investigation into corruption in the Djibouti office by the UNHCR Inspector General in July 2001, UNHCR established a Djibouti Plan of Action in February 2002. Under this plan, UNHCR and Djibouti's Office National d'Assistance aux Refugiés et Sinistré (ONARS) were to re-register asylum-seekers.

[51] Niggli *et al.* 1996. *Op. cit.*

UNHCR sub-office at Ali Addeh.

Yearly, at least since 2007, UNHCR continued to renew attestations to those previously registered as asylum-seekers, but the registration of newly arrived asylum-seekers stopped after the mass expulsions in 2004. UNHCR negotiated the resumption of the process for non-Somalis in 2010. By the end of that year, up to 120 had been newly registered by UNHCR and ONARS.[52] In the first ten months of 2011, the number of registered asylum-seekers increased from 740[53] to 1675.[54]

At the time of my visit, from 20 to 40 asylum-seekers were applying for registration with ONARS each week. On Sundays, they are screened and given appointments for registration for the following Thursday or the week after. Each Thursday, up to 25 are registered, photographed and entered on to the UNHCR database by visiting UNHCR staff. Appointments are then given for refugee status determination interviews with ONARS and the asylum-seekers attend the UNHCR office for their finger prints to be taken and added to their entry on the database.

Refugees reported that possibly half of them had to pay a bribe of 10,000 DF ($60) to be registered at ONARS. UNHCR were aware that this sometimes occurred and local human rights activist, the late Jean-Paul Noel Abdi of LDDH, reported that twice this amount was sometimes charged.

Another problem reported by an experienced translator for UNHCR was that many illiterate asylum-seekers did not understand the process and 'suffered because of poor translation.'

For two days each week, UNHCR staff go to its sub-office at Loyada, on the border with Somaliland (see map on p.7), to enter arrivals from Somalia on its database. Once registered, Somalis are automatically given (prima facie) refugee status.

ONARS refugee status determination interviews are scheduled for two days each week and there is a two or three month waiting period. UNHCR eligibility officers used to be present at these interviews and are still available for complex cases, but for 2-3 months before my visit they had been busy assessing Eritrean army defectors being held in Nagad detention centre and were not routinely present at ONARS interviews.

ONARS sets aside one day each week (Saturday) for those who have missed their appointments. Some asylum-seekers return repeatedly, seeking the result of their status determination interviews and this, according to UNHCR, explains why several visits to ONARS are sometimes reported to be necessary.

[52] UNHCR Global Report 2010, *Op. cit.* p.79. 'Close to 1500' had access to the asylum procedure, including 1380 Somalis. This leaves less than 120 non-Somalis.
[53] *Ibid.* 370 from Ethiopia, 360 from Eritrea and 10 from elsewhere.
[54] Figures provided by UNHCR Protection Unit, Djibouti, 24 November 2011. 1110 from Ethiopia, 541 from Eritrea and 24 from elsewhere.

One ONARS official estimated that 70-80% of Ethiopian and Eritrean asylum-seekers were successful in obtaining registration and their attestation paper. In theory, only those who arrived after the large scale deportation in 2004 are considered for attestation status. However, despite being among the 95% who were refused refugee status in the rushed and flawed status determination process in 2003/4, many in Djibouti city have up-to-date attestation papers.

The ONARS official estimated that only 20% of Ethiopian and Eritrean cases were referred to the NEC with a positive recommendation for refugee status.

Refugee status determination

The NEC has been a bottleneck for refugee status determination since its inception. The government body includes the Secretaries General of the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs and Justice, as well as a representative of the Presidency. These officials have many responsibilities. Meeting to consider the refugee status of individuals who have fled from the government of their most important ally is of low priority.

The NEC hardly ever meets. In 1996, it had not met for 18 months, since it granted asylum to two people at the beginning of 1995. The body was revived with UNHCR help at the end of 2000. Of an initial list of 60 considered in December 2000, it granted refugee status to only nine. A huge backlog of cases for registration and status determination built up over the next three years.[55]

The NEC resumed work in 2003 and 2004, rapidly assessing the 10,000 who had refused to leave the country and who were gathered at Awr Aousa camp. According to those present, all 4180 Somali cases and their families were given prima facie refugee status. Only 160 of the other files, including 3000 individuals from Ethiopia (at least half of whom were Oromo), were granted refugee status, according to one source. Only 52 families (files) of Ethiopians, including only 30 out of 1300 Oromo files, were accepted as refugees, according to another source. Not one of the Eritrean cases or the 521 from Somaliland were awarded refugee status.

Some refugees prefer to build their own shelters at Ali Addeh.

After being assessed in this rushed process, those who were refused acceptance as refugees had their status as registered asylum-seekers revoked and were transported to the border for deportation.

The NEC then became quiescent again. It did not function at all in 2010. In September 2011, 160 files, including 400 individuals, who had registered as asylum-seekers since September

[55] UNHCR Country Operations Plan, Djibouti. Planning Year: 2003.

2010 and had been interviewed for refugee status determination, were submitted to the NEC. There had been no response by December.

There have been no refugee status determination interviews at Ali Addeh camp since March 2010. Ethiopian community representatives told me 'Most people have been here for nearly 20 years.' They complained to UNHCR in October 2011 about 15 who had been interviewed but were awaiting a decision and another 22 who still had not been interviewed after many years.[56]

In Djibouti, UNHCR is negotiating for an alternative to the NEC. It is in the process of engaging lawyers to examine the laws and out-dated decrees concerning refugees in Djibouti and to recommend legislation which acknowledges the rights of refugees and the responsibilities of the government with regard to the UN refugee convention. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will submit findings to the National Assembly. A new legal framework might enable UNHCR to assume more powers of refugee status determination or pave the way for establishing a new body with the powers and responsibilities of the NEC.

UNHCR is legally capable of refugee status determination but is bound to act when possible according to the national law of the host nation. At least in theory, in Djibouti, UNHCR cannot award mandate refugee status in its own right unless there has been a refusal by the NEC. However, in rare instances, UNHCR may grant refugee status unilaterally to those with extreme security concerns.

Status and experience of interviewees

None of the 14 interviewees in Djibouti city were recognised refugees, although two had appointments for status determination interviews, in January and March 2012. All but one, the step-brother of a Djibouti citizen, had up-to-date attestation documents. They said the process of registering as an asylum-seeker and obtaining an attestation paper took 2-3 months and 2-6 visits to ONARS and UNHCR.

The majority of refugees in Ali Addeh camp have refugee status (see p.28). However, out of the 11 interviewees who were asked about their status, only five were recognised refugees, including one who achieved refugee status by marrying another refugee. Osman B (p.82) had his refugee status revoked during the rapid reassessment process at Awr Aousa in 2003/4. Two were awaiting the results of status determination interviews in 2010. Three of the four who had only ever had asylum-seeker status had been in Ali Addeh since 1992.

Eighteen adults were taken by UNHCR to Ali Addeh in early February. They had narrowly escaped being expelled back to Ethiopia from Somaliland. Ten already had refugee status, having been in Somaliland for up to 20 years, and UNHCR conducted status determination interviews with the others at their office near the border at Loyada before taking the 18 to Ali Addeh. The eight who had not been recognised as refugees were still awaiting status determination and thus the entitlement to food rations at the end of April 2012.[57]

[56] The Ethiopian community at Ali Addeh wrote to UNHCR on 22 October, listing 71 files of 172 individuals, who were stuck at various stages in the refugee status determination and resettlement process. This included 7 files (22 individual asylum-seekers) who were still awaiting RSD interviews and four files (15 individuals) who had been interviewed but were waiting for the decision.

[57] Personal communication with a spokesman for the group, 24 April 2012.

In January 2012, after a meeting between the Oromo community and the UNHCR Protection Unit, interviews began for those who had been refugee status holders from 1995 onwards, who had then been refused in the Awr Aousa process in 2004.[58]

Resettlement

With almost no prospect of education or employment in Djibouti, the only chance for refugees to lead independent and meaningful lives, at least until there is a change of regime in Ethiopia, is for them to be settled in a third country.

UNHCR is aware of this and wrote in 2003 that its main emphasis was repatriation and resettlement.[59] Again in 2008, UNHCR stated its commitment to resettling long staying refugees.[60]

The process has not been trouble free. Oromo asylum-seekers reported to OSG that bribery was used to secure resettlement in late 2000. The UNHCR Inspector General visited Djibouti in July 2001 and most pending resettlement cases were put on hold while 'irregularities' in the procedure were sorted out.

UNHCR reported that during 2010, 1400 refugees were interviewed for resettlement but only 320 were actually resettled, in France, Sweden and the USA.[61] Although there was a target of 950 submissions for resettlement in 2011, only half this number had been submitted by mid-November.

However, a team of Resettlement Officers from the Church World Service (formerly JVA - Joint Voluntary Agency) was on a 'circuit ride' from its base in Nairobi during November and December. They were interviewing refugees in Djibouti city and Ali Addeh camp and expected to complete the paperwork for many more submissions. I met several members of the large team visiting Ali Sabieh who were interviewing two coach loads of refuges from Ali Addeh each day. I was impressed with their enthusiasm, sensitivity and commitment.

One of two coaches carrying refugees from Ali Addeh for resettlement interviews at Ali Sabieh on 30 November 2011.

Only 88 refugees had reached the end of the process and been resettled during the first 11 months of 2011, but there were 1500-1700 in the pipeline after having had their interviews, mostly waiting for settlement in the USA.[62] The majority were Somali, in line with their preponderance in the refugee population.

[58] Correspondence from community members on 21 January reported that groups of five were being seen at the Protection Unit.
[59] UNHCR Country Operations Plan, Djibouti. Planning Year:2003.
[60] UNHCR Djibouti National Programme: Fact Sheet. 2008.
[61] UNHCR Global Report 2010, *Op. cit.* p.81.
[62] UNHCR Djibouti, personal communication. 24 November 2011.

Once recommended for resettlement, 90% are accepted by immigration authorities of host countries. Rejections are usually because of findings of incredibility. There were no rejections on the grounds of giving material support to terrorist groups (a problem in the past for Oromo refugees in Kenya applying to the USA).[63]

Placard, used at a protest and now displayed in the Ethiopian community centre at Ali Addeh, expressing frustration with the slow resettlement process.

Refugees at Ali Addeh camp complained of delays in the resettlement process,[64] and one interviewee (Amina, p.79) reported having her and her husband's resettlement application destroyed because of a misunderstanding over her husband's history of abuse in Djibouti.

Many of the placards used in demonstrations at the camp and displayed in the Ethiopian community centre voiced refugees' concerns about the lack of resettlement opportunities and delays in the process (see figure to left and on p.44).

Hostility, attacks and rape by civilians

Niggli believed that immigrants became unpopular in Djibouti in response to the economic recession in the early 1990s. Hostility from members of the public and attacks on refugees by gangs were reported by him in 1996.[65]

However, clashes between refugees and Djibouti citizens began much earlier and had already occurred in July 1991. After rumours reached Djibouti of attacks by Oromo on Issa people around Dire Dawa in Eastern Hararge, revenge was meted out to Oromo refugees in Djibouti with lethal effect. Local Issa, abetted by the police (also Issa), attacked and killed between 250 and 550 Oromo men, women and children, according to Fatuma Galmo, an Oromo businesswoman living in the city at the time.[66]

Fatuma Galmo recalled 'From that time onwards I myself did not feel safe . . . living in Djibouti became more and more dangerous.'[67] She left in 1997.

[63] OSG Report 46, *Op. cit.* p.47.
[64] The list which the Ethiopian community at Ali Addeh submitted to UNHCR on 22 October included 60 files (85 individuals) of refugees who were at different stages of the resettlement process: 21 (49 individuals) had applied for resettlement but had either received no response or were waiting for an appointment for interview and 39 (86 individuals) were waiting for a response after resettlement interviews in 2008 (three files, seven individuals) or between January and March 2010 (36 files, 79 individuals).
[65] Niggli *et al.* 1996. *Op. cit.*
[66] Fatuma Galmo was a businesswoman in Djibouti from the 1970s to 1997. She had housed many Oromo refugees in that period. Her interview with Terfa Dibaba, Director of ORA Germany, in 2002, is recorded in *It is a Long Way: a Reflection on the History of the Oromo Relief Association*, Terfa Dibaba, Books on Demand GmbH, Norderstedt, Germany, 2011. pp.107-114.
[67] *Ibid.* p.113.

In May and June 1999, there were killings and attacks by mobs in Djibouti city. A 25 year-old Oromo man died after his throat was cut and a 30 year-old was stoned to death. Another survived having his throat cut and at least two others were stabbed. Forty or more were injured by civilians or police beating and kicking them. Three disappeared.[68]

Hostility against Eritreans flared up following the border conflict between Djibouti and Eritrea in 2008. Unabor (p.56), a 50 year-old Saho Eritrean, left Ali Addeh camp for Djibouti city in 2004 and lived there despite some fear of the Eritrean security apparatus. Hostility from Djiboutians who had lost relatives in the fighting, and their friends, included beatings and threats, which forced him back to Ali Addeh in 2008.

Refugees reported sexual violence as well as xenophobic violence. Two interviewees in Ali Addeh recounted being raped in Djibouti city. Fatuma (p.80), a 40 year-old Oromo villager from Hararge, recalled that late one night in 1995, when on her way home from work, she was accosted by four men in the Burakebir area. They had their faces covered and did not speak. She said 'I was raped there, on the road, by all of them. They covered my eyes, held my head back and held my arms and legs. They injured my left hip and left me pregnant.'

Fatuma (p.80), was attacked by four men in Djibouti city in 1995. 'I was raped there, on the road, by all of them.'

Fatiya (p.80), although heavily pregnant after being raped in Djibouti city, was again raped, robbed and stabbed by three men in the capital in September 2010. She was in hospital for 25 days.

Fatiya (p.80), a 30 year-old Amhara woman from Dire Dawa reported being stopped in May 2010 by 'a big man speaking Somali', while she was walking to catch a bus on her way home from work in the Plateau du Serpent area. He raped her 'in a dark place on the street.' She became ill and took another job nearer home four months later.

When heavily pregnant from this rape, she was stopped on the street by three Somali speaking men. She handed over the money she was carrying. Nevertheless, she was beaten, stabbed in her left arm and breast and cut across the tip of her nose. They raped her 'not in the proper way', and injured her right buttock with a big stone. She was taken to hospital by UNHCR and remained there 25 days.

Hostility at Ali Addeh

Refugees at Ali Addeh reported attacks by Djibouti citizens, police and by other refugees. Local police are responsible for security but do not patrol the camp at Ali Addeh. UNHCR had organised daily and nightly civil patrols of groups of refugee volunteers, which began just one week before my arrival.

[68] OSG Press Release 30, February 2000, Malvern, UK. p.17.

A permanent police presence at the camp was to be established in December, with the intention of placing 5-10 officers in the camp, according to the Assistant Executive Secretary of ONARS.[69]

In my short time at the camp I received several reports of violence against refugees. Fatiya, one of the victims of rape in Djibouti city reported above, was thrown to the ground by a Somali man during a dispute at a water point one week before the interview. She banged her head on a stone and was admitted to the camp clinic for three days.

One month before my arrival in Ali Addeh, an Oromo man (not interviewed in depth) was beaten by a large number of Somali men and needed medical attention as a result. Police did not even question the assailants, who returned to threaten the man because he had reported the incident.

