ETHIOPIA ASSESSMENT

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Country Information and Policy Unit

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I. SCOPE OF DOCUMENT

1.1 This assessment has been produced by the Country Information & Policy Unit, Immigration & Nationality Directorate, Home Office from information obtained from a variety of sources.

1.2 The assessment has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum determination process. The information it contains is not exhaustive, nor is it intended to catalogue all human rights violations. It concentrates on the issues most commonly raised in asylum claims made in the United Kingdom.

1.3 The assessment is sourced throughout. It is intended to be used by caseworkers as a sign-post to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain.

1.4 It is intended to revise the assessment on a 6-monthly basis while the country remains within the top 35 asylum producing countries in the United Kingdom.

1.5 The assessment will be placed on the Internet (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/asylum/asylum_contents02.html). An electronic copy of the assessment has been made available to the following organisations:

Amnesty International UK
Immigration Advisory Service
Immigration Appellate Authority
Immigration Law Practitioners' Association
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
JUSTICE
Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture
Refugee Council
Refugee Legal Centre
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

II. GEOGRAPHY

2.1 The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has an area of 1,133,380 sq km and lies in north-eastern Africa. Ethiopia has been land-locked since the independence of its former province of Eritrea on the Red Sea coast in May 1993. It is bordered by Eritrea and Djibouti to the north, Somalia to the east, Kenya to the south and Sudan to the west. The population at the 1984 census was nearly 40 million (excluding Eritrea) with an official estimate in mid-1995 of 56,677,100. The 1994 Constitution established a federal structure of nine autonomous ethnically-based `national states' and the federal capital territory. The largest city is the federal capital Addis Ababa (population 2,112,737 in 1994). Other important towns are Dire Dawa, Harar, Jijiga, Nazret, Gondar and Dessie. **[1][2]**

2.2 The official language is Amharic but many other languages are spoken. English is used widely in official and business circles. There are over 80 different ethnic groups in Ethiopia, referred to officially as `nationalities'. The Oromos are the largest single group, comprising over one third of the total population. The Amharas make up almost another third. Other important population groups are the Tigreans (or Tigrayans), Somalis and Afars. The nine autonomous national states established under the 1994 Constitution, broadly reflecting regional ethnic boundaries, are those of the Afar, Amhara, Benishangul/Gumuz, Gambela, Harari, Oromo, Somali, Southern and Tigre (or Tigray) peoples. About 45% of the population are Muslims and 40% adherents of the Ethiopian Orthodox (Tewahido) Church. There are small Evangelical Protestant and Roman Catholic populations. Most of the Jewish Falasha population was evacuated to Israel between 1984 and 1991. Between 5 and 15% of the population are animists. **[1][2][3][31]**

2.3 Ethiopia's climate is mainly temperate owing to its high plateau terrain. The average annual temperature is 13°C, with abundant rainfall in some years and low humidity. The lower country is very hot and subject to drought conditions. Ethiopia is one of the world's least developed countries. Over 88% of the population is engaged in agriculture, contributing 51.7% of GDP in 1993/94. Coffee is the principal cash crop, accounting for nearly two-thirds of export earnings in 1994/5. Major trading partners are Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy, Japan and the USA. The economy, blighted by years of war, State repression, drought, famine and forced resettlement, is heavily indebted and dependent on foreign aid. Average life expectancy in 1990-95 was 47.5 years. Ethiopia uses its own solar calendar, some seven years behind the Western calendar. **[1][2][3]**

III. HISTORY

FOUNDATIONS OF ETHIOPIA

3.1 Ethiopia, formerly known as Abyssinia, has existed as a political entity since the 1st century BC. It was converted to Christianity in the 4th century AD. Emperor Menelik, who founded the modern capital Addis Ababa, united the country behind his monarchy in the late nineteenth century, resisting attempts by European powers, especially Italy, to take over Ethiopia. Menelik defeated the Italians in 1896 although Italy retained control of coastal Eritrea, which it had annexed in 1890. Menelik embarked upon a modernisation programme whilst firmly retaining his grip on power. **[1][2]**

3.2 In the 1930s Emperor Haile Selassie wrested power from the old nobility and established a modern autocracy. In 1935 Italy invaded Ethiopia, securing control in 1936. Allied forces ended Italy's occupation in 1941. In 1952 Eritrea, which had become a United Nations (UN) mandated territory after the Second World War, was federated with Ethiopia. However, Haile Selassie dismantled Eritrea's institutions and made it a province of Ethiopia in 1962. Eritrean resistance to Ethiopia's annexation then began, initially led by the mainly-Muslim Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and joined by the more Christian-based Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in the early 1970s. **[1][2]**

1974 REVOLUTION, THE DERGUE & THE `RED TERROR'

3.3 Haile Selassie was deposed in a military coup led by radical elements in the armed forces in September 1974, against a background of growing demands for democratisation, army mutinies, the revolt in Eritrea, serious economic difficulties and famine. Haile Selassie was detained by the military and died in their custody in August 1975. **[1][2]**

3.4 The Armed Forces Co-ordinating Committee, known as the Dergue (or Derg), meaning Shadow, established a Provisional Military Government (PMG) led by Lieutenant-General Aman Andom. Real power however rested with the Dergue itself, made up of 109 soldiers up to the rank of major. Disputes over how to deal with the revolt in Eritrea resulted in the assassination of General Aman, himself an Eritrean, and two other Dergue members in November 1974. 57 former senior military and civil officials, including two former Prime Ministers and 17 generals, were also executed without trial. **[1][2]**

3.5 Brigadier-General Teferi Benti, the nominal Chairman of the Dergue following General Aman's death, was appointed the new Head of State. His two Vice-Chairmen were Lieutenant-Colonel Atnafu Abate and Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Mengistu Haile Mariam, who emerged as the most influential member of the Dergue in 1975. The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) replaced the PMG. Ethiopia was declared a socialist state in December 1974 and the PMAC embarked upon a series of reforms known as `Ethiopia Tikdem' (Ethiopia First) in 1975. Land, financial institutions and large industrial firms were nationalised and a programme of rural development began, with land reform, health education, a literacy drive and the establishment of peasant co-operatives. **[1][2]**

3.6 Despite promises by the Dergue of an eventual return to civilian rule, there was widespread unrest throughout 1975 and 1976. Power struggles took place within the Dergue, between supporters of the Marxist-Leninist All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (MEISON), which favoured a Soviet-style communist system with military rule, and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), a more popular Marxist-Leninist group which advocated a civilian government and supported the Eritrean independence campaign. The rival groups fought for control of the new State institutions, with acts of terrorism committed, and the conflict spilt over into the Dergue. A restructuring of the Dergue in December 1976 threatened to weaken the position of Colonel Mengistu. **[1][2]**

3.7 In February 1977 Colonel Mengistu took control as Head of State and Chairman of the PMAC and had General Teferi Benti and five other leading Dergue members executed. He then began what became known as the "Red Terror" campaign against political and armed opponents, initially on behalf of his allies in MEISON to eliminate the EPRP. Tens of thousands of Ethiopians, particularly in urban areas, were killed or tortured. In mid-1977 Mengistu turned on MEISON and by late 1978 both MEISON and the EPRP had been effectively neutralised. Ethiopia's foreign relations became increasingly dominated by its relationship with the Soviet Union after Mengistu assumed power. **[1][2]**

RESISTANCE IN ERITREA & TIGRE, OGADEN WAR 1977-78

3.8 Armed resistance groups took advantage of the confusion following the 1974 revolution. In Eritrea the ELF had been weakened by internal divisions in the 1970s and had split into several factions, the largest being the EPLF. In 1975 a joint ELF and EPLF attack on the Eritrean capital Asmara was only narrowly defeated by the Ethiopian army, whose organisation had been

seriously weakened by the revolution. Government retaliation against Eritrea was severe, leading to many Tigrean (or Tigrayan) Christians in Eritrea joining anti-Ethiopian fronts for the first time. **[1][2]**

3.9 Resistance against the central government also increased in the Somali-populated Ogaden district and in the Tigre (or Tigray) province, bordering Eritrea. In support of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), Somalia invaded the Ogaden in July 1977. Having quickly overrun the district, Somalia found its supply lines too stretched and with large-scale military support from Cuba and the Soviet Union, hitherto the main supporter of Siad Barre's Somalia, Ethiopia counter-attacked in February 1978, forcing the Somali army's withdrawal in March 1978. **[1][2]**

3.10 The Ethiopian army, strengthened by its new ties with the Soviet Union and its victory in the Ogaden War, went on the offensive in Eritrea in June 1978. It recaptured most of the main towns within three months and forced the EPLF's retreat to the stronghold of Nakfa. The ELF was left conducting guerrilla operations only. Continuing divisions within the Eritrean resistance movement were to lead to a civil war in Eritrea in 1981. The EPLF, in alliance with the Tigre People's Liberation Front (TPLF) from the adjoining Tigre province, forced the ELF into exile in Sudan in 1982. **[1][2]**