Osman B was badly beaten in the town of Ali Addeh in May 2011. Police were unhelpful.

Osman B (p.82), because he felt insecure in the camp, was given permission to move into the town of Ali Addeh, where he tried to establish himself as a tailor. He was unable to afford the high rent he was charged and began sleeping on the street with his wife and two children. On 2 May 2011, he was badly beaten by local men and showed photographs of facial injuries sustained in the attack. He said that UNHCR were unable to do much about this but a protection officer personally paid for him to get hospital treatment. UNHCR told him to report the incident to the police, but when he did so, they also beat him, saying 'You are living in Djibouti and you dare to accuse Djiboutians!' He returned to the camp, but sleeps outside the perimeter, like most of the men in the Ethiopian block.

The wife of Osman A (p.75) quarrelled with a Somali woman at a water point in May 2010. He recalled 'Men came that night, beat me and stabbed me with a knife in my leg.' He has a large scar on his left calf. 'I went to the police and UNHCR but no-one did anything and no-one was punished.' His assailants live only 100 yards away in the Somali block and he reported receiving threats from them on a daily basis. 'Because of these things, I don't sleep at night. All Oromo have the same problem. I have not slept in my tent since coming back from Djibouti city.'

At the time of the street protests in Denmark and elsewhere following the cartoon depiction of Prophet Mohammed in 2006, hundreds of Muslims at Ali Addeh attacked the protestant and Ethiopian Orthodox churches at the camp. The tented buildings were destroyed by stones (see figure overleaf).

[69] Personal communication, 1 December 2012.

Rape within Ali Addeh camp was not reported by any of my interviewees. However, UNHCR has set up counselling centres for victims of sexual violence at Ali Addeh and at Ali Sabieh, the large town on the main road about 25 km away, because of the high incidence of rape in the camp.

Church at Ali Addeh, damaged beyond repair when stoned by angry mob in response to blasphemous cartoons published in Denmark, in 2006.

Police and rafles

Refugees feared the police, gendarmerie, military and security services in Djibouti. Organised round-ups by police - 'rafles', abuse by corrupt state actors and interrogation and refoulement by the security system were all reasons for legitimate concern.

State sanction to hostility to refugees is evident from the response given by President Ismail Omar Guelleh at interview in 2003. 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.[70]

Djibouti police were complicit in the beating and killing of more than 250 Oromo refugees in 1991, according to eye-witness accounts (see p.38).[71] They were also involved in the mob violence against refugees in 1999, in which at least two were killed (see p.39).

Twenty six Oromo refugee boys, some as young as ten years, were taken from the streets and detained in Gabod prison in April 2000, arousing 'grave concerns' of sexual abuse by guards and detainees, according to the World Organisation Against Torture.[72]

However, the most feared interaction with police is being picked up in one of the frequent 'rafles', when police round up suspected illegal immigrants, take them to Nagad detention centre south of the city and deport them to Ethiopia within 48 hours, unless they produce up-to-date papers showing their refugee status or registration as asylum-seekers.

Rafles were first introduced by the French to find and deport residents of British Somalia (now Somaliland).[73] They are predominantly used now to find and deport illegal immigrants from Ethiopia. There are small numbers of detentions and deportations every day but large scale rafles occur less often, separated by several weeks or months.

In 1996, Niggli reported that attestation papers of asylum-seekers were not necessarily respected.[74] The ORA team were told of incidents when papers were ripped up by police

[70] IRIN, 29 October 2003.
[71] Terfa Dibaba 2011 *Op. cit.* p.113.
[72] OSG Press Release 31, July 2000, p.24.
[73] Niggli *et al.* 1996. *Op. cit.*
[74] *Ibid.*

officers. OSG also received reports of this behaviour up to about 2003. Since then, the situation has improved. UNHCR is responsible for improvements in police training and behaviour. For example, Niggli wrote in 1996 that women who were collected in rafles were likely to be adopted and used as sex slaves. I heard no accounts of this.

Police routinely beat all detainees. This ill-treatment is not restricted to those rounded up in rafles. I witnessed police wielding batons when arresting demonstrating students in Djibouti city on 23 November.

Police, especially young, recently recruited officers, do not distinguish between immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers and send many to Nagad detention centre. Once in Nagad, detainees are assessed by senior officers who are more likely to have received training from UNHCR on recognition of refugee and asylum-seeker status. Those with up-to-date papers are generally released from Nagad within 24-48 hours. UNHCR reported that the behaviour of police during rafles, at the border and at Nagad has improved due to their training.

However, the late Jean-Paul Noel Abdi reported that the equivalent of the American Green Card was still the red 10,000 Franc note ($60), the Djibouti 'Red Card', paid to the police to avoid being taken in a rafle.

The UNHCR protection unit visits Nagad each week , more often when there is news of a rafle. It is much less common now for those with up-to-date attestation papers to be detained and threatened with deportation, according to UNHCR. I heard no accounts of this during my visit or since.

UNHCR protection officers are prepared to visit Nagad to help prevent the deportation of those with out-of-date attestation papers, but there are no guarantees that deportation will be avoided. Staff in the protection unit reported, however, that such deportations from Nagad had not occurred for a few years.

Unabor, a Saho Eritrean, detained in Nagad for 12 days in January 2009. He reported there were over 100 Eritrean army deserters there. Two of them had 'gone mad'.

One of my interviewees in Ali Addeh had been detained in Nagad. Unabor (p.76) was detained in Djibouti city in January 2009, after going to UNHCR there. He was held with nine other Eritrean men and four women in Nagad detention centre for 12 days. He reported that there were over 100 Eritreans who had deserted from the Eritrean army there and that two of them had 'gone mad'. Unabor's group were returned to Ali Addeh.

Eritrean army deserters are held at Nagad, pending resettlement. UNHCR provides rations for them. According to Church World Service resettlement

officers who had been interviewing them,[75] they appeared well-fed and did not appear ill-treated.

It is sometimes difficult to know from the information supplied by refugees and asylum-seekers whether detentions are initiated by the police or the security service, the SDS. For example, Abdella Yassin, now resettled in Sweden, was detained for the second time in Djibouti city on 15 February 2011, badly beaten and accused of informing human rights organisations about the detention and refoulement of refugees and asylum-seekers in November and December 2010 (see p.62).

Arrests at Ali Addeh and Awr Aousa

Abuse by police, soldiers and gendarmerie at refugee camps was sometimes politically motivated and sometimes a result of spite and personal corruption.

Public displays of dissatisfaction with the Djibouti authorities and being 'warehoused' for long periods in the camps are punished. The first incident of this which came to the attention of OSG followed a demonstration at Awr Aousa camp on 16 November 2003, were refugees and asylum-seekers were gathered after the clearing of Djibouti city (p.49).

Kadir Said, a recognised refugee and well-known Oromo singer who had been in Djibouti since 1998, and Salim Ahmed, a registered asylum-seeker, demonstrated in front of delegates from foreign embassies when they visited the camp. They were arrested and taken to Gabod prison in Djibouti city. After two months, they were taken to Nagad detention centre and held there until 22 March 2004, when they were taken by UNHCR to Ali Addeh.[76]

I spoke with a group of six refugees, including five from the Ethiopian refugee committee, at Ali Addeh on 30 November 2011. They reported that the Djibouti civilian camp administrator, Muse Garamer, came with police and soldiers and took suspects to be beaten and interrogated after visits to the camp by officials from abroad.

They reported that punishments were meted out to refugees for displaying slogans on placards at demonstrations (see figure overleaf) or for handing letters to the visitors: following visits by the High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, on 4 December 2010; the Deputy Commissioner on 25 April 2010; a delegation from the European Union on 11 October 2009; and the UNHCR Desk Officer for Djibouti in Geneva, on 19 March 2009. Another refugee reported being detained twice for displaying visual protests, on 20 June 2009 and during the EU delegation visit on 11 October 2009 (Yalew Lelesse, p.84).

Following each visit, up to four people had been detained and mistreated. Refugees described their experiences of being shackled to three points inside and at the entrance to a men's toilet in the police administrative building, where they were urinated upon, or being taken to underground cells in the military garrison.

[75] Informal meeting with Church World Service resettlement officers, Ali Sabieh, 29 November 2011.
[76] It was reported in OSG Press Release 40, July 2004, p.46, that the two men were in transit to the Ethiopian border when rescued using bribery. This is incorrect. A UNHCR Protection Officer took them from Nagad to Ali Addeh (personal communication with the officer, 1 December 2011).

Some of the placards displayed in the Ethiopian community centre at Ali Addeh.

One man reported being detained in the police building toilet six or seven times. Another refugee reported being forced to sign a document in French, which he did not understand, but understood to be an acknowledgement of the threat to be deported.

Gebre-Mikael (p.74) said that in May 2011 he was hand-cuffed and questioned by police, accompanied by the Djibouti authority camp administrator, following a brief absence from the camp. He believed this was precipitated by his recent absence and his being seen previously writing a letter to UNHCR. The police told him he would be in trouble if he contacted anyone in authority.

Abdella Yassin (Appendix 1, p.62), who had been arrested and questioned in Djibouti city in February 2011, wrote from a place of hiding that two weeks after his release, a police vehicle came to his tent in Ali Addeh and he was asked for by name. His fear of returning to Ali Addeh was so great that he was reluctant to attend the resettlement interview which enabled him to leave the country a few months later.

Prominence among the community in the camp attracts abuse. The two individuals who acted as translators for me believed they were putting themselves at risk because of doing so.

Several incidents were reported by interviewees in Ali Addeh which appear to have been motivated by personal animosity or gain rather than being state-sponsored. Asha (p.81), a 63 year-old Amhara woman from Dire Dawa, reported being wrongfully arrested by a policeman in Awr Aousa camp in the early 1990s and accused of stealing. He beat her, breaking her right forefinger, which remains deformed. She was immobilised by her right wrist being handcuffed to her left ankle, before being handed over to the Gendarmerie. Although the Gendarmerie released her, the policeman continued to persecute her until she was moved to Ali Addeh in 1995.

Kadija (p.78), a 34 year-old Amhara woman from Wollo reported that her husband had been employed as a salesman in a shop in Djibouti city for seven years. His employer is a 3-star officer in the Djibouti Gendarmerie but does not pay him regularly. He is only allowed back to Ali Addeh for two days every 4-5 months, when he brings some food items for the children and perhaps 5000 DF ($30). Once, when he had been at Ali Addeh for two days and refused to return when telephoned, his employer came three days later and forced him to go back. Kadija feared being alone at Ali Addeh. She was a cook at the military post for 8000 DF ($48)/month but, five months before the interview, she left because a soldier began demanding sex. He has since been transferred but returns to Ali Addeh to visit his friends and chew *qat*. A week before the interview, he visited her tent and said he would get her arrested if she did not have sex with him. She now moves to another tent when he visits Ali Addeh.

Djibouti police are searching for the husband of Amina (p.79), a 30 year-old Amhara woman from West Hararge. She believes this is because he had made accusations to UNHCR and the resettlement officer that the hotel at which he had worked in Ali Sabieh had not paid him and that the police had beaten him. 'They come every 7-10 days asking about him' she said. 'Three soldiers came five days ago.' 'Sometimes they come in the night when people are sleeping. Sometimes they come in the daytime. . . . They warned me "If you tell him we are looking for him, we will kill you." . . . I'm not a man. I can't go to sleep in the bush. I have a 12 year-old son. I sleep at a friend's tent every second night.' Amina said that she has told UNHCR but they are unable to help. According to other refugees at Ali Addeh, the owner of the Hôtel la Palmeraie is a powerful man.

The hands of Amina (see text to left). Soldiers come every 7-10 days asking for her husband, who has fled. 'I'm not a man. I can't go to sleep in the bush. I have a 12 year-old son. I sleep at a friend's tent every second night.'

Security service (SDS)

Djibouti's security service (SDS - Service du Documentation et de Securité) keeps a close eye on refugees and asylum-seekers in Djibouti and is the state organ with which the Ethiopian security system cooperates when it captures and arranges for the refoulement of suspected OLF members and supporters. It listens to telephone conversations. Jean-Paul Noel Abdi, the late President of LDDH, referred to it being the 'Chinese ears' to their conversations.

The SDS has an extensive street presence. Refugees were afraid to attend the offices of LDDH or to make contact by telephone. 'They hear from outside' they said.

One of the three men who had met me at the airport, and accompanied me to a refugee's home to meet community committee members, was too afraid of the SDS to go to his own home that night. For three days while I was in Hargeisa, he stayed in a house without daring to go out to get food and had to be persuaded by his friends not to attempt the crossing to Yemen. Committee members told me that all of them had been scared to leave their homes at times because of fear of being picked up by the SDS and that more had been followed on the streets after my arrival.

On the day of my arrival, four refugees set off to accompany me to buy a phone and SIM card. All but one fell back as we walked along, fearful of being noticed in my company. I was surrounded by inquisitive people in the office where I eventually obtained a SIM card and the man who accompanied me was stopped by security men in a car two or three days later and asked 'What were you doing with the white man?'

The military garrison at Ali Addeh, a former French Foreign Legion post (through vehicle windscreen).

On three occasions I was asked to postpone interview sessions, despite refugees being gathered ready and being eager to tell their stories. These sessions had been planned to take place in private dwellings in the African Quarter, but an increase in the street presence of security personnel was noticed by the refugees.

On my return from Hargeisa and Ali Addeh, UNHCR kindly provided an interview room for me to use. The interviewees were accustomed to being seen on their way to and from UNHCR and this was deemed safe.

SDS detention

Two episodes of detention which were brought to my attention appeared to be at the hands of the SDS. Mohammed (p.83), a 31 year-old Oromo, used to be employed by an Eritrean in a workshop in Djibouti city making aluminium window frames. In 2008, when conflict between Djibouti and Eritrea erupted, his employer fled to Dubai and two other Oromo employees left for Eritrea. Mohammed continued at the workshop and was arrested there in August 2008.

He was blindfolded and taken to an underground cell where he was held for seven days. Mohammed does not know where he was taken but thinks it was the SDS base in 'Plateau' district (in the vicinity of the railway station and the Sheraton hotel in Plateau du Serpent). He remained blindfolded during his detention and was interrogated about the two other Oromo employees, who were suspected of having links with the OLF.

I also spoke to a man whose detention throughout almost the whole of my visit had the hallmarks of the SDS (Ali, p.85). I spoke with him on the morning of my departure, after his release from detention at 10.00 p.m. the previous evening. He had been taken from outside his home at about midnight on 21 November, when he had stepped out for a breath of fresh air. An unmarked white car stopped and three plain-clothed men, armed with pistols and speaking Somali, abducted him.

He does not know where he was taken. He was blindfolded before being taken there and was forced to lie down in the back of a pickup when he was taken out and dropped on the road in Balbala, southwest of Djibouti city.

He was interrogated in Somali and accused of belonging to the OLF. He was asked who else was involved. [He denies involvement with the OLF.] He was held on his own in a dark cell, above ground. On the first day, he was kicked and beaten with fists and police truncheons for an hour or so. He was otherwise not beaten or tortured.

He does not know how long the journey to Balbala was from his place of detention. There had been several brief stops and he was in a state of terror throughout the journey, believing he was being sent back to Ethiopia.

He was visibly shaken and frightened at being interviewed in my hotel. He had been detained in a similar fashion in January 2011. His account differs in several ways from descriptions of the combined operations which involved Ethiopians and which were followed by immediate deportation (see next section).

Throughout my visit to Djibouti and Hargeisa, other refugees and asylum-seekers, including members of his family and refugees at Ali Addeh, were expressing concern about his absence, and feared he may have been refouled.

Repatriation and refoulement - up to 2003

Refoulement of Oromo refugees from Djibouti is recorded from as early as 1982. Terfa Dibaba wrote of a tripartite agreement from 1982-1984 between the Derg in Ethiopia, the government of Djibouti and UNHCR concerning 'voluntary repatriation.' He wrote 'Those who were picked by the local police and were handed over to the Ethiopian security police were packed on trucks and sent back to Ethiopia. Some of them returned back to Djibouti for the second or third time, as they were sure that they were not safe in Ethiopia.'[77]

In November 1982, 42 newly arrived refugees were tricked into presenting themselves at Dikhil and trucked back to Ethiopia. 'Shooting was heard but it is not known what happened to the 42.' Next month, armed police and soldiers surrounded the transit camp at Dikhil. 'At six o'clock in the morning all the political refugees were driven out of their tents at gunpoint and assembled. Some who resisted were brutally treated and a lorry load of resisters were taken straight to Ethiopia. 21 other people were selected from the refugees and loaded, screaming and begging for mercy, on to a lorry. Some of these were known to be legally registered refugees. In the meantime a further 10 people were brought from Dikhil Prison, where they had been detained for some days, and also thrown on to the lorry. All were deported to Ethiopia.'[78]

Even voluntary returnees to Ethiopia were not safe. Zeinaba Ibrahim, a 55 year-old widow with Djibouti citizenship who had been brought up in Djibouti since 1946, returned to her family area of Dire Dawa with a friend in 1992 to set up a business trading in clothing. She and her friend were both arrested in Dire Dawa and detained at the end of June 1992. She returned to Djibouti where she was interviewed in 1996.[79]

Djibouti and Ethiopian authorities were reportedly cooperating in sending 17 Oromo back to Ethiopia by train in the early 1990s, when the train was brought to a halt by a woman working for a church resettlement program.[80]

Gaali Nurreddin Hussein, a 29 year-old farmer from Jimma, came to Djibouti in 1990 to avoid conscription into the Derg army. He acquiesced to UNHCR voluntary repatriation in 1995 and travelled by train with 200 Oromo and 300 other Ethiopians to Dire Dawa. He was

[77] Terfa Dibaba 2011. *Op. cit.* p.115.
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] Niggli *et al.* 1996. *Op. cit.* p.14.
[80] Terfa Dibaba 2011. *Op. cit.* p.114.

detained and tortured for 28 days. One of his friends was killed. He and three others returned immediately to Djibouti.[81]

In 1996, a group of 17 Oromo were returned to Ethiopia from Djibouti. A 32 year-old woman from East Hararge gave an eye-witness description of 13 being taken from detention in Dire Dawa and shot. Twelve died and she survived, with severe injuries.[82]

Also in 1996, a Tigrean refugee (former TPLF member), an Afar opposition member, a former Ethiopian Somali Region politician and six Ogadeni businessmen were refouled to Ethiopia. All were detained and all except the Tigrean disappeared in detention. (See p.59.)

Between June 1997 and May 1998, in at least four separate incidents, over 110 Oromo, including at least three recognised refugees and two registered asylum-seekers, were returned to Ethiopia (pp.59-60).

Within days of a visit by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia in April 1999, another 21, including at least two with refugee mandates, were detained. Nine of these, including the refugees, were refouled together with three newly detained Oromo, one year later. Four were said to be in particularly poor condition following torture. Ethiopian Radio announced the capture of eight 'OLF commanders' in Djibouti. (See p.60.)

Out of 2500 rounded up and detained in August 1999, at least some were tortured, deported and then presented as captured OLF fighters on Ethiopian state television. Another 20 registered asylum-seekers, in the country for between one and three years, were returned in December 1999, despite being visited by UNHCR in detention. UNHCR announced 1700 voluntary repatriations in May 2000. (See p.60.)

IRIN corroborated reports received by the Oromia Support Group and the Oromo Relief Association of 5000 being returned to Ethiopia on 22 December 2000. Informants told OSG and ORA that 127 registered and named asylum-seekers were among those subjected to lethally overcrowded conditions in pre-transport detention and the cattle wagons used to take the deportees to Ethiopia. Two women died of suffocation and 30 were gang-raped in detention. Twelve suffocated in the rail wagons and 16 were killed by soldiers, 15 being shot dead when they broke out of the trucks. (See pp.60-61.)

Three asylum-seekers were involuntarily returned in separate incidents in 2001 and two groups, of eight and about 60, asylum-seekers were sent back in July and October 2002. At least four of the eight who were removed in July returned one year later with ICRC certificates of imprisonment in Ethiopia. At least two had been tortured. Ali Ibrahim Yusuf, aged 32, one of the 60 taken in October to the notorious Sabategna military camp in Dire Dawa, was beaten and tortured to death on 7 February 2003, according to an eye-witness who returned to Djibouti. (See p.61.)

About 52 Oromo asylum-seekers, including three who had lived in Djibouti for 25 years, and including Jundi Baker Ahmed (see below, pp.51 and 52) were forcibly returned in April 2003. Another 20, including the wife of a Djibouti citizen were removed in July 2003. (See p.61.)

[81] Niggli *et al.* 1996. *Op. cit.* p.18.
[82] Dursitu was interviewed in Hargeisa. See Appendix 2, p.53, OSG Report 47. *Op. Cit.* and Table 4, on p.14, above.

Thousands expelled and refouled in 2003 and 2004; rapid RSD at Awr Aousa

In July 2003, the Djibouti government announced that all illegal immigrants would be expelled if they had not left voluntarily by the end of August. Looting and rape were reported by some among the thousands who began to leave. Fifty died in a single bus crash and over 40,000 had left when those remaining were ordered to gather in the city football stadium on 29 August. The deadline was extended two weeks because of lack of available transport. By 15 September, 80% of Djibouti's immigrants, 70,000 people, had gone. On 10 October, IRIN reported 100,000 had left and the police had 'netted' 100 who tried to remain in Djibouti city.[83]

Ten thousand or more overwhelmed the facilities at the stadium. UNHCR expected only 4000 and complained to IRIN that facilities were paralysed because of congestion. Lack of sanitation, food and water were reported. One infant died. The husband of one of my interviewees (Habiba, p.77) disappeared in the city and another refugee, Abbas Mohammed Ali, was taken from the stadium by Djibouti security forces and also disappeared.[84]

Within a few days, all were taken from the stadium to a former refugee camp at Awr Aousa, which had been closed since 1999. Although this had been originally built to house only 3000, conditions there were an improvement on the stadium. Djibouti's National Eligibility Commission and UNHCR then set about a rapid refugee status determination exercise at the camp, which lasted until March 2004. Almost all of those from Ethiopia (see p.35) were refused refugee status.

Terrain over which several hundred, who had been refused refugee status at Awr Aousa, walked back to Djibouti city in June 2004.

Three days after Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi visited Djibouti in June 2004, convoys of trucks arrived to take the 3-4000 refused Ethiopian asylum-seekers to the Ethiopian border at Dawale and the 521 Somaliland families to Somaliland. Convoys, which some of the refugees thought were taking them to another camp, left for the border on 8, 10 and 12 June. Awr Aousa camp was again empty.[85]

The official version of events was that no violence was used in the transfer to the border or the handing over of refugees at the border. Off the record, UNHCR staff informed me they were aware that violence was use by police during the transfer.

I spoke to one man and his wife whose baby was born only ten days before the mother and child were roughly loaded onto a truck bound for Dawale. The deportees and those who disappeared in the process included those who had acted as translators and fixers for the ORA

[83] OSG Press Release 40, July 2004, Malvern, UK. p.44 *et seq.*
[84] *Ibid.*
[85] *Ibid.*

delegation in 1996 and several OSG informants, from whom nothing has been heard since 2004.

It is not known what became of most Oromo and others from Ethiopia who were not recognised as refugees. Some panicked. There was at least one suicide and several were on the verge of taking their lives rather than be returned to Ethiopia. At least eleven made it to Nairobi, where they were granted asylum and refugee status. In September 2010, I met six of these. They had been given refugee status in Djibouti before 2003 but were rejected in the status determination process at Awr Aousa. They had walked to Kenya, through Somalia.[86]

Correspondents have reported making their way from Awr Aousa to Yemen, Somaliland and South Africa, but the total numbers involved are not known.

An unknown number, probably several hundred and possibly over one thousand, of the men who were refused in the determination process at Awr Aousa walked back over the mountains to Djibouti city (see figure on previous page), where at least some later re-registered as asylum-seekers with ONARS and UNHCR.

Many of the women and children who were trucked to the Ethiopian border also made their way back to Djibouti city. No information has reached OSG about the number refused entry into Ethiopia or the number admitted and detained in Ethiopia. About 60 Eritreans who were trucked to the border were taken from there by UNHCR to the camp at Ali Addeh.

Abdata (see text to right) was taken back to Jimma in 2004. Half of his family's coffee farm had been confiscated. In 2006, he was shot in the leg by police who accused him of supporting the OLF. He returned to Djibouti.

Two interviewees were among those who returned to Ethiopia in 2003 and 2004. Abdata (p.71), a 32 year-old coffee farmer from near Jimma, was taken by train in June 2004 to Addis Ababa with about 20 other deportees and a guard of 5-6 soldiers. He was not detained but was put on a bus to Jimma, again with a guard. He was allowed to go home to his, partly confiscated, coffee farm. Two years later, he was shot in the leg by federal police who accused him of supporting the OLF, and left again for Djibouti.

The other interviewed returnee was not so lucky. Foole (p.72), a 32 year-old cattle merchant and former torture victim from East Hararge, was also escorted on a train from the border, when coerced into leaving Djibouti in late 2003. At Dire Dawa, he said a 'spy was assigned' to him and very quickly he was detained.

After six days in a police cell, he was transferred to underground detention in Harar military camp. He remained in this cell

[86] OSG Report 46. *Op. cit.* pp.45-6.

underground, without daylight, for five years. He was forced to eat faeces, although not physically tortured. He returned to Djibouti immediately after being released in 2008.

Refoulements 2005 - 2011

Between 2005 and 2010, there were scattered reports of refoulement and repatriation of individuals to Ethiopia and Somalia. Asylum requests from two Ethiopian pilots and another member of the air-force were rejected by both French and Djibouti authorities and the men were returned in July 2005. A woman villager from East Hararge was deported from Djibouti city in 2006. Two young men attending school in Djibouti were snatched from the street and returned to Ethiopia in November 2007. Four more teenage school students were abducted and returned in February 2008. (See p.62.)

Between 2009 and 2011, the number of Somali recognised refugees who were refouled through Loyada (the border town with Somaliland) after being rounded up in police rafles was reported by a UNHCR staff member to be much less than previously. Only two or three individuals were illegally deported in this way during these years.

A leaked cable from the US Embassy in Addis Ababa noted that 40 Somali asylum-seekers picked up in a boat by a Dutch military vessel in November 2009 were returned to Mogadishu by the Djibouti government. UNHCR said this amounted to refoulement but no such accusations had followed the repatriation of 52 Somalis picked up by a US vessel six months earlier.[87]

Reports were received before the field trip and from several eye-witnesses in Djibouti during the research period concerning abductions of Oromo and Ogadeni refugees and asylum-seekers. The abductions were carried out by a combined unit of Ethiopian and Djibouti security forces operating between 25 November 2010 and early January 2011. Reports were consistent in their description of the snatch squad and some of the incidents were corroborated by separate eye-witness accounts.

The Toronto-based Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa reported that three men, including a youth of 16 years, were abducted and disappeared on 25 November. It also named six who were abducted on 22 December and were believed to have been taken back to Ethiopia.[88] The Human Rights League reported that the abductions were carried out by a combined unit of Ethiopian and Djibouti security forces

Two men at Ali Addeh camp described in detail the abduction of four of those taken in Djibouti city on 22 December 2010.[89] They were staying with friends and relatives in the same neighbourhood. Jundi Baker, in his mid-forties, (who had previously been refouled in 2003, see p.61); Mohammed Ali, ca32; Omar Ibrahim, ca30; and Anwar Jemal, ca28, were taken from their own or their relatives' homes at about 2.00 a.m. by three Amhara-speaking men in plain clothes, carrying pistols, and three uniformed members of the Djibouti security forces, carrying rifles. One of the informants described how his Djiboutian landlord denied access to the snatch squad while he escaped through a window at the rear of the property.

[87] http://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/02/10DJIBOUTI100.html
[88] Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa, Urgent Action and Appeal. Extra-judicial arrest in Djibouti; Fear of deportations and torture. Toronto. 12 January 2011.
[89] Two of the six men seen together at Ali Addeh camp on 29 November 2011.

One man, whom I interviewed only briefly in Djibouti city, was a food trader with the same first name as one of those abducted and refouled (Jundi). He was released after being held for a short period. He described 'running, running, running' and not daring to show himself in the market for a month afterwards.

Another refugee reported at substantive interview being asked for by name by the snatch squad in Djibouti, 15 days after the abduction of Jundi Baker. He was not at home. Adem Abdush, ca45, was however taken in his absence. An eye-witness reported to him that Adem was taken by members of both countries' security forces in an Ethiopian embassy vehicle. The interviewee requested that this information was separated from the rest of his account in case he could be traced.

Apart from Jundi Baker, all of the abductees have disappeared. Jundi's wife, since resettled in Sweden, has discovered from relatives that he is being detained in Dire Dawa, E. Hararge.

After the abductions in Djibouti city, the snatch squad went to Ali Addeh. 'They were running the operation for one or two weeks' I was told. A Land Cruiser with blacked out windows visited the properties of at least four men in the camp, 'five nights, after midnight'. These included the tent of one of those who had been sought in Djibouti city earlier.

Habiba (see text on right) reported that her cousin Hasan, a 24 yr-old registered refugee, was taken by Ethiopian and Djibouti security forces from the capital in January 2011.

Habiba (p.77) reported that her cousin was present in Djibouti city in December 2010 and narrowly escaped when 15 of his friends, with whom he was staying, nine men and six women, were abducted and taken to Ethiopia. He returned to Djibouti city after a month at Ali Addeh camp. He and his brother Hasan, 24, both mandate refugees, were warned that they were being sought by the snatch squad. Shortly afterwards, Hasan was taken. Neighbours said that Hasan was taken by plain-clothed Ethiopians and armed, uniformed members of the Djibouti security forces who were travelling in an Ethiopian embassy vehicle. He again returned to Ali Addeh and has slept outside the camp in the bush since then.

There were two further reports of refoulement and attempted refoulement in 2011. A group of men interviewed in Ali Addeh on 29 November named an individual who was sought by a unit of Ethiopian and Djibouti security men in Djibouti city on 22 February 2011. He has since ran away from the city.

Another man, Habtamu Dababa, aged 42, fled to Djibouti in 2011 after a period of detention in Ethiopia on suspicion of belonging to the Ethiopian Patriotic Front. According to eye-witnesses, he reported being followed in Djibouti city and on 20 May 2011 was taken from the city by a team of Ethiopian and Djibouti security men. The interviewee who reported this wished to remain anonymous.