WORKERS' PARTY OF ETHIOPIA

3.11 Having dealt with Somalia and Eritrean separatists in 1978 Mengistu turned his attentions to the reorganisation of government. With MEISON and the EPRP neutralised, Mengistu set up the Committee for Organising the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE) in late 1979. All other political groups were abolished. COPWE's Central Committee was dominated by the military. In 1984 the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE) was formally inaugurated, modelled along the lines of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, with Mengistu as its Secretary-General. However, the WPE failed to win public support and was widely seen as a system for furthering the military regime's control. **[1][2]**

3.12 In preparation for the eventual transfer of power from the PMAC to a civilian government, a referendum in February 1987 endorsed a new Constitution and national elections were held in June 1987 for a new legislature, the National Shengo (Assembly) with over 800 seats. At the inaugural meeting of the National Shengo the PMAC was abolished, the country was renamed the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) and Mengistu was unanimously elected President of the PDRE, as well as head of the armed forces. **[1][2]**

ETHIOPIAN 'NATIONALITIES'

3.13 The 1974 Revolution raised expectations amongst various of Ethiopia's ethnic groups, or 'nationalities', particularly the Oromos, Somalis, Afars and Tigreans, and in the annexed province of Eritrea. The Afar population, who live in the north of Ethiopia (and also in Eritrea and Djibouti), achieved local autonomy in 1977, with members of the Afar National Liberation Movement, which co-operated with the PMAC, being appointed as local administrators. **[1][2]**

3.14 Despite its defeat in the 1977-78 Ogaden War, Somalia continued to support the WSLF and the Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF), which operated in the south-eastern Bale and Sidamo regions, into the mid-1980s when both groups collapsed internally. Ethiopia backed opposition groups inside Somalia opposed to Siad Barre's regime. Relations between Ethiopia and Somalia improved in 1986 and, under pressure in Eritrea, diplomatic relations were resumed in 1988. **[1][2]**

3.15 The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) became active in the 1980s, advocating self-determination for the Oromo people and the promotion of their culture and language. Although Mengistu's Government was initially supported by Oromo peasant farmers, who had benefited from land reforms in 1975, peasant opposition to farming co-operatives increased support for the OLF. The Government responded with widespread arrests of Oromos in Addis Ababa and elsewhere. The OLF was militarily weak, able to operate only along the Sudanese border and in an area south-west of Harar. **[1]**

3.16 The growth of the TPLF, established in 1975, posed a more serious threat to the Mengistu Government. The Eritrean EPLF provided arms and training to the TPLF, which was able in 1977-78 to defeat opponents in the EPRP, which had been operating in the Tigre region since 1975. Support for the TPLF grew during the period of Mengistu's "Red Terror" and with its calls for self-determination for the Tigrean people. The TPLF set up the Marxist-Leninist League of Tigre in the mid-1980s. The TPLF received support, like the Eritrean and Oromo groups, from Sudan. However, conflicts with other anti-Government groups, including its former backers the EPLF, weakened the TPLF and Government forces achieved considerable success against the TPLF in campaigns in 1985 and 1986. **[1][2]**

3.17 With the proclamation of the PDRE in 1987 Ethiopia was declared to be a unified socialist state under the `democratic centralism' of the WPE. The new Constitution created five autonomous regions, four of which were based on ethnicity: Tigre for the Tigrean people, Dire Dawa for the Somali Issa clan, Ogaden for all other Somalis, Assab for the Afar people and Eritrea, with its nine component nationalities. However, the EPLF and TPLF , being by now committed to the removal of the Mengistu Government, rejected the new regional structure. **[1][2]**

OVERTHROW OF MENGISTU

3.18 Failure to resolve the political crisis of Ethiopia's nationalities was matched by economic disaster. State farms were inefficient and the severe drought of 1984-85 exacerbated the problem. About 600,000 people were moved from drought-affected areas to the south and west in a very unpopular Government resettlement programme, which the Government abandoned in 1986 following international criticism. The TPLF also moved 200,000 people from Tigre, the hardest-hit drought area, to Sudan. Further problems arose in 1989-90 with the unpopular `villagisation' programme, and subsequent fall in agricultural production levels, in which villages were grouped together, for political control and security purposes. **[1]**

3.19 Military setbacks for the Government from 1988 onwards led to the loss of most of Tigre province to the TPLF in 1989 and most of Eritrea to the EPLF, which had begun a new offensive in December 1987. The diversion of Government forces to Eritrea proved beneficial to the TPLF's campaign in Tigre. A State of Emergency was declared in Eritrea and Tigre in May

1988. Government forces made some gains in Tigre but major defeats in early 1989 forced the Government to abandon the region. The TPLF, once in control of Tigre in 1989, established a united front in September 1989, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), with the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) (which later became the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM)), an Amhara-based group set up by the TPLF to fight in non-Tigrean areas. **[1][2]**

3.20 While the EPLF and TPLF/EPRDF continued their military campaigns against Mengistu's Government the two groups did agree to take part in peace discussions. Negotiations between Government and EPLF representatives took place in the United States in September 1989, chaired by former US President Carter. These and further discussions held in Nairobi in November 1989 failed to produce any agreement between the opposing sides as neither was prepared to move its position on the question of Eritrean independence. The talks were abandoned after the EPLF captured the Eritrean port city of Masawa in February 1990. Discussions were also held in Rome in November 1989 between Ethiopian Government and TPLF representatives, but these collapsed in March 1990. **[2]**

3.21 The EPRDF set up other groups as it advanced southwards, including the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) when the OLF refused to join the EPRDF, but the TPLF still formed the main element of the EPRDF, although it switched its emphasis from achieving Tigrean self-determination to the removal of Mengistu's regime and the establishment of a democratic government in Ethiopia. By November 1989 EPRDF forces had reached within 160 km of Addis Ababa. **[1]**

3.22 Mengistu was forced to make concessions as his Government's military position worsened, particularly after the loss of the vital Eritrean port of Masawa to the EPLF in February 1990, which cut supply lines to Addis Ababa. Socialism was effectively abandoned in March 1990 and the WPE was renamed the Ethiopian Democratic Unity Party (EDUP), with membership open to non-Marxists. Economic reform of the centralised socialist system began with moves towards a market economy and inheritance of land was permitted. The economy however was in a state of collapse, reflecting the Government's worsening military position. Also, with the fall of communism in Eastern Europe Mengistu's Government lost access to cheap fuel and its arms supply. Opposition forces continued to advance, and by the end of April 1991 the EPRDF had taken Ambo, 130 km west of Addis Ababa while the EPLF was only 50 km from the main Eritrean port of Assab. **[1][2]**

3.23 In January 1991 the EPRDF announced a moderate political programme which made no reference to Marxism and was acceptable to the United States. As opposition forces closed in on Addis Ababa Mengistu's armies ended their resistance. Mengistu fled Ethiopia on 21 May 1991, seeking asylum in Zimbabwe, where he remains to the present day. Vice-President Lieutenant-General Tesfaye Gebre Kidan assumed control of the Government. **[1][2]**

TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT, ERITREA'S INDEPENDENCE

3.24 Following Mengistu's departure, talks began in London under United States auspices to ensure an orderly transfer of power. With the failure of these talks, EPRDF forces entered Addis Ababa on 28 May 1991 with the public support of the United States, encountering little resistance. An interim government was established by the EPRDF and at the same time the

EPLF set up a provisional administration in Eritrea, pending the holding of a referendum on Eritrean independence. Eritrea thereby effectively seceded from Ethiopia, independence being approved in a referendum by the Eritrean people in April 1993 and formally proclaimed, with recognition by Ethiopia, on 24 May 1993. Agreements between the two countries were reached on defence, security, trade, economic matters and the joint use of the Eritrean port of Assab, vital to Ethiopia's economy. Relations between Ethiopia and independent Eritrea remained generally cordial until a long-running border dispute led to the outbreak of hostilities in May 1998. (See also Sections 3.44-3.51) **[1][2][6a]**

3.25 The EPRDF convened a national conference in July 1991, attended by some 20 political and ethnically-based groups, to discuss Ethiopia's future political structure and set up the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE). A national charter prepared by the EPRDF was adopted with some amendments and provided for self-determination for Ethiopia's nationalities and guaranteed freedom of association and expression. The conference elected an 87-member Council of Representatives to govern the country for a transitional two year period, following which free elections would be held. The Council of Representatives elected the EPRDF's Chairman and TPLF leader, Meles Zenawi, as Chairman of the Council and thereby President of Ethiopia. Tamirat Layne, Vice-Chairman of the EPRDF and Chairman of the EPDM (which became the ANDM in January 1994), was elected Prime Minister. 32 political groups were subsequently represented on the Council of Representatives, with EPRDF-allied groups holding 32 of the 87 seats. The OLF had 12 of the 27 seats allocated for Oromos. Seven different groups were represented on the Council of Ministers, including the OLF which held four Ministerial positions. **[1][2]**

3.26 Despite the participation of various political and ethnic groups in the TGE, violent clashes continued in many parts of Ethiopia in 1991, prompted partly by the dominance of the EPRDF and its allies in the new administration. Government forces clashed with the EPRP in the Gojam and Gondar regions and in August and September 1991 EPRDF and OLF supporters clashed, although both parties were co-operating at government level at that time. Government troops, mainly Tigreans, also encountered opposition from Afar, Issa and Gurgureh forces. **[1][2]**