A Land Cruiser with darkened windows, containing four men, including at least one member of the Djibouti security forces, was reported by a group of refugee spokesmen on 29

November to have again visited Ali Addeh camp at night; five times during April and May 2011 and five times in the two months after the World Refugee Day celebration in June (see below, p.54). It stopped outside the tents of particular individuals, who were sought by name, in the Ethiopian block. It also stopped at Ogadeni tents in the Somali block. One of my interviewees reported separately that this vehicle had stopped at the tent of an Ogadeni family in the Ethiopian block.

Because of fear of being abducted at night from the camp, the group of six who were interviewed on 29 November said that since the visit by the Ethiopian embassy on World Refugee Day, 90% of male Ethiopian refugees slept in the bush, outside of the camp. Before World Refugee Day, 25-30% had done so.

I enquired about this in telephone conversations with a refugee who had arrived in Ali Addeh from Somaliland, more than two months after my visit. On 9 March 2012, five weeks after he had arrived in Ali Addeh, he confirmed that most of the men slept 'under the trees' rather than in the camp. He said that he slept outside the camp 'about 11 nights out of 20.'

Accusations of involvement with the OLF

UNHCR were aware that Jundi Baker and others had been targeted and removed by Djibouti security forces. An official from the protection unit reported that he believed the men including Jundi and other recognised refugees, who were taken in November and December 2010, were targeted because they were OLF or ONLF activists. He had seen receipts which he was told by the police were found at Jundi's residence. He believed these demonstrated that the OLF were forcing refugees to contribute money and proved that those arrested were OLF supporters or members.

A researcher for Amnesty International was told by UNHCR that the men who were refouled from Djibouti in November and December 2010 were OLF members, actively recruiting and collecting money. Thus, on the word of Djibouti police, UNHCR turned a blind eye to the refoulements and Amnesty International followed suit.

The chairman of the Oromo community in Ali Addeh said 'Sometimes they use a pretext. Jundi was taken like that. They put papers around to make it look like he was working for the OLF.'

Members of the Oromo communities in Djibouti city and Ali Addeh, and non-Oromo members of the Ethiopian community in Ali Addeh, did not believe that Jundi Baker was involved with the OLF at all, let alone actively recruiting or collecting money for the organisation.

Membership of the OLF is necessarily clandestine and it is possible that Jundi was a member without his close friends and family being aware of it. However, other men who were sought by name by the snatch squad, whom I interviewed, were not among the OLF members who freely admitted their involvement with the organisation in the past, at interview.

In addition, the temporary detention of a second man named Jundi, apparently in error, and the abduction of Adem Abdush, who was merely taken in reprisal for the absence of the man who was sought at his address (see previous page), indicate that at least some of the abductions were indiscriminate.

Ethiopian government surveillance

It is naive to assume that the Ethiopian government does not closely monitor refugees in Djibouti city and Ali Addeh camp. There is a widespread belief that its agents do so in order to instil fear and a sense of impotence among the refugees. Even if this belief is ungrounded, the Ethiopian government certainly monitors suspected opposition activity abroad and has a low threshold of suspicion.[90] It is self evident that those who have fled abuses in Ethiopia because of suspicion of opposing the government will be suspected of the same sentiments when living outside Ethiopia.

At least up to 2003, it was commonly reported that Ethiopian government security men were active in Djibouti, among the refugees and watching outside the UNHCR office. Refugees expressed fears that 'government spies' were among those gathered at Awr Aousa in 2003/4.

During my visit, asylum-seekers in the city informed me that there were 40-50 informants to the Ethiopian embassy among them. Refugees in the city and Ali Addeh reported being contacted repeatedly by former acquaintances now working at the embassy and being asked to attend publicity and fund-raising events. One said he had been warned, after expressing reluctance to attend a meeting 'If you refuse, one way or another we will get you.'

A degree of infiltration of UNHCR by either the SDS or Ethiopia's intelligence system was apparent, at least in 2002. One victim of refoulement that year, who returned to Djibouti in 2003 after being imprisoned in Ethiopia, reported that his UNHCR record was available to Ethiopian government officials when he appeared in court in Dire Dawa after being taken back.[91]

Ethiopian diplomats at Ali Addeh celebrations, June 2011

Ethiopian government representatives in Djibouti appear to have persuaded UNHCR that their intentions toward refugees are benign. On World Refugee Day, 20 June 2011, the Ethiopian deputy ambassador joined UNHCR and ONARS officials at celebrations held in the football stadium in the town of Ali Addeh, near to the refugee camp.

According to e-mail correspondence received the day after the event and according to six refugees interviewed on 29 November, the appearance of the Ethiopian representative on the stage, after Somali and Ethiopian cultural shows, was a cause of surprise and alarm.

The Ethiopian diplomat awarded a football prize to an Oromo teenager. Presumably, neither he nor the UNHCR official who had introduced him were aware that the recipient of the prize was the son of Jundi Baker, who had been abducted and refouled in December 2010.

Refugees reported that embassy officials came in two vehicles, a saloon car and a Land Cruiser. Occupants of the Land Cruiser were taking photographs and video recordings. Refugees described leaving the stadium and fleeing back to their tents. After the delegation left, the saloon car returned without the deputy ambassador. Camp officials told the refugees that the car had got stuck in sand and the deputy ambassador had been transferred to another vehicle. The refugees were suspicious because the driver was seen taking photographs of the

[90] Trueman, Trevor (2011) Abuse in Ethiopia and asylum in the UK: Oromo experience. A report for asylum - seekers. OSG. Malvern, UK. September 2011. pp.79-81. http://www.oromo.org/Report_re_Oromo_Sept_11.pdf
[91] OSG Press Release 39, July 2003, Malvern, UK. p.17.

Ethiopian section at the camp for 15 minutes before meeting the ONARS camp manager. He remained at Ali Addeh until late evening.

UNHCR

In Djibouti, UNHCR has a staff of 42, including six international staff, at two offices - the main one in Djibouti city and another at the border with Somaliland at Loyada. At least some of the senior staff regard Djibouti as a hardship post, more difficult to work in than, for example, the Democratic Republic of Congo. I was made very welcome at the office and witnessed first-hand how hard senior staff members worked, putting in 11 or more hours work in one day, at the office alone.

The Country Representative, Mme Marie-Antoinette Okimba, Senior Protection Officer, Mme Myléne Ahounou, and Protection Officer, Hassan Said Mohammed were extremely patient with me and generous in the time they took to explain the situation for refugees in Djibouti. Without their generous assistance I would have been unable to visit Ali Addeh camp, visit ONARS or conduct seven of the 14 interviews in Djibouti city (see Acknowledgements, p.4).

In common with UNHCR staff elsewhere, and for similar reasons, they are expected to cope with an impossible array of conflicting demands and expectations, and are besieged with criticism from all quarters.

The Djibouti government is obstructive to establishing a welcoming, accessible asylum system which it fears would attract more refugees from surrounding countries, especially from its powerful neighbour and ally, Ethiopia. UNHCR must respect the sovereignty of host countries and operate under restraints placed upon it by the Djibouti security system. Refugees demand rapid status determination and access to the only durable solution - resettlement. Foreign governments are slow to accept the small number of resettlement cases.

UNHCR is informed by Djibouti and Ethiopian authorities that the majority of asylum-seekers from Ethiopia are either terrorists or economic migrants; that security concerns merit the deportation of suspected Ethiopian government opposition supporters, and; economic concerns merit the deportation of economic migrants. On the other hand, refugees know that resettlement is more likely if they can demonstrate their insecurity and are therefore prone to exaggerate or invent security threats.

Because of their histories of persecution, genuine refugees may also perceive threats when they do not exist. When UNHCR staff do not share refugees' concerns about insecurity, they are accused of being biased against Oromo, of cooperating with government agents or being infiltrated by them.

UNHCR officials in Djibouti also felt the organisation was unjustly criticised by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. My criticisms of the invitation of Ethiopian diplomats to the World Refugee Day celebrations at Ali Addeh were felt to be well-meaning but ill-informed and credulous.[92]

[92] Complaint was made to UNHCR in London and Geneva about this incident.

There is some substance to this view. On the basis of information received from Djibouti, I had reported the arrests of singer Kadir Said and Salim Ahmed at Awr Aousa in 2003 and that they were in transit to the border when their release was secured by bribery, after UNHCR had failed to prevent their deportation. This was not correct. UNHCR Protection Officer Hassan Said Mohammed had in fact personally accompanied the men from Nagad detention centre to Ali Addeh camp, where I met Kadir Said. (See p.43.)

Nonetheless, I find it difficult to marry the alarm and fear expressed by Oromo and other refugees from Ethiopia with the opinions of senior UNHCR staff in Djibouti. Because refugees with families in Ali Addeh are sometimes reportedly seen selling goods, including food distributed at the camp and materials such as scarves, at markets in Djibouti city, they were said to be economically integrated with the local population and at least some were therefore economic migrants who were at no more risk than Somalis in Djibouti. Mme Okimba believed that some individuals traded between Ethiopia, Ali Addeh and Djibouti city.

Despite reports from several sources of combined units of Ethiopian and Djibouti forces snatching refugees and deporting them to Ethiopia and the acknowledgement of the refoulement of some refugees who were allegedly involved with the OLF, senior UNHCR staff believed the reports of a Land Cruiser visiting Ali Addeh camp and refugees being sought by name were inventions by refugees eager to promote their chances of resettlement. Ten local UNHCR staff were based in Ali Addeh and had not reported any incidents of unwelcome intrusions into the camp. Mme Okimba simply did not believe that men slept outside of the camp because they felt insecure or that combined Djibouti/Ethiopian snatch squads had operated in Djibouti city.

Djibouti government perspective

In 1996, when the estimated number of refugees and illegal immigrants in Djibouti city was over 100,000, the District Commissioner of Djibouti described them as a 'plague on the capital', taking over and occupying squares and public spaces, causing problems with hygiene and public health.[93] Then, as in 2003 (p.41) and currently, the Djibouti government maintained that the majority of Ethiopian immigrants were economic migrants.

On 1 December 2011, I met the Assistant Executive Secretary of ONARS, Hasan Robleh Barre, who told me that he had no information about cooperation between Ethiopian and Djibouti security forces and their combined units taking OLF and ONLF suspects and returning them back to Ethiopia. He had not been informed about any episodes of refoulement, he said.

Regarding insecurity in Ali Addeh camp, he said that policing the camp was impossible without enclosing the refugees there. He believed the allegations of refoulement by refugees were inventions to promote their chances of resettlement.

Comment on security

Despite my great respect for senior UNHCR staff in Djibouti, I do not agree with their conclusions regarding the safety of refugees and asylum-seekers in Djibouti. I present the findings in this report as evidence that refugees in Ali Addeh and asylum-seekers in Djibouti

[93] Niggli *et al.* 1966. *Op.cit.*

city are genuinely in fear of persecution in Ethiopia and in need of international protection because of the reality of the basis of that fear. They remain at risk of detention in Djibouti and of refoulement to Ethiopia, whether or not they are members, supporters or sympathisers of the OLF or other opposition groups.

This fear is reflected in the mental state of refuges and asylum-seekers and their behaviour in Djibouti city and Ali Addeh camp.

Ethiopian government representatives should be not be allowed access to Ali Addeh camp. When an Ethiopian government delegation visited the camps at Dadaab in Kenya in 2001, one refugee was subject to refoulement followed by torture in an Ethiopian military camp for one year. I interviewed him in September 2010.[94]

It is naive to expect there to be no cooperation between the governments of Djibouti and Ethiopia regarding surveillance and treatment of suspected opponents of the Ethiopian government in Djibouti. It is no coincidence that detention, refoulement and repatriation of refugees and asylum-seekers have followed shortly after Ethiopian Prime Ministerial visits to Djibouti in at least April 1999 and June 2004.

Suggestions

As noted by Jean-Paul Noel Abdi, late President of LDDH, with increasing tension due to economic and employment stress and the authorities' low tolerance of immigrants, there is an acute need for legalisation of the status of the thousands of asylum-seekers in Djibouti and for their resettlement.

Without an effective programme of refugee status determination, there is no prospect for the resettlement of the majority of Oromo and others from Ethiopia, which contrasts to the opportunities for resettlement of prima facie refugees from Somalia.

The British government is encouraged to apply diplomatic pressure on members of Djibouti's National Assembly to change the law so that Djibouti could more effectively recognise refugee rights and Djibouti's responsibilities to them under the UN refugee convention.

Djibouti's cooperation with Ethiopia is necessary for its own security and economy. It is therefore recommended that new legislation permits UNHCR to manage refugee status determination and that UNHCR provides funding for the necessary capacity building of its office in Djibouti. It will then be better placed to help refugees and asylum-seekers in Djibouti and to dissuade those intending to risk the dangers of seeking asylum in Yemen.

There is some recent and welcome improvement in relations between asylum-seekers and UNHCR in Djibouti city. It is essential for asylum-seekers in the city to organise and for their representatives to discuss their concerns on a regular basis with UNHCR officials. This will improve information flow and will build trust and mutual understanding, which have been unsatisfactory hitherto.

[94] Trueman 2010. Ethiopia exports more than coffee . . . *Op. Cit.* p.51.

UNHCR report that asylum-seekers tend to describe the general problems of Oromo people rather than detail their own experiences of persecution. Greater liaison and understanding between Oromo asylum-seekers and UNHCR would also help this.

There is poor communication and lack of trust between refugee representatives in Ali Addeh and senior UNHCR staff in Djibouti city. A mechanism for refugees communicating their concerns regarding security should be established.

Refugees and asylum-seekers are encouraged to establish better dialogue with the Djibouti human rights group, LDDH. Although under surveillance by the Djibouti security service, LDDH, once initial contact is made, could arrange for meetings which were free from SDS observation and interference.

It is not sensitive to the fears of refugees that Ethiopian government representatives should be allowed access to Ali Addeh camp. Fear of the Ethiopian security apparatus drove refugees to seek asylum there. No Ethiopian government or diplomatic presence should be tolerated at Ali Addeh.

Dr Trevor Trueman, Chair, Oromia Support Group. 2 May 2012.

Ethiopian block, Ali Addeh refugee camp.

Appendix 1.

Djibouti: Refoulements, abductions, killings, deaths and attacks.

This is by no means an exhaustive account.
References are given below or contained within the text of this report.

Nov. 1982	42 refugees refouled from Dikhil.
Dec. 1982	31, including refugees and detainees at Dikhil, refouled.
June 1992	Zeinaba Ibrahim, in Djibouti since 1946, returned with a friend to Dire Dawa to set up business trading in clothing; both were detained.
Early 1990s	Attempted refoulement of 17 Oromo refugees foiled.
1995	Gaali Nurreddin Hussein voluntarily repatriated with 200 other Oromo and 300 other Ethiopians to Dire Dawa; detained and tortured for 28 days; his friend was killed.
1996	17 Oromo taken by Ethiopian government forces back to Ethiopia. 13 were taken out from detention in the disused cotton factory at Dire Dawa to a ravine where 12 were shot dead. The other was shot and injured in her left thigh and abdomen. She was 17 years old. She was then detained for 8 years before fleeing to Hargeisa where she was interviewed on 26 November 2011.[95]
Aug.1996	Girmay Moges Newaye-Mariam, former TPLF member, recognised refugee, sent back from Ali Addeh refugee camp and detained in Mekele, Tigray Region, Ethiopia.[96]
23.8.96	Muhyadin Maftah Kedir, Deputy Secretary General of Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front, arrested while having medical treatment, taken to Ethiopia and disappeared in detention.[97]
1.9.96	Aydrus Hussein, ex-member of Somali Regional Assembly and Regional Commissioner for Dagaxbur, arrested with 6 Ethiopian Somali businessmen. All seven were handed over to Ethiopia one week later and disappeared in detention.[98]
6.6.97	Recognised refugee, 'AKA', detained for one week in Djibouti, removed to Ethiopia, detained in Dire Dawa and Hurso military camp until Aug.1998.[99]
[Nov.1997	Reciprocal refoulement of 14 Afar political opponents of Djibouti government from Ethiopia.][100]
Jan.1998	100 Oromo detained in Gabod prison and returned to Ethiopia, refugee status not known.[101]
14.1.98	Eight Oromo detained in Plateau area (where the Djibouti Security Service is based) and returned to Ethiopia on 18.1.98; two recognised refugees - Ibrahim Ali Omar (successful businessman, in Djibouti since 1979) and Ms Ibsitu Kamar; two registered asylum-seekers - Murad Ahmed and Mohamed Yusuf; four of unknown status - Hassan Ali, Abdulwasi Ali, Sheikh Musa Hassan and Obsa Cafa. Thought to be held in Dire Dawa. UNHCR were denied access while they were in detention in Djibouti.[102]

[95] Dursitu, Interview S6, OSG Report 47, *Op. cit.* p.53 and Table 4, p.14, above.
[96] OSG Press Release, October/November 1996, p.7.
[97] *Ibid.*
[98] *Ibid.*
[99] OSG Press Release 31, July 2000, p.24.
[100] Urgent Action 310/97, Amnesty International, London, 28 November 1998.
[101] OSG Press Release 21, January/February 1998, p.13.
[102] *Ibid.* p.12.

28.5.98	Wahib Ahmed Abdullahi, after one year in Djibouti, detained on his way to UNHCR office, and returned to Dire Dawa four days later. Held in underground cells for one year.[103]
Apr.1999	Within days of Ethiopian PM attendance at inauguration of President Ismail Omar Guelleh, 21 Oromo, including at least two with mandate status, arrested and threatened with deportation. Ali Mussa and recognised refugee Ibrahim Mohamed Osman were tortured and still detained in June.[104]
22.5-17.6.99	Killings and attacks by mobs in Djibouti city. Abdella Ali Mohammed, 25, died after his throat was cut on 25 May. Mohammed Said, 30, stoned to death, 25 May. Jamal Kamar Mohammed, 29, survived his throat being cut on 17 June. Abdella Mohammed Usman and Ahmed Ali Abdi received knife wounds on 24 May. At least 40 other refugees wounded by Djibouti civilians and police - 15 arrested. Three refugees reported to have disappeared - Najib Aliyi, Ilyas Adem and Abdulhakim Amme.[105]
Aug.1999	About 2500 rounded up and detained in Djibouti. Mohamed Abdu Idris and Mohamed Siraj hospitalised after torture. Some were returned to Ethiopia and presented as captured OLF fighters on television. Others were turned back from the border.[106]
Sept.1999	Thousands more arrived fleeing food shortages in Ethiopia. At least seven dead at roadside.[107]
5.12.99	UNHCR visited 20 detained registered asylum-seekers who were returned to Ethiopia two days later. Eleven had been in Djibouti since 1996 - Ahmed Abdulla Hamid, Dima Gamachu Goba, Jemal Abdella Hassan, Mume Yunis Sultan, Abdulaziz Bakar Amade, Umer Mikael Abdi, Saada Ahmed Yusuf, Abdu Said Ibrahim, Roras Hassan Mume, Hussen Waday Mulata and Chimsa Kabso; five since 1997 - Abdulaziz Ali Adem, Ahmed Jemal Mohammed, Ibrahim Adem Ali, Kalifa Mohammed Abullahi and Mohammed Umar Yusuf; four since 1998 - Oumer Abdella Moussa, Salah Mohammed Ahmed, Elias Abdi Ahmed and Karima Said Dadhi.[108]
15.4.00	Nine Oromo refugees and asylum-seekers who were detained in April/May 1999 and three who were taken on 14 and 15 April 2000 were returned to Ethiopia. The nine were Jafar Sharifa*, Ali Mohammed Sagir*, Abdi Mohammed Shirbo*, Heydrus Abdullahi, Ali Mussa (see Apr.1999, above), Elias Mohammed Ahmed, Mohammed Oumer Osman, Hassen Ahmed Yassin and Ali Mohammed Umar. The three were Sheik Hussein, Mohammed Amin and Shambee*. Those marked * were reported to be in particularly poor condition following torture. On 21 April, Ethiopian state radio announced the capture of eight 'OLF commanders' in Djibouti.[109]
May 2000	UNHCR announced 1700 had been voluntarily repatriated to Ethiopia since blanket refugee status was withdrawn from those fleeing before 1991.[110]
21.12.00	5000 refugees returned to Ethiopia, including 127 Oromo registered asylum-seekers. Before being taken by train to Ethiopia, two died of suffocation in

[103] OSG Press Release 23, June-July 1998, p.8 and Press Release 30, February 2000, p.16.
[104] OSG Press Release 28, May-July 1999, p.13.
[105] OSG Press Release 30, February 2000, p.17.
[106] OSG Press Release 29, August-October 1999, p.23.
[107] OSG Press Release 30, February 2000, p.16.
[108] *Ibid.*
[109] OSG Press Release 31, July 2000, p.24.
[110] *Ibid.* p.25.

	overcrowded cells at Nagad and 30 were reportedly gang-raped. Next day, they were loaded into cargo trucks, 300 per wagon, which were locked from the outside. Eight women and four men died of asphyxiation in the trucks. When the train stopped at Shabelle, 15 men, including five husbands of women who had died of suffocation, were shot dead as they broke out of the wagons. Another woman died after being beaten to the ground. UNHCR denied the deaths. Ethiopian security forces refused entry to 2000 and chased them back into the desert. More than 1000 were 'taken to unknown places'.[111]
Oct.2001	Oromo asylum-seeker, Hassan Sambussa, sent back to Ethiopia.[112]
Dec.2001	'AKA' refouled for second time (see 6.6.97). Held in Sabategna military camp in Dire Dawa, then two other camps until Jan. 2003.[113]
23.7.02	Eight registered asylum-seekers refouled: Mustafa Abdi, Merga Yadeta Akasa, Tofiq Hassan Ali, Dachasa Galata Chalchisa, Daraje Mosisa, Anwar Abdi Roba, Dawit Terefe and Merid. At least four returned to Djibouti one year later, bearing ICRC certificates that they had been imprisoned. At least two were tortured in detention.[114]
July. 2002	Asylum-seeker Badassa Geleta Birru detained in Djibouti and refouled in September. Detained and severely tortured in Maikelawi Central Investigation Department, Addis Ababa.[115]
6.10.02	Registered asylum-seeker Ali Ibrahim Yusuf, 32, a former detainee and torture victim, in Djibouti since 1995, taken with 'about 60' others from Djibouti to Sabategna military camp, Dire Dawa. Eye-witness account received of him being beaten and tortured to death on 7 February 2003.[116]
17&21.4.03	About 52 Oromo registered asylum-seekers were returned to Ethiopia, including Ahmed Hamza, Afandi Sheik Taha, Hussein Mohammed Osman, Mohammed Usso, Yasin Abubaker Gamtessa, Najash Abdurahman Kureba, Jundi Baker Ahmed, Yusuf Hassan, Abba Dawe, Yasin Abubaker Mumad, Abduljabar Usso, Usman Godana, Mohammed Umar, Adem Harreye, Abdulkadir Ahmed Ali, Mohammed Sani Dawud Aded, Jafar Ibrahim Abdurahman and Musa Dima. Three had been in Djibouti for 25 years.[117]
22.5.03	18 Oromo killed when bus crashed while taking 100 to border.[118]
July 2003	Djibouti government announces all illegal immigrants still present at the end of August will be deported.[119]
22.7.03	Halima Qamar, wife of a Djibouti citizen, and 18 others were returned to Ethiopia. Ahmed Ali Mohammed was returned about one week previously.[120]
23.7.03	50 refugees and six soldiers killed when bus carrying refugees crashes at Ali Sabieh on way to Ethiopia.[121]
8-12.6.04	3-4000 refugees returned to Ethiopia under supervision of UNHCR after rapid refugee status determination process at Awr Aousa camp.[122]

[111] OSG Press Release 33, May 2001, pp.30-35.
[112] OSG Press Release 38, December 2002, p.17.
[113] *Ibid.*
[114] *Ibid.* p.16 and OSD Press Release 39, July 2003, pp. 16-7.
[115] OSG Press Release 38, December 2002, p.17 and personal communication 17 April 2012.
[116] OSG Press Release 39, July 2003, p.16.
[117] *Ibid.*
[118] *Ibid.* p.17.
[119] OSG Press Release 40, July 2004, p.44.
[120] *Ibid.*
[121] *Ibid.*
[122] *Ibid.* p.47.

12.7.05	Three members of Ethiopian air force, including two pilots, refused asylum by France and Djibouti; handed over to Ethiopian forces in Djibouti city.[123]
2006	A young woman from a village in East Hararge deported from Djibouti city.[124]
Nov.2007	Umar Aliyi (16) and Abdulfatah Abdulatif (21) detained on their way home from the Catholic school and deported.[125]
Feb.2008	Kadir Hassan Ahmed (17), Fatih Mohamed Ali (16), Abdulaziz Ahmed (17) and Muhamed Abdo (17) detained on their way home from the Catholic school and deported.[126]
2009	In May, a US vessel picked up 52 Somalis and returned them to Somalia. In November, 40 Somali asylum-seekers picked up in a boat by Dutch military vessel, returned to Mogadishu by the Djibouti government. UNHCR said latter incident amounted to refoulement.[127]
2009-2011	Two or three Somali recognised refugees rounded up by police during two year period and refouled through Loyada - 'an improvement on previous years.'
25.11.10	Ibrahim Hussein, Kadir Umar and Mustafa Muktar (16) abducted by combined unit of Ethiopian and Djibouti security forces in Djibouti city and disappeared, believed to have been taken back to Ethiopia.[128]
Dec. 2010	About 15 Ogadeni from Ethiopia's Somali Region abducted in Djibouti city and returned to Ethiopia.[129]
22.12.10	Jundi Baker Ahmed, in his mid-forties, (who had previously been refouled in 2003, see above), Mohammed Ali (ca32), Omar Ibrahim (ca 30), and Anwar Jemal (ca 28) abducted from their own or their relatives' homes in Djibouti city at about 2.00 a.m. according to eye-witnesses. Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa also reported that Ahmed Mohammed Said and Ali Ahmed Mohammed were taken. All were abducted by a unit of Ethiopian and Djibouti security forces and believed to have been returned to Ethiopia. Jundi Baker Ahmed is reported to be in detention in Dire Dawa.
Jan. 2011	About two weeks after Jundi Baker and others were taken, Adem Abdush, ca45, from Harar, was abducted from his house in Djibouti, by Ethiopian security men and Djibouti security forces in an Ethiopian embassy car. Present location unknown. Ogadeni mandate refugees, Hasan Ahmed Mohammed, 24, abducted in Dibouti city and refouled to Ethiopia. His brother narrowly escaped.[130]
15.2.11	Abdella Yassin detained in Djibouti, badly beaten and accused of informing human rights organisations about refoulements in November and December 2010.[131]
20.5.11	Habtamu Dababa, 42, suspected member of Ethiopian Patriotic Front, reported being followed in Djibouti city before being abducted by a team of Ethiopian and Djibouti security men.

[123] OSG Press Release 41, July 2005, p.17.
[124] Sister of interviewee in Hargeisa, Saatu, Table 4, p.15 and OSG Report 47, *Op. cit.* Appendix 2, pp. 65-6.
[125] OSG Press Release 44, August 2008, p.37.
[126] *Ibid.*
[127] http://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/02/10DJIBOUTI100.html
[128] Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa, Urgent Action and Appeal. Extra-judicial arrest in Djibouti; Fear of deportations and torture. Toronto. 12 January 2011.
[129] Habiba, p.77.
[130] *Ibid.*
[131] E-mail correspondence from Abdella Yassin, 19 April 2011 and later, when resettled in Sweden.

Appendix 2.

Interviews with refugees in Djibouti city and Ali Addeh camp 23 November - 1 December 2011.

All names used for interviewees, apart from A1. Genet Tamana and Yalew Lelesse (see end of section), are fictitious.

Djibouti city, 23.11.11.

D1. Asli, F, 33, Kombolcha, Hararge. Oromo.

Her husband was a vegetable merchant in the town of Kombolcha. They were quite well off, owning three cows and four oxen. In January 2007, four soldiers came to their home and beat them repeatedly with rifle butts. They took her husband away, accusing him of supporting the OLF. He **disappeared** in detention.

One month later, she was taken from her home to an illegal detention centre in Muti, near Harar. For three weeks she was beaten and raped every night. [She bears scars on her cheek and forehead from beatings.]

She was raped by two soldiers each night. She estimates that, **in all, 20 men raped her**. The rapes occurred at the end of daily sessions of beating and interrogation, when she had been beaten into semi-consciousness. Eventually, she collapsed and was taken to Hiyot Fana hospital in Harar, where she spent two weeks under guard.

A nurse helped her escape through a rear entrance to the hospital and into an awaiting ambulance. She walked 25 km from Harar to Dire Dawa, where she said goodbye to her children, then aged seven and nine, collected some money from her family and took a train to the border town of Dawale. She crossed the border on foot and walked for two days to Ali Sabieh, from where she got a bus to Djibouti city. She was pregnant from being raped.

In Djibouti

She delivered a child, now three years old, in hospital. Asli lives in Quartier 4 with a total of seven adults and five children. She washes clothes for Djiboutians and contributes 4000 Djibouti Francs ($24) to the rent of 9000 DF ($54) per month for a dilapidated home without utilities.

She attended UNHCR and ONARS once or twice per week for about two months to obtain her attestation paper and appeared to be unaware that it should be renewed annually. She would prefer to be in a refugee camp and was not aware of the camp at Ali Addeh.

She reports being unwell, with aches and pains affecting her whole body. [This is a common presentation of low mood and self esteem, especially in Oromo culture.]

D2. Halima, F, 38, Deder, Hararge. Oromo.

She and her husband were arable farmers. Their children where one and two years old and she was pregnant with their third child when soldiers took her husband away from home one late afternoon in May 2005. He was handcuffed and beaten. She was hit with fists and batons when she tried to protect her husband.

Her husband was accused of supporting the OLF and had been visited at home four or five times, at about two monthly intervals, before his arrest. She tried unsuccessfully to find where he was being held, but he **disappeared** in detention. One week after her husband's abduction, soldiers came to their home, ostensibly looking for weapons. They took 'everything', including 10,000 Birr and one ox. They interrogated her about her husband's contacts and demanded to know what he did for the OLF.