ETHNIC AUTONOMY & ETHNIC TENSION

3.27 In November 1991 the TGE fulfilled its promise of autonomy for Ethiopia's different nationalities when it announced the establishment of 14 new administrative regions with autonomy in regional law and internal affairs, based largely on ethnic and linguistic boundaries. The new Constitution of 1994 further reorganised the regions into nine autonomous 'national states' and the federal capital territory, reflecting the EPRDF's support for a federal system of government based on ethnicity and language. Some nationalities, such as the Tigreans and Oromos, appeared to gain from the reorganisation while others that were more widely spread did not seem to fair so well. **[1][2]**

3.28 A great many new political parties, mostly ethnically-based, emerged in the early 1990s. By 1993 there were over 100 parties although in the May 1995 elections only 49 groups participated. As Tigreans make up only 7% of Ethiopia's politicians the Tigrean-dominated EPRDF has set up surrogate parties with which it could form alliances, although only one such organisation, the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Union (SEPDU), established in 1992, has joined the EPRDF to date. **[1]**

3.29 Relations between the EPRDF and the OLF deteriorated during 1991 and 1992, although the OLF remained within the TGE. The OLF was opposed to the EPRDF-sponsored OPDO and clashes between OLF and EPRDF supporters occurred as both groups sought to better their position in the Oromo-populated areas in the run up to the 1992 regional elections. A cease-fire between the EPRDF and OLF, under United States and EPLF auspices, was agreed upon in April 1992. **[1][2]**

1992 REGIONAL ELECTIONS, CLASHES WITH THE OLF

3.30 The regional elections in June 1992 were boycotted by the OLF and other groups who alleged EPRDF intimidation of opposition groups, although the OLF itself harassed civilians and election officials. International observers, including representatives of the European Union, the United States and the Organization of African Unity, concluded that some of the claims of electoral malpractice made against the EPRDF were, at least in part, justified. The EPRDF and its allies won 90% of the votes cast. Shortly afterwards the OLF withdrew from the TGE and warned of the risk of a renewed civil war. On 10 July 1992 political groups which were signatories to the July 1991 national charter demanded that the regional election results be annulled. While in the same month the TGE set up a board to look into alleged electoral errors, regional councils were in place in all areas, except the Afar and Somali regions (where elections had been postponed), by late August 1992. Complaints of harassment by the EPRDF and its allied party the OPDO were also made by ethnic Somalis in respect of the regional elections held in the south-east in October 1992. **[1][2]**

3.31 Further doubts about the EPRDF's commitment to democratic principles were raised by reports from the Ethiopian Human Rights Council which had identified over 2,000 cases of people being detained without charge by mid-1992, mainly political opponents of the EPRDF, as well as 13 extra-judicial killings. **[2]**

3.32 OLF forces captured Asbe Teferi, 150 km from Addis Ababa, in late June 1992 but stronger Government forces were able to secure the capital. Talks in October 1992 between the Government and the OLF, organised by Eritrea's EPLF, proved unsuccessful and the OLF maintained its insistence on the annulment of the June 1992 election results. The EPRDF encouraged the OLF to rejoin the transitional government but hostilities continued between the Government and the OLF in various areas and by mid-December 1992 the Government held some 20,000 prisoners of war. **[2]**

3.33 In January 1993 Government security forces ruthlessly suppressed a student demonstration in Addis Ababa, in protest against UN involvement in Eritrean independence discussions. One student died and over 30 were injured. A Government commission of enquiry set up to investigate the matter, which reported in January 1994, blamed the demonstration's organisers for causing chaos and disorder. **[2]**

3.34 Differences within the EPRDF emerged in July 1993 when the party's Executive Committee denounced an undisclosed number of party members, apparently in response to criticism by middle-ranking TPLF members of the Government's ethnic regionalisation policy and the lack of economic reform. **[2]**

1994 NATIONAL ELECTIONS & NEW CONSTITUTION

3.35 Elections were held in June 1994 to a new national assembly, the Constituent Assembly. The EPRDF won 484 of the assembly's 547 seats. The elections were boycotted by the OLF, the All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPO) and the recently-formed Coalition of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (CAFPDE), who alleged that Meles' EPRDF-led Government had intimidated their supporters and refused to allow opposition parties to open offices, allegations denied by the Government. **[2]**

3.36 The new Constituent Assembly was inaugurated in October 1994 to discuss a draft of a new Constitution, which it approved in December 1994. The Constitution established a federal system of government, dividing Ethiopia into nine autonomous `national states' and the federal capital territory (Addis Ababa). The Constitution allowed for regional autonomy, including the right of secession. The Constituent Assembly was replaced by a new legislature, the bicameral Federal Parliamentary Assembly, comprising the Council of People's Representatives (CPR), with 548 directly elected members, and the Council of the Federation, with 117 deputies elected by the new regional state assemblies. **[2]**

1995 CPR & NATIONAL STATE ELECTIONS, DERGUE TRIALS

3.37 Elections of deputies to the CPR and the national state assemblies were held simultaneously on 7 May 1995 but were boycotted by most opposition parties. The EPRDF and its allies won a landslide victory of 483 of the 537 confirmed seats on the CPR. In Tigre the TPLF won all the seats in the state assembly and all the state's seats on the CPR. EPRDF-allied parties met with similar success in the Amhara and Oromo states. The EPRDF won all 92 local assembly seats in Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian National Democratic Movement (ENDM) was the largest opposition party that participated in the election but it failed to win any of the 80 seats it contested. Elections in the Afar and Somali regions, where opposition to the EPRDF was strong, were postponed to June 1995, when pro-EPRDF parties secured narrow victories. Efforts by the United States to persuade CAFPDE to take part in the elections failed, with CAFPDE rejecting the legitimacy of the new institutions and alleging harassment by Government officials. International observers concluded that the elections were largely free and fair but were worried about the lack of participation by opposition parties in the political process. **[2][4][31]**

3.38 Legislative power was transferred from the transitional Council of Representatives to the new Federal Parliamentary Assembly (FPA) on 21 August 1995. The TGE was wound up on 22 August 1995 when the new Constitution took effect and the country was officially renamed the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). On the same day Dr Negasso Gidada, Minister of Information in the TGE and a member of the EPRDF-allied OPDO, was elected President of Ethiopia at a joint session of the FPA. On 23 August 1995 ex-President Meles Zenawi was elected Prime Minister by the CPR and on 24 August Meles appointed a 17-member Council of Ministers, which was approved by the FPA. **[2]**

3.39 In December 1994 the trial of 73 officials of the former Mengistu Government, including Mengistu who is living in exile in Zimbabwe, commenced in Addis Ababa. The Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO) was established in 1992 to create an historical record of human rights abuses during the Mengistu administration and to bring to justice those found to be criminally

responsible. 23 of the defendants were being tried in absentia and five had died while awaiting trial. The defendants were charged with crimes against humanity and genocide between 1974 and 1991. Claims by the defence that the Court did not have jurisdiction to try members of the former Government were rejected by the High Court in 1995. The trial resumed later in 1995. The trial of a total of 5,198 people charged with genocide and war crimes committed under the Mengistu administration began at the Federal High Court in Addis Ababa in 1997. (See also Sections 4.11 and 5.42 - 5.43) **[2][4][31]**

3.40 Prime Minister Meles' Government came under increased criticism in late 1995 and early 1996 over its treatment of political opponents, particularly those in the press, intellectuals and civil rights workers. The Secretary-General of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association (ETA), Dr Taye Woldesemayat, was arrested in mid-1996 on his return from a visit abroad along with several associates, accused of organising the Amhara-based Ethiopian National Patriotic Front (ENPF), which the Government held responsible for terrorist acts including the attempted assassination of an employee of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in 1994 and a grenade attack on USAID's offices in Addis Ababa in 1995. Taye was not arrested in connection with any of his activities on behalf of the ETA. Human rights groups condemned the arrests. Charges against Taye in connection with the grenade attack were subsequently dropped but his trial on other charges continues. (See also Section 5.37) **[2][4][5]**

3.41 In July 1995 Ethiopia made armed incursions into Somalia to attack bases of al-Ittihad al-Islamia (the Islamic Unity Party), a group seeking independence for the Somali-populated Ogaden district, which claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks on three hotels in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa in early 1996 and the attempted assassination of Dr Abdul-Mejid Hussein, Chairman of the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League and Minister of Transport and Communications in the Federal Government. Ethiopian forces killed some 230 al-Ittihad members and in further incursions into Somalia in December 1995 arrested 100. Further armed incursions into Somalia against al-Ittihad bases were made by Ethiopian forces in 1996, 1997 and 1998. (See also Section 5.40) **[2][4][6b][6c][7]**

3.42 The Government launched a drive against corruption in September 1995, which it claimed was endemic in Ethiopia. In October 1995 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Tamirat Layne was accused of `indiscipline' and removed from office. He was later implicated in corrupt activities. He was also dismissed as Secretary-General of the ANDM. He was replaced as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence by Tefera Walwa. (See also Section 4.3) **[2]**

3.43 In response to an increase in armed attacks by the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF) the Government set up a 25,000 strong Afar military force, under the Afar People's Democratic Organization, in late 1996. Government efforts in November 1996 to negotiate an end to ARDUF's military activities failed, although following a withdrawal of Government forces from sensitive areas in the Afar region and concessions on political prisoners in January 1997 discussions between the two sides resumed. **[2]**