She stayed with her brother for three weeks, where she miscarried because of her beating. Leaving her two year-old with her brother, she took her one year-old to Jigjiga in the Ogaden and crossed into Borama in Somaliland and thence to Selan and across the Djibouti border at Loyada. She paid to be taken by lorry and pick-up to Loyada but was given a lift from there to Djibouti city by soldiers, who helped because she was carrying her baby.

In Djibouti

She lives with three other women and her child (now seven) in a house without utilities, in Quartier 3. Halima earns 3-4000 DF ($18-24) per month by laundering and cleaning for Djibouti families about 15 days each month. 'This money is not enough for life' she says. She contributes 3000 DF to the rent of 6000 ($36)/month and would like to live in Ali Addeh camp, if she obtained refugee status.

She obtained her attestation paper as an asylum seeker after two months and 5-6 visits to UNHCR and ONARS. She has applied for her refugee mandate and had a second interview in January 2012.

D3. Hana, F, ca40, Adele, nr Haromaya, Hararge. Oromo.

Her husband was a trader and distributor of foodstuffs. He was held in detention for five days about two months after the June 1992 elections, and again for ten days about one month later. Each time, he was taken to Adele military camp and tortured by beating the soles of his feet.

The couple moved to Ganda Depot, a quarter of Dire Dawa, but her husband was taken after they had been there only 15 days. She tried to locate him in all the surrounding prisons,

including Dire Dawa, Harar, Haromaya and Adele, but he had **disappeared** in detention. She received a visit from the security forces, ordering her to stop looking for him.

One night, soldiers came to her house and shouted through the door that they had her husband with them. She opened the door ajar, whereupon the soldiers pushed it open with such force that it injured her face and put her on the ground. [She carries scars on her lower lip and forehead.] She was beaten and **raped by each of the four soldiers** in her home. Since then she has had pain in her right lower abdomen and reports having a pelvic infection.

She moved from place to place in Eastern Hararge for 14-15 years, avoiding the security forces. In 2006, when she heard that the government was insisting all citizens carried identity cards and was checking them, she left her five grown up children and took a train to Dawale. After staying for a week with distant relatives, Hana paid an agent to take her across the Djibouti border. She walked for two days to Ali Sabieh and took a bus from there to the capital.

In Djibouti

There are five adults in the room she rents. She contributes 1600 DF ($10) to the 8000 ($48) monthly rent and earns money by making *budeena*.[132] After three months and six attendances to ONARS and UNHCR, she has an asylum-seeker attestation.

D4. Sara, F, 30, Harar, Hararge. Oromo.

She and her husband came to Djibouti in 1994, because he was persecuted in Ethiopia as a suspected OLF supporter. They have two children, aged eight and eleven years, in Ethiopia and three children, aged seven years, three years, and two months, in Djibouti.

Sara and her youngest child.

Sara's older brother (ca50) used to work for CARE as a water engineer but left when harassed at work and accused of supporting the OLF. He then took a civil service job as a water engineer but continued to be harassed at work. Security men questioned him at work and asked his colleagues about him.

[132] Also called *injera*, the unleavened dry-fried cereal flour pancakes on which and with which most food is eaten in Oromia Region.

Early one morning in 2007, Sara's brother was called in to work and was **shot dead together with two watchmen** just after opening the door into his office. Relatives were prevented from moving the three bodies until midday of the following day.

Sara returned to Harar to attend his funeral. She and her other brother were questioned every day by security forces and she was warned she would be killed 'just like your brother'. After one week, she went to stay with her husband's family in Dire Dawa but was again questioned there, so she fled via Jigjiga and Somaliland, crossing into Djibouti at Loyada, taking 10 days.

In Djibouti

Sara is included on her husband's asylum attestation and lives with him and three of their children in Quartier 4. They live in a room without utilities, with a corrugated metal roof and walls on a timber frame. They pay 6000 DF ($36) monthly rent. Her husband earns a few hundred DF per day if he gets work as a labourer, but he and Sara often go without food. 'There is not enough money for food and medicines' she says.

Djibouti city, 24.11.11.

D5. Abdi, M, 36, Hirna, Hararge. Oromo.

He worked in a shop after reaching Grade 8 education in 1991. At school, when the OLF were legal, he wrote a pro-OLF pamphlet but was not involved with the OLF after it was forced from the transitional government in the pre-election period in June 1992.

In May 1995, he was taken and held with about 1100-1200 other detainees in Hurso military camp. There were 100-150 in the room in which he was held, including many teenagers. He was shackled at the wrists and 'every third night we were taken in turn for interrogation and beating.' He was beaten with sticks, especially across his back and on the soles of his feet. Sometime after being visited by ICRC,[133] he was released after one year.

Following release, he was harassed and had to report to his local security office every month. He had to report all his movements and associations. After six months, in early 1997, when the security forces became more active following local OLF activity, he fled. Abdi travelled by car to Dire Dawa and Melka Jebdu, on foot for 12 days to Dikhil and thence by bus to Djibouti.

In Djibouti

He was among the majority of Oromo asylum-seekers who were refused refugee status in the rapid and flawed assessment of claimants in Awr Aousa camp in 2004. Rather than be returned to Ethiopia, he walked with a large group of men from Awr Aousa for four days

[133] International Committee of the Red Cross.

back to Djibouti city. He obtained his attestation of asylum-seeker status in July 2010, after 'weekly' visits over three months.

He lives with four other men in one room, for which they pay 12,000 DF ($72)/month. Abdi works as a labourer for about 15 days each month, earning up to 1000 DF ($6) in a day. Even so, if it were safe from the Ethiopian government and he were allowed some autonomy, he would prefer to be in Ali Addeh camp.

D6. Abdurahman, M, ca39, Machara, West Hararge. Oromo.

After working in his large family general store, he helped his grandmother in Hirna to run her restaurant and six rented houses, for 12 years. His mother asked him to return to the general store when his father **disappeared in detention** in 2004.

Abdurahman's father had been detained many times, usually for a few months, since 1992. He spent four years in Harar federal prison from 2000 to 2004 and had only been released for a month before being again detained and made to disappear.

In 2005, security officers came three times to the store within two weeks, demanding to see his father's files of OLF contributors, for which Abdurahamn invited them to search for themselves. As the election drew nearer, he was warned on a daily basis. He was not involved in the widespread post-election demonstrations in 2005 (there were none in Machara) but one month after the election, he was detained with many of his friends.

Abdurahman was held with 20 others in a room at the local police station for 18 days. He was interrogated and beaten for an hour every two or three days. He was struck by fists, boots, rifle butts and wooden staves and has scars on his scalp, face, right shoulder and both legs. Elders negotiated his release, but the authorities took over the family store.

His mother advised him to flee and he did so, staying with his grandmother in Hirna for a year before going to Dawale via Dire Dawa, crossing the border at night on foot and walking to Ali Sabieh, from where he went to Djibouti city.

In Djibouti

He obtained his attestation paper as an asylum-seeker in July 2010. He works as a carpenter and builder earning 500-1500 DF ($3-9) per day, but only has work for 7-10 days each month. He lives with two friends, his wife and two of their three children in a house without utilities, for which the rent is 7000 DF ($42) per month.

Djibouti city, 1.12.11.

D7. Biftu, F, 30, Melka Jebdu, E. Hararge. Oromo.

Her brother was on the local election board for the May 2005 elections. Just after the voting took place, he was accused of vote-rigging in favour of the opposition and ran off.

Biftu, her mother and her brother's wife were taken from their home by 5-6 policemen and put in a cell at Dire Dawa police station with three other women. They were all beaten with sticks on the first day. **Biftu and her sister-in-law were** taken separately to other rooms and **raped**.

She has not seen her sister-in-law since their release and does not know whether they were raped by the same men or not. Biftu was raped by five policemen and was told 'We will do this every day until you bring your brother.' She was raped by five men every day for 20 days. She developed a uterine infection and is now infertile.

As soon as she was released after almost a month in detention, Biftu travelled to Dikhil with nomads, without charge. She walked seven days to reach Djibouti city.

In Djibouti

Biftu registered with ONARS within two or three months and only two trips to their office. She was due to have a refugee status determination interview in March 2012. She married in 2008 but has not become pregnant.

Biftu lives in Quartier 6 and works every day, selling samosas on the street. Her husband trades in clothes. Between them, they earn 18,000 DF ($108)/month. They pay 6000 ($36)/month rent for a dilapidated house without running water or electricity, which they share with others. The remainder of their income (12,000 DF-$72/month) is spent on food. She recalls only one day when she and her husband had to go without food.

D8. Kadija Ahmed, F, 35, Dire Dawa, Hararge. Oromo.

Her husband had a shop selling electrical goods and information technology equipment. In 2007, he made a copy of a DVD for some Eritrean customers whom he had not met before. That night, he was taken from his shop by police to the police station, where he was held for two months, beaten and questioned about the Eritreans.

Kadija's brother took elders to the police and they negotiated her husband's release with a guarantee of 10,000 Birr should he abscond. He had to sign every day at the police station. After three or four weeks, he fled to Djibouti and 3-4 days later, police came to Kadija's house and took her to the police station.

Because she had four children, her brother negotiated her release and was imprisoned in her stead. He was not beaten in detention and was released following negotiation by elders after one month. After his release, his salary as an electrical engineer looking after power lines was reduced from 1500 to 1000 Birr/month.

Kadija survived by making and selling samosas until she heard her husband was in Djibouti in 2009.

In Djibouti

Kadija's husband earns 1-3000 DF ($6-18) per day as an electrician and manages to get work 10-15 days each month. They live in Quartier 4 with their four children and another couple in a rundown house without utilities, paying 8000 DF ($48)/month. Their children attend Qoranic school free of charge.

The couple are registered as asylum-seekers with ONARS. This took two and a half months and two visits to ONARS by her husband.

Kadija said 'Sometimes we don't get enough to eat. We have nothing for the adults to eat, about seven days each month.'

D9. Caaltu, F, 37, a small village near Haromaya, E. Hararge. Oromo.

She lived with her widowed father, one sister and one brother, on their arable farm. Her brother disappeared in 2001 and the police came looking for him, demanding to know where he had gone. Caaltu's father was detained three times for a total of about eight months in one year because of this.

The fourth time the police came to the family farm, they said to her father 'Produce your son or we'll kill you.' He replied 'I don't know where he is. Do what you want.'

With a Kalashnikov, the **police then shot Caaltu's father dead** in front of her on the farm. Caaltu was shot through the bone in her right shin. She spent the next eight months in Harar hospital and another five months recovering at home. She now walks with a severe limp.

In 2002, Caaltu travelled by train from Dire Dawa to Djibouti city, as a guest with Djiboutian Arabs who were friends of her family. Her sister fled to Hargeisa, Somaliland, 2-3 years ago.

In Djibouti

Caaltu is a registered asylum-seeker. She has no appointment for refugee status determination. She married in 2007 and lives with her husband and their four year-old daughter in Quartier 3, in a 'broken' house, without water and electricity. They pay 5000 DF ($30)/month in rent. Her husband does not do any regular work. She earns 6000 DF ($36)/month by washing clothes for four days a week.

D10. Leenco Ali, M, 55, Haramoya, E. Hararge. Oromo.

Leenco, a father of three teenagers, drove a Land Cruiser, distributing goods such as flour, sugar and milk, to retail outlets in East Hararge.

In June 2006, he was accosted at gunpoint by four soldiers while loading his vehicle in Haromaya. His companion ran off. The soldiers accused him with 'These goods are not for shops; they are for the OLF.' **One of the soldiers then shot him** in the right thigh with four bullets.

Leenco was taken unconscious to Dilechora Hospital in Dire Dawa, where he spent 40 days. Six days after his discharge, in August 2006, relatives advised him to flee. He was barely mobile and hired a camel to carry him to Dikhil, taking eight days. Getting lifts in trucks, he arrived in Djibouti city two days later.

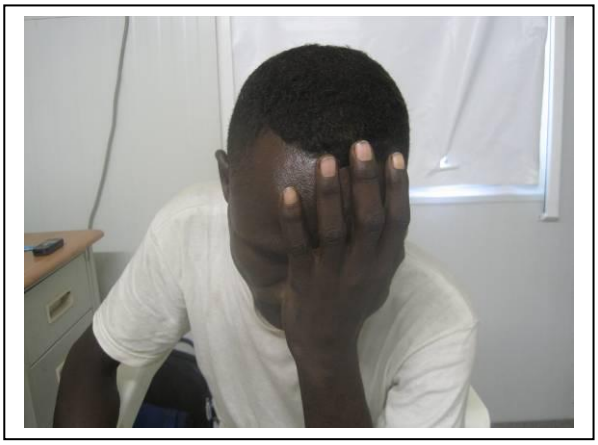
In Djibouti

He lives with two others in a dilapidated house without water or electricity in Quartier 4, for which they pay 6000 DF ($36)/month (2000-$12 each). He works as a car mechanic, earning 15-16,000 DF ($90 -96)/month. A good friend of his sends him $50 every two months from the UK. He is registered as an asylum-seeker and had an appointment for refugee status determination in January 2012.

D11. Raree, M, ca35, Weter, near Harar, E. Hararge. Oromo.

They said everyone has the right to support the party they want [in 1991].

He witnessed the massacre at Weter after the 1992 elections and was quite sure of the numbers killed. **His father**, in his 40s, **and his brother**, aged about 20, **were among about 1000 who were shot dead**. [Their names were recorded but are not written here, in order to protect Raree's identity.] There were 150-200 soldiers, about half of whom fired on people who were demonstrating in support of the OLF. They were firing for 30 minutes, picking off many who tried to run away.



Raree was in tears and had difficulty talking about the event. 'The bodies were piled so deep' he said 'I was only able to find my brother because he had deformed toes and his feet were sticking out of the pile of bodies.'

He ran away to Dire Dawa and moved between there and Deder for 13 years. He was farming in Deder in 2005 when he heard that people without identity cards were being arrested. He returned to Dire Dawa and then Weter 'hoping for a good result in the 2005 elections.'[134] After the election, the Weter kebele chairman announced 'they would shoot all opposition supporters' so he fled again, initially to Dire Dawa and then the nearby town of Errergata, where he hid until 2006.

Raree then paid cattle drovers 800 Birr to take him by foot to Dikhil, where he stayed for two months before he went on to Djibouti city in June 2006.

In Djibouti

His two children, aged seven and ten, had died of malnutrition in Ethiopia. Raree's wife joined him in Djibouti in 2008 and they had a third child, now aged three. His wife returned to Dire Dawa after the child was born and lives with relatives there.

Raree now lives with two other men in a 'broken' house without amenities in Quartier 4. Their rent is 7000 DF ($42)/month. He earns 300-500 ($2-3)/day for about 15 days each month, collecting garbage. He has an up-to-date asylum-seeker attestation but has not been interviewed for refugee status determination.

D12. Abdata, M, 32, Choche, near Jimma, Illubabor. Oromo.

Abdata's father was a wealthy coffee farmer who contributed to the OLF when it was in the transitional government from 1991 to 1992. He was arrested and held in Jimma federal prison for two years, from 1999 to 2001.

Abdata was 54 km away in Jimma in January 2002 when government soldiers came to the family home. His mother and his younger brother and sister told him how the soldiers broke down the door and **shot his father dead** in his home. They then beat his mother and his siblings.