BORDER CONFLICT WITH ERITREA 1998-2000

3.44 A simmering border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and a deterioration in relations since Eritrea adopted its own currency to replace the Ethiopian birr in 1997 which resulted in

disruption of cross-border trade, led to an outbreak of hostilities on 6 May 1998. Both states accused the other of invading disputed border territory. The dispute was centred on an area of land in the Badme area, although Eritrean forces made incursions into other areas along the border. Ethiopia and Eritrea launched air raids against each other's territory on 5 June 1998. Eritrean aircraft bombed the northern Ethiopian town of Mekele, killing 44 people. Ethiopian aircraft attacked Asmara airport, killing and injuring several people. **[2][6a][24]**

3.45 On 15 June 1998 Ethiopia and Eritrea accepted a United States-brokered agreement for an immediate cessation of air attacks against each other. Diplomatic efforts by various countries and organisations, including the European union and the OAU, to resolve the dispute have continued since fighting halted on 15 June 1998. **[2][8a][9][25]**

3.46 Large numbers of Ethiopians and Eritreans were expelled from each other's countries in the wake of the border dispute. Each side accused the other of illegal deportations, involving several thousand people, and mistreatment of those remaining. **[2][6d][24]**

3.47 In July 1998 Ethiopia accused the OLF and the al-Ittihad al-Islamia militia of entering agreements with the Eritrean Government to fight against Ethiopia. The Eritrean Government denied that any such agreements had been made. **[10a][11a][12]**

3.48 Both Ethiopia and Eritrea have issued regular reports that the other side had expelled large numbers of its citizens. In September 1998 the Legal Forum for Peace, a committee of academics and government officials, was established in Ethiopia to draw international attention to claimed Eritrean atrocities against Ethiopian citizens. The Ethiopian Government claimed in December 1998 that Eritrea had expelled over 39,000 Ethiopians since May 1998. In the same month the Eritrean Government claimed that expulsions of Eritreans from Ethiopia exceeded 41,000. **[10c][10d][11b]**

3.49 An Amnesty International report issued in January 1999 stated that 52,000 Eritreans had been expelled from Ethiopia since June 1998. Amnesty believes that Ethiopia is operating a systematic policy to arrest and expel anyone of full or part Eritrean descent. Amnesty reported that at least 22,000 Ethiopians had left Eritrea but found no evidence to support Ethiopian claims that 40,000 Ethiopians had been mistreated and forcibly expelled from Eritrea. **[28]**

3.50 After a lull in fighting since June 1998, heavy fighting broke out along the disputed border on 6 February 1999, resulting in hundreds of casualties. Ethiopia deployed aircraft and helicopter gunships in support of ground troops on 8 February 1999 as fighting spread to new fronts, breaching the moratorium on air strikes that had held since June 1998. **[2][13b][29]**

3.51 In April 2000 Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed to attend talks in Algeria aimed at resolving the border conflict. The Algerian President, who is the Chairman of the OAU, set up the talks. Eritrea accepted an OAU peace plan under which both countries would withdraw from disputed territory but Ethiopia questioned the technical arrangements in the plan. **[32a]**

3.52 Ethiopia launched an all-out offensive against Eritrea in May 2000 to recapture disputed territory seized by Eritrea in 1998. Ethiopia announced on 31 May 2000 that the war had ended. Ethiopia had, by then recaptured all the land that Eritrea had occupied in 1998 and its forces held positions deep inside Eritrean territory. **[36a][36b][36c]**

3.53 Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a cessation of hostilities agreement on 18 June 2000. Under the terms of the agreement, Ethiopia withdrew to positions it occupied before the border war broke out in 1998 and Eritrea withdrew to positions leaving a 25 km-wide buffer zone between its forces and Ethiopia, to be filled by a UN monitoring force. Disputed territory, such as Badme, which was under Ethiopian administration before May 1998 continues to be patrolled by Ethiopian forces. By the end of October 2000, 50 unarmed observers had been deployed, out of a planned 4,200-strong peacekeeping contingent expected later in 2000. **[32b][32c][36c]**

3.54 The foreign ministers of Ethiopia and Eritrea met again in Algiers in October 2000 for a second round of peace talks aimed at turning the cease-fire agreed in June 2000 into a permanent peace accord. The talks focused on reaching agreement on the demarcation of the border and compensation for war damages. Representatives from the UN, OAU, EU and USA were present at the talks. **[32c][36c]**

NATIONAL ELECTIONS MAY 2000

3.55 National elections were held in May 2000. Elections were held for both the Council of People's Representatives and the Council of the Federation. 39 parties registered to contest the elections. The ruling EPRDF and its allies made up 22 of the 39 parties that registered. Opposition parties that registered to participate in the elections included AAPO, the Oromo National Congress (ONC), the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) and the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition. The Government stated that international observers would not be invited to monitor the elections but foreign diplomats, UN staff based in Ethiopia and domestic NGOs would be welcome to observe the election process. **[6e][31]**

3.56 The ruling EPRDF coalition was returned to office with an overwhelming majority. The four main parties that comprise the EPRDF won landslide victories in the regional Amhara, Oromo, Southern and Tigre states, in which they have previously enjoyed strong support. The EPRDF won 467 of 548 seats in the federal parliament with 85% of the popular vote. **[34]**

3.57 Eight opposition parties, six of them ethnic-based regional parties and five independent candidates, won 15 seats in the federal parliament; these parties were the EDP, AAPO, Oromo Liberation United Front and ONC. EDP won two seats; the other parties won one seat each. Four ethnic-based parties in the Southern region won five parliamentary seats. **[34]**

3.58 In Addis Ababa, the EPRDF won 120 seats for the House and State Council, losing 41 seats to the opposition and independents. AAPO won 20 seats in the House of People's Representatives and State Council and the EDP won 16 seats. In the Oromo regional state the ODPO, part of the EPRDF coalition, won 174 out of 178 seats for the House and took all but two seats in the 535 State Council; AAPO won the remaining seats. **[35]**

IV. INSTRUMENTS OF THE STATE

POLITICAL SYSTEM

4.1 Ethiopia continues its transition from a unitary to a federal system of government. New federal institutions, organised along mainly ethnic lines, are increasingly autonomous. Responsibility for internal security continues to shift from the military to police forces in most areas. However, Ethiopia's history of highly centralised authority, poverty, the recent civil war and unfamiliarity with democracy complicate the implementation of federalism. **[4][5][30]**

4.2 Despite the EPRDF's apparent commitment to democratisation, regional autonomy and human rights it has continued to dominate the political system by favouring regional affiliated parties and clamping down on opposition groups. Several regional political parties that enjoyed considerable support in their home areas, such as the OLF and ONLF, frequently complained during the transitional period of the early 1990s about official harassment and even killings of their members and supporters. **[4][5][14]**

4.3 The EPRDF-led Government continues its efforts to enhance transparency and accountability in public life. In 1996 and 1997 several detailed reports were published in State media of officials who were arrested or dismissed for abuse of their official position, corruption and human rights violations. These included two EPRDF members of Parliament who were indicted for war crimes committed during the Mengistu administration and removed from office in July 1997. The former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Tamirat Layne, who was removed from office in 1995, is facing trial on corruption charges. Transparency in government nevertheless remains limited. (See also Section 3.42) **[4][5]**

THE JUDICIARY

4.4 The 1994 Constitution provides for an independent judiciary. The Government is committed to a decentralised judicial system, to bring justice closer to the people, but, in practice, severe shortages of personnel and financial constraints weaken the judicial system and deny most citizens the full protection provided in the Constitution. The Government has welcomed foreign technical and financial assistance in improving the efficiency of the judiciary. In 1996, 1997 and 1998 hundreds of people were detained without charge, particularly in the Oromo and Somali national states, with many being subsequently released without explanation or having appeared before a judge. Such actions reflect arbitrary actions by local officials but are also a result of the shortage of trained prosecutors and judges. **[4][5][30]**

4.5 Regional offices of the federal Ministry of Justice monitor local judicial developments but the federal judicial presence in the national states is limited. It has been reported that some local authorities have taken advantage of regionalisation by acting as if they were not accountable to higher authority. It has been reported that some police officers have disregarded federal Supreme Court decisions. **[30]**

4.6 The Government is making concerted efforts to train suitable replacements for many lower court judges. Many judges were hastily appointed after the fall of the Mengistu administration in 1991 but were subsequently dismissed for corruption or abuse of power. Aware of the shortage

of competent judges, the Government began to place greater emphasis on the training of new prosecutors and judges in 1995. 56 federal court justices were appointed in May 1996 and an administrative commission was appointed to oversee the workings of the federal judiciary. Additional civil and criminal judges were assigned to regional courts. Efforts to eradicate malpractice resulted in the dismissal of many judges. In 1998 the Supreme Court introduced measures to ensure more rapid provision of justice by limiting the practice of carrying over cases from one session to the next. Senior government officials have, however, estimated that it may be several decades before a truly independent and skilled judiciary is in place. **[4][5][30]**

4.7 Although the judiciary is weak and overburdened, in 1996,1997 and 1998 the federal courts showed increased signs of independence from the executive. The Federal High Court and Federal Supreme Court adjudicate cases involving federal law, national security and trans-regional issues. The regional judiciary is increasingly autonomous, with district (Woreda), High and Supreme courts being established which mirror the federal structure. Regional supreme courts may be delegated authority by federal courts to hear some federal cases, including war crimes trials of officials of the Mengistu administration in the areas where the crimes were allegedly committed. **[4][5][30]**

4.8 All judges are guided by the Federal procedural and substantive codes, pending the passage by national state legislatures of laws particular to their regions. All trials are held in public and defendants have the right to a defence lawyer. Legal counsel is provided to poor or needy defendants by the Public Defender's Office although its scope is limited, particularly in regard to SPO trials. The Law does not provide for the defence to have access to the prosecution's evidence before a trial. **[4][5][30]**

4.9 The Constitution gives legal standing to some established religious and customary courts and gives federal and regional legislatures authority to recognise such courts. Both parties must agree before a case can be heard by a customary or religious court. Islamic Shari'a courts may hear religious and family cases involving Muslims. Some traditional courts still operate which, although not sanctioned by law, settle disputes for most people living in rural areas and who have little access to the formal judicial system. **[4][5][30]**

4.10 A major overhaul of the military justice system took place in 1996, continuing through 1997 and 1998, with foreign assistance provided to train officers in subjects such as judicial and non-judicial forms of punishment, human rights and conduct during military operations. **[4][5][30]**

4.11 The trial of the first group of defendants charged with war crimes committed under the Mengistu administration began in December 1994 and continued throughout 1996. In December 1996 some 1,200 additional detainees were charged with war crimes. The trial of 5,198 people charged with genocide and war crimes began at the Federal High Court in Addis Ababa in September 1997 and continues. (See also Sections 3.39 and 5.42 - 5.43) **[4][5][30]**

V. HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

INTRODUCTION

5.1 While the Government has taken steps to improve its human rights practices, serious problems remain, with some local officials and members of the security forces being responsible for human rights abuses, such as the beating of detainees and arbitrary arrests and detention. The Federal Government has difficulty in protecting constitutional rights at a local level. Local administrative, police and judicial systems remain weak in many areas. Human rights violations continue to be committed by armed opposition groups, notably in the Oromo and Somali national states. (See also Section IV) **[4][5][30]**

5.2 The TGE and the present Ethiopian Government have enacted laws that guarantee respect for human rights and the independence of the judiciary and the press. The transitional legislature under the TGE ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, although Ethiopia remains one of only two African countries not to have ratified the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. Both the transitional charter and the 1994 Constitution of the FDRE give prominence to human rights. **[14][16]**

5.3 Allegations have regularly been made that State security forces have committed human rights abuses during counter-insurgency operations, particularly in the Oromo and Somali national states. People suspected of supporting armed opposition groups have regularly been held in detention for long periods without trial. **[4][5][14]**

5.4 In addition to alleged abuses of human rights committed by the Ethiopian Government, various opposition groups, notably the OLF and al-Ittihad al-Islamia, have also been responsible for human rights violations, committed during terrorist operations. (See also Sections 5.22 - 5.33 and 5.38 - 5.41) **[4][5]**

ETHIOPIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

5.5 Domestic human rights organisations operating within Ethiopia include the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), Ethiopian Human Rights League, the Ethiopian Human Rights and Peace Centre, the Ethiopian Congress for Democracy, the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association and the Inter-Africa Group, which promote civic and human rights education, monitor trials and provide legal assistance. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), a self-proclaimed human rights monitoring group, received legal status as an NGO in 1999 after a seven year campaign for recognition. **[14][31]**

5.6 Assefa Maru, assistant secretary of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association and an executive committee member of EHRCO, was shot dead by police in 1997. Police suspected that he was member of a terrorist organisation and reportedly shot him while he was resisting arrest. The results of an internal investigation into his death were not made public. **[5]**

5.7 The Oromo-based Human Rights League (HRL) was formed in 1996 to promote human rights education and report violations. In October and November 1997 eight leading members of the HRL were arrested in Addis Ababa, along with several other prominent members of Oromo community organisations, including journalists, and charged with armed conspiracy. The HRL members, including the organisation's Secretary-General, Garuma Bekelle, were accused of using the HRL to support terrorist activities allegedly committed by the OLF, including hotel bombings in 1997. The HRL has denied the charges. Government investigations into the HRL's alleged links to the OLF continued in 1999. (See also Section 5.26) **[17][31]**

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS IN ETHIOPIA

5.8 The Government allows the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international human rights organisations to make regular visits to civilian detention centres throughout Ethiopia and permits them to travel and operate freely. Although prior approval must be obtained from regional authorities for prison visits, this is usually routinely granted. In 1996 access was generally good but there were problems in visiting some sites in the Oromo and Somali national states. Access improved noticeably in 1997 with the opening of new ICRC regional offices in Gode, in Somali state, and Assosa, in Benishangul state. **[4][5]**

5.9 The Government encourages international human rights organisations and foreign diplomats to observe the war crimes trials of officials of the Mengistu Government that commenced in 1994. Visits were made to Ethiopia in 1997 by delegations from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Africa, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Reporters sans Frontieres, the Committee to Protect Journalists, Education International and various international labour organisations. Senior Government officials, including the Prime Minister, met representatives from these organisations in 1996 and 1997 for substantive discussions. Officials of the Federal Security Authority were generally responsive to requests for information from foreign diplomats in both 1996 and 1997. In 1996 and 1997 several visits were made by diplomats to prominent detainees charged with war crimes under the Mengistu Government who were held by the Special Prosecutor's Office, including Abera Yemane-ab, Mamo Wolde and Mekonnen Dori, who showed no sign of mistreatment by the prison authorities. **[4][5]**

SPECIFIC GROUPS

WOMEN

5.10 While the 1994 Constitution provides for the equality of women the provisions are often not applied in practice. Despite the prominent role played by women, including in combat, during the civil war and their increased participation in political life women do not enjoy equal rights with men. Although equal under the law, men are still usually regarded as head of the household. Men commonly hold land tenure and property rights for the whole family, although land reforms enacted in March 1997 allowed women to lease land from the State, which still owns all land. To further enhance the status of women the Government formally adopted a National Programme of Action in 1997, which seeks to improve educational and work opportunities for women. A decline in traditional practices such as early marriage and marriage by abduction has been reported since the inception of this programme. **[4][5][31]**

5.11 In rural areas, in which 85% of the population live, women on average work over 13 hours a day, in both household and farming duties. In urban areas women have fewer employment opportunities than male workers and do not receive equal pay for equal work. An initiative to promote equality for women was launched by the Government in 1993, since when women's affairs desks have been created in each of the ministries. A national action programme was adopted by the Government in June 1997 to promote women's access to health care. **[4][5][30]**

5.12 Domestic violence against women and rape are pervasive problems and although women have recourse to the law, societal discrimination and the limited infrastructure, especially in remote areas, in practice prevent many women from seeking legal redress. Many women are unaware of their rights under the law. Social practices obstruct investigations into rape and the prosecution of alleged rapists. Sentences for rape are typically much lighter than the 10 to 15 years prescribed by law. **[4][5][31]**

5.13 Domestic violence is not considered a serious justification in law for divorce. After divorce, a husband has no obligation to provide financial assistance to his family. Although illegal, abduction of women and girls as a form of marriage is still widely practised in the Oromo and Southern People's national states. Women are often physically abused during abduction. **[31]**

5.14 Societal abuse of young girls remains a serious problem, with reports of as many as 90% of females undergoing some form of female genital mutilation (FGM), which although not specifically prohibited is strongly discouraged by the Government, through its support for the National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia which campaigns for the eradication of FGM. Early childhood marriage is common in some rural areas, with girls as young as 9 being party to arranged marriages, although the official age of consent for females is 15 (18 for males). In the Afar national state in particular young girls continue to be married to much older men, although this traditional practice is coming under greater scrutiny. Child prostitution is also a problem, particularly involving the sale of under-age girls to work in bars as dancers and prostitutes. Some families send under-age girls to work in the Middle East as domestics and some are kept in sexual bondage. **[4][5][31]**

5.15 Although the status of women and their level of political participation is greater than it has ever been, women are still only represented in small numbers in government and as senior figures in political organisations. Only one of the 15-member Council of Ministers is a woman; two other women hold ministerial rank. In 1999 there were only 15 women among the 545 members of the lower House of People's Representatives and eight among the 115 members of the upper House of Federation, including the speaker. In 1999 six of the 23 judges in the Federal High Court were women. There were two women on the Supreme Court in 1999. **[31]**

CHILDREN

5.16 The Government has encouraged efforts by domestic and international NGOs that focus on children's social, health and legal issues. However, despite Government efforts to increase the number of schools, including the construction of 303 new schools in 1999, there are still not enough schools to meet needs. Only 525 of male primary age children and 31% of female primary age children attend school. The overall literacy rate is about 23%. **[31]**