Abdata was at home when soldiers returned a day or two later and demanded that he, as the eldest son, produce his father's papers. He fled to Addis Ababa and then by train to Dire Dawa. He travelled to Dawale by car and walked for two days from there to Djibouti city.

[134] First the first time in Ethiopian history, there was meaningful political opposition and effective campaigning before the May 2005 election. It appears that the ruling EPRDF underestimated its unpopularity and the brief opening of political space was rapidly closed after the election, with about 200 killed in demonstrations, about the manipulation of the results, in June and November. Tens of thousands, including the leaders of the main opposition party, the CUD, were arrested.

In Djibouti

Abdata shared a house with others, including Anwar Abdi Roba and Mustafa Abdi. The three of them were among nine Oromo asylum-seekers, who were imprisoned in the 'Djibouti Commissariat prison' in July 2002. The other eight were refouled to Ethiopia, where they were imprisoned and tortured (23.7.02, p.61, Appendix 1). Abdata escaped by jumping from a toilet window and fled to Gebiley in Somaliland, where he stayed for three days before returning to Djibouti.

In 2003, he was rounded up in the stadium with other asylum-seekers and taken to Awr Aousa camp. He was refused refugee status in the rapid determination process and was among the 3-4000 who were thrown into 25-30 trucks and taken to Dawale on the Ethiopian border in June 2004.

Back in Ethiopia

He was taken under guard by train to Dire Dawa. With about 20 others, he was then taken by 5-6 soldiers by train to Addis Ababa and still under guard by bus to Jimma. There, he was allowed to make his own way back to Choche.

The government had taken about half of the coffee farm. Abdata stayed there until mid-2006, when he was visited at the farm by federal police. They accused him of supporting the OLF 'just like your father' and shot him in his right calf while he was standing in the coffee plantation.

There was no bony injury and he was treated in a local clinic. He remained in Choche for another ten months before returning to Djibouti in 2007, using the same route as previously.

Back in Djibouti

He is a registered asylum-seeker and lives with his wife and their two year-old child in a modest property without water or electricity. They pay 5000 DF ($30) /month in rent. His wife washes clothes for about 20 days each month, earning 500-600 DF ($3-4)/day.

D13. Foole, M, 42, Deder, E. Hararge. Oromo.

He was a cattle merchant who supported the OLF from 1991 to 1992. He was detained immediately after the OLF left government in June 1992 and accused of keeping funds for the OLF. He was held in Deder military camp for three years and nine months.

He was severely beaten, including with wooden staves, every second day for three weeks. For five of the interrogation sessions, he was subjected to electric shocks for about 40 minutes. Bare wires were applied to his groins, wrists and arms. He exhibited scars from burns due to these electric shocks.

Foole was visited by ICRC in prison and was released in early 1996. He went to Djibouti but was among those who were coerced to return to Ethiopia in late 2003.

He returned by train to Dire Dawa and 'a spy was assigned' to him there. He was taken to a police station and held for six days. Foole was accused of showing others the way out of Ethiopia to Djibouti and was detained in underground cells in Harar military camp 'with many others' for five years.

He was not beaten but was forced to eat faeces. The prisoners' only meal was a single bowl of 'shurro' each day. There was a toilet in the cell. He was not allowed out of the cell and did not see daylight for five years.

In 2008 he was released and immediately returned to Djibouti.

Back in Djibouti

Foole works every night, cleaning and watching over three cars. He sleeps outdoors with the cars and pays no rent. He earns 9000 DF ($54)/month and has experienced no problems with Djibouti security forces.

D14. Abdulla, M, 28, Dire Dawa, Hararge. Oromo.

His father was a railway mechanic in Dire Dawa. After the OLF blew up a train carrying weapons in the railway depot in Dire Dawa in September 2001, he was arrested with eleven other Oromo who worked there.

Abdulla's father was imprisoned in Dire Dawa federal prison for 18 months before being transferred to Maikelawi CID. Abdulla visited him twice in Maikelawi and noted that he looked old and emaciated. He believes he had a heart problem. In March 2005, after two years in Maikelawi, his father died.

Abdulla graduated from Addis Ababa university in 2008 and returned to Dire Dawa. An Oromo kebele official accused him of 'being the son of OLF' and warned him 'You'll go to the same place as your father.' Abdulla beat him with a stick and ran away to Djibouti, arriving in November 2008.

In Djibouti

He has an older, Djiboutian, step-brother, an ex-soldier on a pension. He lives with him and his family, in their own house in Ambouli, southwest of Djibouti city. His sister-in-law, a Djibouti citizen, earns 45,000 DF ($270)/month as a cleaner in Djibouti port.

Ali Addeh refugee camp, 29.11.11.

A1. Genet Tamana, F, 30, Massawa, Eritrea. Eritrean/Ethiopian.

Her problems began in 1988, during the war between Eritrea and the Derg communist military dictatorship. Her home in Massawa was burnt down, her family dispersed and she lost contact with her husband.

She found that she was not welcome in Ethiopia or Eritrea following the 1998-2000 war between the two countries. She has gynaecological problems for which there is no available treatment in Ali Addeh camp.

Genet is mentally unwell and easily confused. She lives alone and complains that there is no-one to help her fetch fuel or water. 'Muslim people do not tolerate us in the camp' she says.

'Other people [refugees] are following me. I don't sleep in my house. I change from place to place. I report it to UNHCR and the government but no-one is helping me.'

A2. Gebre-Mikael, M, 38, Bedesa, Holfata, near Harar, Hararge. Amhara.

His father, an officer in the Derg army, was imprisoned in Holfata kebele prison in July 1992. Gebre-Mikael stayed with an uncle in Bedesa while he attended secondary school there. His uncle was arrested on suspicion of supplying arms to the Ethiopian Patriotic Front and Gebre-Mikael was also sought. He attempted to hide in a hotel at Kuni, but was found there after 15 days.

He was taken to a military camp and held on his own in a small cell, about 2m by 2m, with a dirt floor, for eight days. He was taken from the cell twice a day and his head was repeatedly immersed in a barrel of stagnant water about 20-30 times in each 45 minute session. While his head was under the water, his back was beaten with sticks. After each session of this, he was suspended upside down and the soles of his feet were whipped with electric cable, for about one hour. He was questioned throughout each session.

Gebre-Mikael's toes, scarred after being shot during his escape.

At night, he was taken to a dark place in the camp about 100-200 m away from his cell. He was beaten with sticks and threatened with a pistol held under his chin. He was told to produce the weapons which his uncle was hiding.

On the eighth night, after he feigned unconsciousness, the soldiers were relaxing while waiting for him to come round. He jumped over the perimeter fence. He was shot at but only the toes of one foot were hurt and he managed to run off. He reached Asebe Teferi (Chiro) and got a truck to Galafi, a border town between the Afar Region of Ethiopia and Djibouti. He then went by foot to Dikhil and Awr Aousa camp.

In Djibouti

Gebre-Mikael was registered as an asylum-seeker soon after arriving in Awr Aousa in 1992. He moved to Ali Addeh camp in 1999 when Awr Aousa was first closed.

A3. Osman A, M, 41, Masala, near Chiro, W. Hararge. Oromo.

He was a farmer who raised cattle and grew cereals and other crops. Referring to the time just after the fall of the Derg in 1991, he said:
'They said support whatever organisation you want. So I supported the OLF. I helped them a lot. I stopped when they left the charter and were banned.'

Front tooth damaged by the barrel of a Kalashnikov during mock execution.

In June 1992, he was with his brother who was two years his elder. 'A week after the election and when the OLF had left the country, Tigrean soldiers came to my brother's home. **They immediately shot my brother dead** in front of me and took me to Masala military camp.'

Osman was held in the military camp for four months. There were 31 in the room in which he was held. The room was about 3m by 3m and they had to be pushed by guards to get them all in. At night, they had to turn all together because of the shortage of space.

He was taken out at night on average five times a week for the four months of his detention. He recalled 'they took us out, three or four at a time, with our hands handcuffed behind us. They beat us and took us to a hole where [on one occasion] they said was a dead body. They put the barrel of a Kalashnikov in my mouth breaking my front tooth and said "Tell us where you keep the weapons. Give us what you have. When the OLF went, they left weapons and material with you." Then they fired the gun into the hole where the body was.'

'At other times, they pushed me in the hole and fired the rifle near me. Sometimes they fired by the side of my head or over my head, while I was standing up.'

On three or four days each week for the duration of his period at the camp; 'Then they took us to a narrow room and ran water from a pipe over my head so it was difficult to breathe and I thought I was drowning. Meanwhile they were beating my back - everywhere - with electric cable. It is a very cold place. This continued for three or four hours.'

On one occasion, he fell outside the torture room on his way back to the cell. 'They got a glowing red hot iron pipe and put it on my stomach.' (See photograph, p.17.)

He was in a convoy of military vehicles among 31 detainees being transferred to Chiro (Asebe Teferi) when the convoy was attacked in a forested area by the Galeti river, presumably by OLF fighters. He and others escaped when the guards left the trucks to return the fire.

He went by foot to Melka Jebdu, taking three days, intending to stay with his sister. But her husband's sister told him that soldiers had been looking for him there already and had taken

his sister away. His sister-in-law introduced him to a group of nomads travelling to Djibouti and he walked with them for nine days before reaching Ali Addeh in October 1992.

In Djibouti

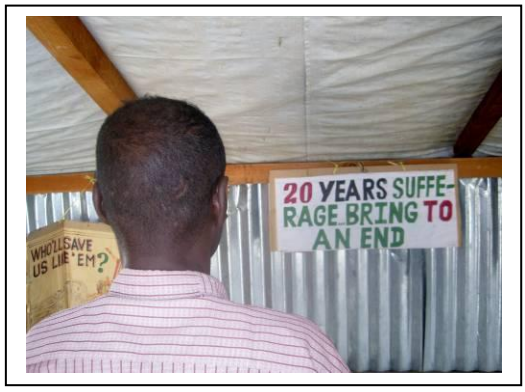
He has an attestation paper that he is seeking asylum but has no mandate, despite being in Djibouti for 19 years.

His wife quarrelled with a Somali woman at a water point in the camp in May 2010. 'Men came that night, beat me and stabbed me with a knife in my leg.' He has a large scar on his left calf. 'I went to the police and UNHCR but no-one did anything and no-one was punished.' His assailants live only 100 yards away in the Somali block and he reports receiving threats from them on a daily basis.

'Because of these things, I don't sleep at night. All Oromo have the same problem. I have not slept in my tent since coming back from Djibouti city [in January 2011].'

Ali Addeh refugee camp, 30.11.11

A4. Unabor, M, 50, Adike (Adik'eyih), Eritrea. Saho (Eritrean).



He was a soldier in the Derg army who defected to the EPLF in March 1990. A few days later, he was detained with many other former Derg soldiers in a temporary military camp at Afabet and remained there until two months after the fall of the Derg in April 1991.

For the first month in Afabet, his hands and feet were tied behind him with plastic cord, so that he was forced to squat and was unable to get up if he fell or was knocked over. His hands were untied only twice a day for toilet purposes and for eating. Unabor was also taken from the cell and untied for beating in the camp compound. He reported being beaten to unconsciousness with gun butts and wooden batons and being kicked with military boots, for 10-15 minutes twice each day.

After this month of beating, he was forced to do manual work - cutting and stacking trees for fuel and for defences at the front.

He was released in June 1991 and warned to stay in Eritrea with the EPLF. Because of his Saho ethnicity,[135] he remained in a low rank and was restricted to menial work. With permission, he went to visit his family in Adike but stayed for four months. When military police came looking for him, he ran off to stay with relatives in a remote area, Naba Gadi, until 1997, when government soldiers extended their control to that area.

[135] Unabor reported that the Saho are the third largest people of Eritrea, after Tigrigna and Tigre peoples. They are Muslim and are subject to discrimination and persecution.

He fled to Sudan and attempted to organise the Saho Democratic Liberation Front as part of the Popular Liberation Front, which was supported by the TPLF, at war with Eritrea from 1998 to 2000. Division within the Popular Liberation Front resulted in his being beaten, threatened with execution and imprisoned for two months in their camp. His friend, **Yikalo Zikta**, about 45, from Senafe, **was taken and found hanging from a tree** next morning.

Unabor was helped to escape and lived under the protection of the TPLF in Tigray and then Addis Ababa. In March 2003, Popular Liberation Front cadres were moving around Addis Ababa and he fled to Djibouti city via Galafi.

In Djibouti

He joined about 60 Eritrean asylum-seekers among the 10,000 gathered in the football stadium in Djibouti city, just one day before they were transported *en masse* to Awr Aousa camp in September 2003. All Eritreans were denied refugee status in the rapid determination process and he was taken with the rest of his group and other refugees to the Ethiopian border in June 2004.

UNHCR brought the Eritreans from the border to the camp at Ali Addeh. Unabor moved to Djibouti city later in 2004 and stayed there until 2008, with only a little fear of the Eritrean security apparatus. Following the border conflict between Djibouti and Eritrea in 2008, Unabor experienced hostility from Djiboutians who had lost relatives in the fighting. Because of beatings and threats, he returned to Ali Addeh.

In January 2009, he went to UNHCR in Djibouti city and was arrested together with nine other Eritrean men and four women and detained in Nagad detention centre for 12 days. He reported that there were over 100 Eritreans who had deserted from the Eritrean army there and that two of them had 'gone mad'. Unabor's group were returned to Ali Addeh.

One day later, he attempted to cross the border with Ethiopia at Guelile [this is the name of the town on the actual border near Dawale, which is a few km south of the border], but was turned back. After being detained for 20 days at Ali Sabieh, he was again returned to Ali Addeh.

A5. Habiba, F, ca39, Dagahmadob, near Dagaxbur, Somali Region. Ogadeni.

She came to Djibouti in 1993 because her father and family were sought after he had given food to ONLF fighters. 'Ethiopian government soldiers beat and questioned you if you went in search of wood and water' she said. 'I know a girl, **Halima**, who **was raped and seriously tortured** so that she became unconscious.'

In Djibouti

Habiba changed her name and keeps a low profile because of fear. Her husband went to Djibouti city in 2003, at the time when asylum-seekers from the city were rounded up in

the stadium and large numbers were deported. He did not return to Ali Addeh and she looks after their seven children on her own. She moves from tent to tent every night.

One of her cousins, Hasan Ahmed Mohamed, aged 24, was abducted in Djibouti city in January 2011, a few weeks after a group of 15 Ogadeni people were abducted and returned to Ethiopia. Hasan's brother narrowly escaped capture and refoulement. He returned to Ali Addeh and now sleeps outside the camp.

She was accepted for resettlement in the USA in February 2010. She passed her medical examination and received orientation one year ago, but awaits a flight.

A6. Kadija, F, ca34, Kemise, Wollo. Amhara.

She is from the Amhara Muslim minority in Wollo. Her father, a supporter of the Ethiopian Patriotic Front, and her older brother, ran away in September 1991. Shortly afterwards, three soldiers came to her house. Two of them took away her **mother** and she has **not seen her since**.

Although she was only 14 at the time, **one of the soldiers** remained after the others had taken her mother. He threatened her with a pistol and **raped her in her home**.

A maternal aunt took in her three sisters and one brother, aged 2-8 years, and she went to stay with relatives in Addis Ababa. After meeting her siblings in January 1992, including her older brother, she was advised to leave the country for her own safety. Her aunt arranged an agent to take her across the border in Afar Region by foot and by boat from Tadjoura to Djibouti city.