5.17 Under the Labour Law the minimum age for paid employment is 14 years. Special provisions cover children aged between 14 and 18 years, including the prohibition of night work and hazardous work. and govern the number of hours children may work. However, although the Government disputes the existence of child labour the practice is widespread, particularly in the informal sector. Large numbers of children tend animals in rural areas and work as street peddlers and beggars in urban areas. There are thousands of street children in Addis Ababa, too many for Government and privately run orphanages to cope with. Older children often abuse younger children. **[30]**

5.18 It is also reported that children are sent into involuntary service abroad, that children are stolen from rural areas, sold to bars and forced to work as prostitutes. Children are occasionally maimed or blinded by `handlers' to raise their earnings from begging. Under-age marriages are reported, particularly in the Afar national state. (See also Section 5.14) **[30]**

'NATIONALITIES'/ETHNIC GROUPS

5.19 Ethiopia has over 80 ethnic groups, or `nationalities'. Historically the Amharas and Tigreans from the northern highlands have played major roles in the country's life. Some ethnic groups, including the Oromos, the largest single ethnic group, claim to have been subjugated during the nineteenth century by the dominant Amharas and Tigreans. The present Government's policy of regionalisation attempts to address ethnic concerns. The new federal structure, with regional states based largely on major ethnic boundaries, has granted local populations a greater say over their own affairs and resources than at any time in the past century. The Constitution provides for teaching of primary school students in their own local language. Religious tensions linked to ethnic distinctions persist in some areas, particularly the Oromo and Somali national states. **[1][2][4][5][30]**

5.20 In the armed forces the demobilisation of a further 25,000 Tigrean soldiers was completed in 1996 and they were replaced by recruits from other ethnic groups, as part of the Government's effort to create a national apolitical army. The military continues to recruit more members of ethnic minorities at all levels. In 1996 over 3,500 militia members were integrated into the national forces as regional militia were disbanded. Also, 7,000 soldiers with technical skills who served with Mengistu's forces were integrated into the forces and were often able to retain their existing rank, up to the level of colonel. In 1998 seven of the military's nine generals were non-Tigreans. **[4][5][30]**

5.21 In 1998 ethnic conflict took place in some remote areas; there were reports of conflict between the Nuer and the Anuak in Gambella national state in western Ethiopia. **[30]**

- OROMOS & THE OLF

5.22 The OLF, which has been in armed opposition to the Ethiopian Government since June 1992, is one of a number of political organisations which is not permitted to participate in the political process as it will not renounce violence and will not recognise the elected government as a legitimate authority. Although the OLF is, thus, an illegal organisation, simple membership of the OLF is not necessarily cause for arrest. OLF members travel abroad for negotiations with

the Government without hindrance. The Government draws a distinction, however, between rank-and-file members of the OLF and the organisation's leadership. **[3][4][5]**

5.23 Military forces conducted low-level operations against the OLF in parts of the Oromo national state in 1996 and 1997. Military operations were also conducted in 1997 against the Somalia-based al-Ittihad al-Islamia fundamentalist militia and elements of the ONLF. **[4][5]**

5.24 The police blamed the OLF for grenade attacks in Addis Ababa in April 1997 that killed two and injured 75. Other fatal attacks in Dire Dawa and Harar in 1997 were attributed to both the OLF and al-Ittihad al-Islamia. The murders in March 1997 of the Mayor of Dolo Mena, a Danish nurse and a passing motorist were also blamed on the OLF. 150 to 200 suspected OLF militants attacked the Jeldu Wereda police station on 13 July 1997, killing three policemen and wounding five. **[5]**

5.25 OLF sympathiser Wako Tola died in police custody in 1997, apparently of natural causes. On 8 October 1997 police killed three men in Addis Ababa, reportedly while they were resisting arrest, who were allegedly involved in an OLF attack in July 1997. Two others were arrested during the incident. Three alleged OLF members were arrested on 5 November 1997 and confessed to bombing attacks on hotels and restaurants in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. **[5]**

5.26 On 6 November 1997 federal police arrested 17 OLF supporters, most of them members of Tulema, a well-established Oromo self-help group which the Government alleges is a political organisation. Six of the 17 arrested were founding members of the Oromo-based Human Rights League, an NGO registered in 1996. 31 OLF activists were detained on 2 December 1997 on charges of terrorism and possession of illegal weapons. In 1996 and 1997 hundreds of people were arrested and detained by federal and regional authorities without charge or trial for activities allegedly in support of the OLF in the Oromo national state. Those arrested were typically held incommunicado for days or weeks before being released without having appeared before a judge. 93 people from a large group of OLF fighters detained in 1994 were still being held at the end of 1997. Amnesty International reported further arrests of prominent Oromos in February 1998, including a group of folk singers and a businesswoman. (See also Section 5.7) **[4][5][17][18]**

5.27 Amnesty International noted reports of alleged extra-judicial killings carried out by the security forces in areas of armed conflict in the Oromo national state in 1996. Amnesty International also noted the death in Addis Ababa of Ebissa Adunya, an Oromo singer who was apparently killed by soldiers who suspected him of supporting the OLF. There were no confirmed reports of alleged extra-judicial killings by the security forces in 1996 or 1997. **[4][5][16]**

5.28 Overall, some 7,000 criminal suspects remained in detention without charge at the end of 1997, mostly suspected OLF supporters or guerrilla fighters. The ICRC reported that the army sometimes uses military camps in the Goba area of the Oromo national state for the temporary detention and interrogation of alleged OLF fighters and supporters. While the ICRC has routine access to prisons and civilian detention facilities it has only limited access to military detention facilities in eastern Ethiopia, where suspected OLF fighters are held. **[4][5]**

5.29 The UN Special Rapporteur, in his report of December 1997 to the 54th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, expressed his concern to the Ethiopian Government at the

consistency of allegations of torture made by people detained, especially by the military, on suspicion of involvement with the OLF. The Ethiopian Government was urged to ensure that detention and interrogation practices of the military when engaged in counter-insurgency operations met minimum international standards. **[19][20]**

5.30 The UN Commission on Human Rights' Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, in its report of December 1997 to the Commission, gave details of the cases of two Oromos, whose detention appeared to be arbitrary and politically motivated, based on their support for the OLF. The cases appeared to contravene articles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Ethiopia is a signatory to. **[21]**

5.31 The UN Commission on Human Rights' Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, in its report of January 1998 to the Commission, gave details of five new cases of reported disappearances in 1997, and further details on two previously notified cases, mostly of ethnic Oromos, that it had transmitted to the Ethiopian Government. Information had been given to the Working Group by the Ethiopian Government on one of the cases. **[22]**

5.32 The opposition Oromo National Congress was registered as a political party in 1996. **[5]**

5.33 The murder of an EPRDF official near the border between Oromo and Southern People's national states in July 1998 prompted inter-ethnic fighting between the Gudji Oromos and the Geddeo in villages around Hagare Mariam. 22 of the 88 kebeles (municipalities) in the area were badly damaged. In September 1998 the Government began repatriating some 160,000 displaced persons to the villages from which they had fled. All had returned by the end of 1998. **[30]**

- AMHARAS & THE AAPO

5.34 The AAPO was founded in 1992 and is a legally registered party. Its members often complain that the Government restricts the party's ability to campaign for popular support. The party claims to oppose the Government through peaceful means only. The AAPO, which advocates Ethiopian unity, was opposed to Eritrea's independence and aims to defend and promote the interests of the Amhara people. **[3][5]**

5.35 The Chairman of the AAPO, Professor Asrat Woldeyes, and four other leading AAPO members were convicted in 1994 of planning armed opposition to the Government at a meeting in 1993. Professor Asrat was also convicted of incitement to war for a speech he delivered in 1992. He was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment. He was also facing charges in connection with an attempted prison escape in Debre Berhan in May 1994 during which several guards died. Professor Asrat was permitted diplomatic visitors whilst in detention. **[3][4][5][30]**

5.36 In December 1998 charges against Professor Asrat, whose health was deteriorating, were suspended by the Federal Prosecutor's Office and he was released from prison. Later in December 1998 he left Ethiopia for the USA for medical treatment. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council praised the Government's decision to release Asrat as a humane action. Professor Asrat died in the USA on 14 May 1999. He was buried in Addis Ababa later the same month. **[8b][26][27][30][33]**

5.37 The chairman of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, Dr Taye Woldesemayat, was arrested in mid-1996 on charges of involvement with an Amhara extremist group, the ENPF. His trial continues. He was permitted to receive diplomatic visitors in 1997. (See also Section 3.40) **[2][4][5]**

- SOMALIS, THE ONLF & AL-ITTIHAD

5.38 Amnesty International reported the detention without trial for some months of scores of ethnic Somalis after a hotel bombing in Addis Ababa in January 1996 for which al-Ittihad al-Islamia claimed responsibility. Further arrests without trial of ethnic Somalis were reported following an assassination attempt on the Chairman of the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League, a Federal Government minister, by al-Ittihad in July 1996. There were large numbers of arrests in early 1996 in the Somali regional state of suspected supporters of the ONLF. The ONLF was the majority elected group in the Somali national state and the party advocated self-determination and independence for the Somali-populated region. After the OLF and the ONLF announced an anti-Government alliance in July 1996 several ONLF members and former members of the regional parliament were arrested in Jijiga and Dire Dawa, suspected of involvement in armed activities by ONLF forces. **[4][16]**