In Djibouti

She tried to get registered as an asylum-seeker but reported being fearful of being arrested outside the offices of ONARS and UNHCR. She was asked to pay 10,000 DF ($60) by ONARS staff for registration. She met her husband and was married informally in 1992, formally in 2001. She is now included on his refugee mandate.

Her husband has been employed as a salesman in a shop in Djibouti city for seven years. His employer is a 3-star officer in the Djibouti Gendarmerie but does not pay him regularly. He is only allowed back to Ali Addeh for two days every 4-5 months, when he brings some food items for the children and perhaps 5000 DF ($30).

Once, when he had been at Ali Addeh for two days and refused to return when telephoned, his employer came three days later and forced him to go back with him to the capital.

Kadija fears being alone at Ali Addeh. She was a cook at the military post for 8000 DF ($48)/month but five months ago, after being there for three months, she left because a soldier began demanding sex. He has since been transferred but returns to visit his friends and

chew *qat*. A week before the interview, he visited her tent and said he would get her arrested if she did not have sex with him. She now moves to another tent when he visits Ali Addeh.

A7. Amina, F, ca30, Masala, near Asebe Teferi (Chiro), W. Hararge. Amhara.

In 1993, after fighting between Oromo and Amhara in her area, soldiers came to her family home and took away her father, a former Derg army officer, her mother, two brothers and one sister. She has not seen them since then.

Although she was only 11-12 years old, **two soldiers** took her separately and **raped her**. 'They beat me and injured me, raping me all night until I passed out' she said. They abandoned her in the forest, where she was found by strangers next day. These strangers took her to hospital and looked after her in Lubudakab (a village about 1½ hours from Masala by foot) for six months. When they took her back to her home 'It was burnt down. Our cows and goats had disappeared. Neighbours said my elder brothers had run away from the EPRDF and that there was no news of my father or the rest of my family.'

In Djibouti

A relative helped her travel to Dire Dawa and then Dawale by train, from where she walked for one day to Ali Sabieh. She stayed with Somali refugees there for two days and travelled to Awr Aousa by car. She lived in Awr Aousa for about one year before being transferred to Ali Addeh. She has refugee status.

She married in Ali Addeh in 1998. Her husband, born in Eritrea to a Gurage father and Eritrean mother, faced problems due to anti-Eritrean hostility during the conflict between Eritrea and Djibouti in 2008. He had worked as a chef in the Hôtel la Palmeraie in Ali Sabieh for two years but was having difficulty getting paid.

On 14 June 2011, Amina and her husband approached a UNHCR resettlement officer, to explain the hostility he had experienced. According to Amina, the resettlement officer, after being told by hotel staff that no Eritreans had worked there, accused him of telling lies and tore up their resettlement application. Her husband ran away that day and she has not seen him since then. At the time of interview she was seven months pregnant.

Djibouti police are searching for her husband. She believes this is because he had made accusations to UNHCR and the resettlement officer that the hotel had not paid him and that the police had beaten him. 'They come every 7-10 days asking about him' she said. 'Three soldiers came five days ago.'

'Sometimes they come in the night when people are sleeping. Sometimes they come in the daytime. . . . They warned me "If you tell him we are looking for him, we will kill you." . . . I'm not a man. I can't go to sleep in the bush. I have a 12 year-old son. I sleep at a friend's tent every second night.'

Amina said that she has told UNHCR but they are unable to help. According to other refugees at Ali Addeh, the owner of the Hôtel la Palmeraie is a powerful man.

A8. Fatuma, F, ca40, a village near Harar, Hararge. Oromo.

Shortly after the OLF left the transitional government in 1992 **Fatuma's father and brother were shot dead outside their home** and their house was burnt down. The family scattered. She went on foot with nomads to Dawale, Ali Sabieh and then Djibouti city.

In Djibouti

Fatuma lived with four other women and worked as a cook for a Djibouti family. Late one night in 1995, on her way home from work, she was accosted by four men in the Burakebir suburb of the capital. They had their faces covered and did not speak.

She said '**I was raped there, on the road, by all of them**. They covered my eyes, held my head back and held my arms and legs. They injured my left hip and left me pregnant.'

She delivered a baby by Caesarean section and was referred by hospital workers to UNHCR, who brought her to Ali Addeh. They registered her as an asylum-seeker but she awaits confirmation of refugee status following an interview in February 2010.

'I am alone with my child. I'm afraid. At night people throw stones at us. Some women are raped in their tents at night. When you hear about these rapes you cannot sleep.'

A9. Fatiya, F, 30, Dire Dawa, Hararge. Amhara.

She was born in Robe, Bale, but moved to Dire Dawa, where she ran a successful restaurant. People came there to eat and to chew *qat*.

Just after the 2005 elections, a group of soldiers in an army pickup came to the restaurant and rounded up the 8-9 customers who were relaxing there, including her brother. They beat them and accused them of being CUD supporters. The soldiers asked for the owner of the restaurant. She was in the kitchen with two of her employees and said that she merely came to buy something there.

Fatiya escaped but the government closed her restaurant. **Her brother** was a student and was not a CUD supporter. Neighbours later told her that he was **severely beaten and died** later in hospital.

Fatiya left her nine month-old son with her mother and hid near Dire Dawa for 15 days before travelling by car to Dawale. She went from there by foot via Dikhil to the road junction 13 km northwest of Ali Sabieh, from where she got a lift in a truck to Djibouti city.

In Djibouti

Fatiya registered as an asylum-seeker with ONARS and her husband joined her in Djibouti, although he did not bring their children. She worked for five years as a maid in a house in the Plateau du Serpent district in the northeast of the city.

In May 2010, she was stopped by a 'big man speaking Somali', while she was walking to catch a bus on her way home. **He raped her** 'in a dark place on the street.' She became ill and took another job nearer home four months later. She was pregnant from the rape but did not tell her husband. When he asked why she left the first job, she said it was because she had been ill.

When heavily pregnant, she was stopped on the street by **three Somali speaking men**. She handed over the money she was carrying but they beat her nonetheless and stabbed her in her left arm, shoulder and breast. They cut across the tip of her nose, **raped her** 'not in the proper way', and injured her right buttock with a big stone. UNHCR took her to hospital, where she spent 25 days.

She later delivered her baby on the street and was cared for by Djibouti people. When the baby was three months old (eight months before the interview) she was moved to Ali Addeh.

A Somali man threw her to the ground during a dispute at a water point one week before the interview. She banged her head on a stone and was admitted to the camp clinic for three days.

Fatiya was granted mandate refugee status in October 2011. Her husband sleeps outside of the camp, fearful of being taken by Ethiopian and Djibouti security forces.

A10. Asha, F, 63, Dire Dawa, Hararge. Amhara.

Asha was a cleaner at the military section of the airport at Dire Dawa. Her husband was a three star officer in the Derg airforce and was taken by EPRDF soldiers in 1991. They came looking for her but she was sleeping at a neighbour's house. She fled, travelling by car to Dawale and then travelled with other refugees to Guelile and Awr Aousa.

In Djibouti

In Awr Aousa, she was arrested by a policeman, named Ali, who accused her of stealing. He beat her, breaking her right forefinger, which remains deformed. She described how she was immobilised with her right wrist handcuffed to her left ankle, before being handed over to

the Gendarmerie. Asha reported that although the Gendarmerie released her, the policeman continued to persecute her. She was moved to Ali Addeh in 1995.

Asha said that she was considered a prima facie refugee after a man named Girma was refouled from Ali Addeh and that she was interviewed for resettlement in the USA in 1997 but was rejected. She is not a mandate refugee now, awaiting the decision of a refugee status determination interview in 2010.

She says 'I am alone here, without husband or children. I am frightened and I suffer from headaches and disturbing thoughts about my safety. I worry about dying here.'

A11. Osman B, M, 31, Deder, Hararge. Oromo.

He was a Grade 10 student among the 800 at Deder High School and a member of the seven-man student council. In May 2002, Osman was arrested after taking part in pro-democracy demonstrations. He was accused of supplying medicines and information to the OLF.

He was held in solitary confinement in a small dark cell, about 2m by 2m, at Goro Gutu military camp. For the first four days, he lay on his front with his hands and feet tied together above his back ['rocking horse']. He was given a little bread and water once a day but not taken to the toilet. He lay in his own faeces and urine for four days.

He was beaten and had scarring on his forehead from being kicked with military boots. He was whipped across his back with electric cable and struck with an iron bar on his head.

After being in this cell for 50 days, being beaten and interrogated by new officers every week, he was transferred to Deder federal prison. He was not tortured there and received a visit from ICRC. There was severe overcrowding in the prison. About 50 were held in a room 4-5 metres square, with one small window. 'We all had to agree when to turn over at night' he said.

Osman was released on 8 October 2002 with a guarantee of 5000 Birr from his father. He signed a document agreeing to report and sign on at the kebele office every morning, to avoid meeting groups of other people, including at weddings and funerals, to stay in Deder town and to have nothing to do with the OLF. He was told that if he gathered with other people he would be killed or made to disappear.

He went to the ICRC office in Harar to get a certificate confirming their visit to him in detention. When he called on relatives there, his mother telephoned to say that soldiers had come to their home because of him. They had arrested his father and beaten her until she had told them that he was in Harar. They were therefore searching for him in the city.

He walked 5 km to Hamaresa and took cars to Dire Dawa and Melka Jebdu. He walked to Shinile, caught a train to Aisha, walked to Dikhil and then went by bus to Djibouti city.

In Djibouti

He reported that he already had refugee status when he joined the thousands of refugees and asylum-seekers in the stadium in Djibouti in September 2003, but that mandate status was revoked in the renewed status determination process at Awr Aousa camp. He avoided being taken to the Ethiopian border and walked across the mountains back to Djibouti city in June 2004, with 52 Oromo families who had also been refused refugee status. He was detained in Nagad detention centre for 25 days and then went to Ali Addeh camp.

Because of insecurity in the camp, he obtained permission to move into the town of Ali Addeh, where he tried to establish himself as a tailor. He was unable to afford the high rent and began sleeping on the street with his wife and two children.

He was badly beaten on 2 May 2011 [he showed a photograph of facial injuries received]. He said that UNHCR were unable to do much about this but a protection officer who was based in Djiouti city paid from his own pocket for Osman to get hospital treatment. UNHCR told him to report the incident to the police. When he did so, the police also beat him, saying 'You are living in Djibouti and you dare to accuse Djiboutians!'

Osman moved back to the camp, but sleeps outside the perimeter, like most of the other men in the Ethiopian block.

A12. Mohammed, M, 31. Oromo.

He was a student involved in widespread protests in early 2001 and fled to Djibouti in that year.

In Djibouti

He registered with ONARS straight away and came to Ali Addeh camp in 2001. He got his refugee mandate in 2005.

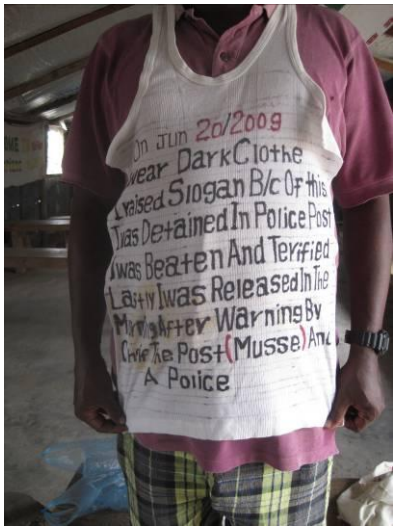
Mohammed was working in Djibouti city in 2008, at the time of the border conflict between Eritrea and Dibouti. With two other Oromo, he made aluminium window frames for an Eritrean businessman who imported aluminium from Dubai. Because of hostility precipitated by the conflict, the businessman fled to Dubai and the other Oromo employees went to Eritrea.

Mohamed continued to work but was arrested from the workshop by Djibouti security forces on 10 August 2008. He was blindfolded and taken to an underground cell where he was held for seven days. He does not know where he was taken but thinks it was the SDS (Djibouti Security Service) base in 'Plateau' district (in the vicinity of the railway station and the Sheraton hotel in Plateau du Serpent). He remained blindfolded and was interrogated about the two other Oromo employees, who were suspected of having links with the OLF.

He was interviewed for resettlement by JVA in January 2011 and by CIS one week before the interview. He awaits the outcome.

Other interviews, report of killings

Yalew Lelesse, 30.11.11, Ali Addeh refugee camp. Eritrean.



Yalew is deaf and unable to speak. He communicates by writing, gesture and art.

He presented himself to be photographed during interviews at Ali Addeh.

Yalew describes his feelings of frustration and isolation, and his history of being detained twice in Ali Addeh for protesting in front of visiting officials (20 June and 11 October 2009).

Abdusalem, 28.11.11, Djibouti city. Oromo.

He came to Djibouti with his family when he was five years old. After eight years of school, he worked as a librarian at the Catholic Mission from 1989 to 2001. He then returned to Ethiopia to find his family, but they had all died or scattered.

He was taken at night, jailed and tortured repeatedly. As soon as he was released, he returned to Djibouti, leaving his wife and children in Ethiopia. He was recognised as an asylum-seeker on 17 September 2011. He is an active member of the Oromo refugee community and a member of their committee. He is therefore of some profile and feels at risk from the Djibouti security apparatus.

After accompanying me for part of the time from 22 and 24 November, he reported later (28 November, after my return from Hargeisa) that he had been stopped in the street by a Djibouti security man and asked what he had been 'doing with the white man' here.

He lives with four other men, three women and five children in Quartier 2. He contributes 13,000 DF ($78) to the monthly rent of 30,000 DF ($180). He earns money from private French language tuition.

Ali, 2.12.11, Djibouti city. Oromo.

Ali was detained, presumably by the SDS, the Djibouti Security Service, the evening before my arrival in Djibouti. He was taken outside his home in Djibouti city at about midnight on 21 November, when he had stepped out for a breath of fresh air. An unmarked white car stopped and three plain-clothed men, armed with pistols, speaking Somali, blindfolded him and accused him of being in charge of the OLF in Djibouti. [He denies any involvement with the OLF.]

In his place of detention, Ali was interrogated and accused again of belonging to the OLF. He was asked who else was involved. The questions were asked in Somali. He was held on his own in a dark cell, above ground. On the first day, he was beaten for an hour or so, with fists and police truncheons, and kicked. He was released on 1 December at 10.00 pm.

He does not know where he was taken. He was blindfolded before being taken there and was forced to lie down in the back of a pickup when he was taken out and dropped on a road in Balbala, southwest of the city. He does not know how long the journey took. There were several brief stops and he was terrified at the time, fearing he was being sent back to Ethiopia.

He was visibly shaken and frightened at being interviewed by me in my hotel. He had been detained in a similar fashion in January 2011.

Killings

These killings were reported by an interviewee who was a close relative of the men who were killed. The report is not included in the interview record to protect the identity and location of the informant.

Ibrahim Omar, in his 50s, and his son, **Abdi Ibrahim Omar**, ca27, **were shot dead** outside their home in Chinaksan village, near Harar, in late June/early July 1992, because they had given support to the OLF. They were not fighters. The remainder of their family was scattered. Their home was burned down. A close relative reported the event.