5.39 Amnesty International noted reports of alleged extra-judicial killings by the security forces in areas of armed conflict in the Somali national state in 1996 and claimed that no investigation had been held into allegations of torture, disappearances or extra-judicial killings. There were no confirmed reports of alleged extra-judicial killings by the security forces in 1996 or 1997. **[4][5][16]**

5.40 Security forces conducted military operations against armed elements of the ONLF and al-Ittihad al-Islamia between 1996 and 1999. Ethiopian forces made armed incursions into Somalia to attack al-Ittihad bases in July and December 1995. Further raids into Somalia were made in 1996, 1997 and 1998. (See also Section 3.41) **[2][4][5][6a,b][7]**

5.41 The Somali Democratic League merged with elements of the ONLF in June 1998 to form the Somali Democratic Party (SDP). Ethiopian President Negasso Gidada attended the four-day conference in Jijiga that established the new party. The Chairman of the SDP is Dr Abd-al Majid Husayn, who is the Transport and Communications Minister in the Federal Government. **[10b]**

- FORMER MEMBERS OF THE DERGUE/WPE

5.42 The trial by the Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO) of 5,198 people charged with genocide and other war crimes committed under the Mengistu administration began at the Federal High Court in Addis Ababa in September 1997. Some defendants had spent six years in detention awaiting trial while the SPO carried out its lengthy investigations, which began in December 1994. Of the 5,198 people charged, 2,246 are held in detention while the remaining 2,952 are charged in absentia. **[5]**

5.43 Defendants are mainly charged with genocide and war crimes, except 25 who are charged with aggravated homicide. 2,658 of the 5,198 people charged have had preliminary hearings. All defendants held in custody are scheduled to appear before courts in 1998. In July 1997 the

SPO removed the parliamentary immunity of two EPRDF MPs, arrested them and charged them with war crimes. The Federal Sports Commissioner was arrested in December 1997 on charges connected with his alleged association with activities of the Mengistu administration. Also in 1997 the SPO trials of Olympic marathon champion Mamo Wolde and former University of Addis Ababa president Dr Alemayehu Teferra began. (See also Sections 3.39 and 4.11) **[5][16]**

OTHER ISSUES

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY & POLITICAL ASSOCIATION

5.44 The Constitution provides for the right of peaceful assembly and groups are generally permitted by the authorities to hold public meetings. Permits are required for large political meetings and demonstrations and are routinely granted. Addis Ababa saw a number of large demonstrations against Government policies in 1996 and 1997, including protests against the detention of Professor Asrat by the AAPO. Permits were granted by the Addis Ababa municipal authorities for all but one of the major demonstrations held in the capital and there were no reports of violence. The police stopped demonstrations held without permits. A student demonstration held without a permit in March 1997 against Government land reform policy led to the detention for several days of some of the organisers. **[4][5]**

5.45 The Constitution provides for freedom of association and the right to engage in unrestricted peaceful political activity. Political parties must register with the National Election Board (NEB). Parties that do not participate in two consecutive national elections are liable to be de-registered. There are about 60 organised political parties, eight of which are national and the remainder regional-based. The opposition AAPO is registered with the NEB but its members complain that the Government restricts its ability to operate. CAFPDE was granted registration as a national party in July 1996. CAFPDE has established branch offices in several regions and launched a newspaper, Amaratch, which is highly critical of Government policies. The opposition Oromo National Congress was also registered by the NEB in 1996. **[4][5]**

5.46 Political participation is closed to organisations which have not renounced violence and which do not recognise the elected government as a legitimate authority. Such organisations include the OLF, MEDHIN, Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF), the EPRP and several Somali-based groups, including some elements of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). Radical Amhara groups, the OLF and al-Ittihad were responsible for a series of grenade attacks, bombings, shootings and ambushes that resulted in a number of deaths and injuries throughout 1996 and 1997. **[4][5][30][31]**

5.47 The right of Ethiopian citizens to change their government was exercised for the first time in 1995. Although observers reported that opposition participation in the elections was possible, most opposition groups chose to boycott the polls, claiming that the Government impeded their ability to compete freely. The elections were however judged to be generally free and fair by observers including the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Western donor states and domestic NGOs. With the widespread opposition boycott, the well-organised and funded EPRDF won the elections with an overwhelming majority over those less well-organised opposition groups and independent candidates that did participate. National elections are scheduled for 14 May 2000. **[4][5][6e][30][31]**

5.48 The Ethiopian Human Rights Council and opposition groups allege that some people in detention are held for political reasons but the Government denies that it holds any political prisoners. **[4][5][30]**

5.49 Government procedures for the registration of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were changed in 1996. The Ministry of Justice is now primarily responsible for the registration of NGOs and has not yet issued comprehensive written procedures. In 1995 the Government revoked the registration certificates of 47 domestic and international NGOs and has refused to re-register some of them. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council has been refused registration as an NGO because the Government asserts that it is primarily a political organisation. While the Government has refused to register several NGOs it has not otherwise prevented them from operating. The registration process itself is slow although it speeded up in late 1997. The Action Professionals' Association for the People was re-registered in November 1997. The Government remains generally sceptical about NGOs. **[4][5]**

5.50 The 1994 Constitution and the 1993 Labour Law give the majority of employees the right to form and join trades unions and bargain collectively, although only about 300,000 workers are unionised. Only a small percentage of Ethiopia's population is engaged in formal salaried employment and most of those are in urban areas. 88% of the population is engaged in subsistence farming in rural areas. Employees of the security and civil services and those in 'essential services', such as transport workers and bank staff, are not permitted to strike. The 1993 Labour Law forbids trades unions from acting in an overtly political manner. Unions are free to affiliate with and participate in international labour organisations. **[1][2][4][5][30]**

5.51 The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) was formed in 1993. Individual unions are not required to belong to CETU. Nine federations, organised on the basis of industrial and service sectors rather than by region, comprise CETU. The Government decertified CETU in December 1994 because of internal management disputes but officially re-established and re-certified it in April 1997. **[4][5][30]**

5.52 In May 1997 the police closed the shops of some participants in a strike by shopkeepers and businessmen who were protesting against rent increases and revoked their business licences. **[5][14]**

FREEDOM OF SPEECH & OF THE PRESS

5.53 There is general freedom of speech and expression. Groups critical of the Government are able to hold press conferences and public meetings without apparent retribution. Only about 1% of the population regularly read a newspaper or magazine. Access to the print media is very limited outside Addis Ababa. Owing to poor management, the effect of market forces and the Government's enforcement of the Press Law, only about 20 weekly newspapers appeared regularly in 1997, although this had increased to 34 weekly and two fortnightly newspapers in 1998. **[4][5][30]**

5.54 Foreign journalists are able to operate freely and often write articles critical of the Government and, with their local affiliates, have greater access to Government officials than local journalists. New regulations were introduced in January 1998 requiring foreign journalists to apply for visas two weeks before travel and requiring foreign correspondents to hold work

permits and provide evidence of training. These regulations were rescinded in February 1998 following complaints. **[4][5][30]**

5.55 The Constitution and the 1992 Press Law provide for the right to free speech and freedom of the press but the Government has often used legal mechanisms to curtail press rights. Vague provisions of the Press Law regarding publication of false information or incitement of ethnic hatred often affect journalists. **[4][5][30]**

5.56 At the end of 1997 there were 15 journalists either detained or imprisoned by the Government, 13 of whom were awaiting trial, most accused or convicted under the provisions of the Press Law of inciting ethnic hatred or publishing false information. Of the 13 awaiting trial, five were arrested for publishing reports in Urji ("Star"), a newspaper that openly supports the OLF. Two others were unable to provide guarantors for bail. Bail is sometimes set at an unreasonably high level, often more than a person's annual salary. At the end of 1997 two journalists were serving sentences of one year. One journalist was released in 1997 after serving a one year sentence and another, charged with libel, was released on bail in August 1997. **[4][5][30]**

5.57 At the end of 1998 13 journalists remained in detention. In January 1998 four journalists from the influential Amharic language newspaper Tobia were detained and held for six months. Four of the five journalists from the Oromo language newspaper Urji who were arrested in 1997 remained in detention at the end of 1998, awaiting trial on charges of involvement with terrorist activities and violation of the Press Law. One Urji detainee was released on bail in December 1998. Three journalists from the private weekly Nishan were detained in July 1998, allegedly for publishing an editorial cautioning against anti-Eritrean propaganda. They were released in September 1998. **[30]**

5.58 Some journalists practice self-censorship. Despite the threat of legal action the private press is very active and newspapers critical of Government policies are widely available in Addis Ababa, though scarcer elsewhere. **[4][5][30]**

5.59 Amnesty International reported in 1998 that there were 16 journalists in prison in Addis Ababa. There had been 17 new arrests in the last four months of 1997 and 14 in 1998, and over a dozen journalists had fled the country. Four journalists had been arrested on 16 January 1998 at the offices of the Amharic-language newspaper Tobia for publishing an internal UN document on emergency evacuation procedures for UN staff based in Addis Ababa. The newspaper's office had subsequently been burned down by unidentified arsonists, following which six of the newspaper's administrative staff were detained, but later provisionally released, on suspicion of having started the fire. The four journalists had not been formally charged with any offence as of April 1998. Amnesty International also reported the arrest of journalists from the Oromo newspaper Urji, which had reported abuses against OLF suspects. **[23]**

5.60 The official media is legally responsible for its own management and partial revenue generation, although it continues to receive State subsidies. Government reporters practice self-censorship but have sometimes questioned official policies. The Press and Information Department acts as the Government's official mouthpiece. Although the Press Law requires that the Government is accessible, private journalists are still denied access to Government press conferences. Access to information is even denied to official media journalists. Most, but not all, Government officials refuse to speak with either the official or private press. The new Office

of the Government Spokesperson was established in June 1998 following the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea. The Spokesperson distributes press releases to the Ethiopian news agency, foreign embassies and foreign news agencies. **[4][5][30]**

5.61 The private press frequently alleges that federal government forces and local officials commit human rights violations, but most private press reports are unsubstantiated and are too imprecise to verify. The Government has not, however, banned any newspaper or publication, although many publications are inaccurate. To address the problem of the lack of professionalism in the private press, the Ministry of Information and Culture established the Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute in April 1996. Ten private newspapers were invited to participate in a 2-month training course in June 1996 but only two attended. **[4][5][30]**

5.62 Radio is the most influential medium in reaching people living in rural areas. The Press Law allows for private radio stations but the only non-governmental licences granted to date have been to Radio Fana, which is controlled by the ruling EPRDF and the Mekele Voice of Tigray. The only television station is operated by the Government. In 1996 the ban on ownership of private satellite receiving dishes was lifted and import restrictions on facsimile machines and computer modems was dropped. There are no restrictions on Internet access. **[4][5][30]**

5.63 The authorities respect academic freedom, although political activity is not, in general, encouraged in universities. Following demonstrations in late 1995, students at Addis Ababa University, who had not been permitted a student council since 1993, were able to elect representatives to a student committee. A number of student activists were detained for several days in March 1997 after they had held a demonstration outside the University of Addis Ababa without a permit. Despite Government assurances that the University would not be affected by the conflict with Eritrea, nine academics of Eritrean origin were dismissed soon after hostilities broke out. Also, at the end of 1998 some 30 out of 82 Eritrean exchange students from the University who had been detained remained in detention at Bilate on the grounds that they had received military training and would be conscripted into the Eritrean armed forces if released. **[4][5][30]**

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

5.64 The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, including the right of conversion. There is a broad level of religious freedom and tolerance in Ethiopia and in most areas **Orthodox Christians** and **Muslims** participate in each other's religious observances. In some areas, notably in the Welo area, intermarriage and even conversion is tolerated. However, there have been cases of open conflict between religious groups, particularly between Orthodox Christians, **Pentecostalists** and **Evangelicals**. Newer faiths, such as the Pentecostalists and **Jehovah's Witnesses**, have sometimes faced overt, even violent, public opposition. In February 1998, despite generally good relations with the Government, Jehovah's Witnesses reported that regional officials in highly Orthodox Christian Tigre national state had disrupted religious services and arrested and briefly detained 50 of their members. Following the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea in 1998 the Government decided that Jehova's Witnesses of Eritrean origin, who might face persecution in Eritrea on account of their religious beliefs, would not be subject to deportation to Eritrea. **[4][5][30]**

5.65 While there have been incidents of Orthodox Christians disrupting Pentecostalist meetings most observers accept that the Government strictly enforces the Constitutional right of freedom of assembly and that the police endeavour to remain impartial in religious disputes. Muslims and Orthodox Christians have complained about proselytisation by Pentecostalists and Jehovah's Witnesses, and Muslims have claimed that some Pentecostalists have disparaged Islam in sermons. However, in 1998, unlike in previous years, there were no complaints made by Pentecostalists and Evangelicals that the police failed to protect them during instances of inter-religious conflict. Religious tensions, often related to ethnic distinctions, persist, particularly in the Oromo and Somali national states. **[4][5][30]**

5.66 After Ethiopia had restored diplomatic relations with Israel in 1989, Mengistu's Government removed restrictions on emigration by the Jewish **Falasha** people. Israel evacuated 14,000 Falasha from Addis Ababa in May 1991 as the Mengistu Government was about to fall. In 1998 Israel opened an office in Gondar to assist some 3,000 Falasha from the Quara area near the border with Sudan who were in the process of emigrating to Israel. **[1][2][30]**

5.67 The status of some 8,000 **Feles Mora** is under review by the Israeli government. The Feles Mora claim to have been forced to convert from Judaism to Christianity during the past century. Cases of those who wish to emigrate to Israel are assessed individually by the Israelis. **[5][30]**

FREDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL

5.68 The Constitution and the Criminal and Civil Codes prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention. However, these rights are not always respected in practice by the Government. The Criminal Procedure code requires that any person detained must be charged and informed of the charges within 48 hours and, in most cases, be offered release on bail. Persons charged with serious offences may be detained for 15 days while police investigate the case and for further periods of 15 days while investigations continue. Bail is not available to those charged with murder or treason. People are, however, often detained without a warrant, particularly in outlying regions, often not charged within the required 48 hours, and, if bailed, never recalled to appear before a court. Some 7,000 criminal suspects remained in detention without charge or trial at the end of 1997, mostly suspected OLF supporters or guerrilla fighters, the majority of such detentions being attributable to the shortage and limited training of judges, prosecutors and lawyers. **[4][5]**

5.69 Hundreds of people were arrested and detained without charge or trial in 1996 for activities allegedly in support of armed opposition groups, the majority of cases being in the Oromo national state. In many cases people were held incommunicado by security forces for several days or weeks before they were eventually released. Most detainees were held in connection with alleged activities of the OLF. At the end of 1996 93 people from a large group of alleged OLF fighters detained in 1994 were still in detention. **[4]**

5.70 Judicial search warrants are required to search houses but are seldom obtained outside Addis Ababa. It was reported in 1996, for example, that in Dire Dawa some residences were searched by local officials without warrants. **[4][5]**

5.71 The 1994 Constitution proscribes slavery, which had been formally abolished in 1942, and involuntary servitude. There are no reports of slavery in Ethiopia, although child prostitution involving the sale or abduction of young girls remains a problem and there were many reports of

involuntary servitude of young Ethiopian women in Middle Eastern states. The Criminal Code prohibits forced labour but its use can be ordered by courts as a punishment for over-15s. (See also Sections 5.10 - 5.18) **[4][5][30]**

FREDOM TO TRAVEL & INTERNAL RELOCATION (INTERNAL FLIGHT)

5.72 The Constitution provides for freedom of travel and residence, both internally and abroad, and allows emigration and repatriation. Exit visas are required but these are issued routinely, except to people with outstanding court cases or unpaid debts. While there are, in theory, no restrictions on where a person may live or work, the Government has restricted the rights of Eritreans and people of Eritrean origin to free travel and movement since the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea in May 1998. Ethiopian passports of people of Eritrean origin have been routinely confiscated and by the end of 1998 an estimated 45,000 people of Eritrean origin had been deported from Ethiopia to Eritrea. The Government justified these actions on national security grounds. **[4][5][30]**

5.73 In 1996 Ethiopia provided first asylum to more than 360,000 refugees, mainly from Somalia and Sudan, in accordance with the provisions of the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. In 1997 and 1998 Ethiopia continued to host some 270,000 refugees. There were no reports in 1996, 1997 and 1998 of forced expulsion of those with a valid claim to asylum. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and foreign diplomats considered Ethiopia's treatment of asylum seekers to be fair. The Government co-operates with the UNHCR and other organisations in assisting refugees and returning citizens. There was a large-scale round-up of Sudanese refugees living in urban areas in early 1998 with people being relocated to refugee camps along the border with Sudan. Prior to their move they were temporarily detained in sometimes overcrowded conditions. Steps were taken at one camp to improve medical care following the deaths of 50 children from diarrhoeal disease. **[4][5][30]**

PRISON CONDITIONS

5.74 Prison conditions in Ethiopia are poor and overcrowding remains a problem. Several prisoners and detainees reportedly died during 1999 from illness and disease, including the acting Secretary-General of the ETA, Shimelis Zewidie, who died in June 1999 from tuberculosis. Although the Constitution prohibits the use of torture and mistreatment of prisoners there are many credible reports of detainees being beaten sometimes by security officials. Following the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea in May 1998 the Government detained and then deported thousands of Eritreans and people of Eritrean origin. This prompted concerns over arbitrary arrest and detention. A crackdown on suspected OLF activists in early 1998 led to the detention of about 100 Oromos, who were held incommunicado for several days. State media carries occasional reports of officials who have been dismissed or imprisoned for abuse of authority and human rights violations. Additional police training has been provided to combat this problem. **[4][5][30][31]**

5.75 The Government permits independent monitoring of prison conditions and police stations by the ICRC and diplomatic missions. The ICRC, in general, had access in 1999 to federal and regional prisons and detention centres and police stations throughout Ethiopia. However, after an ICRC visit in July 1999 the Government refused to allow ICRC access to a Central

Investigation Division detention facility in Addis Ababa. ICRC was also unable to gain access in 1999 to police stations in Addis Ababa holding ethnic Eritrean detainees. ICRC had restricted access in 1999 to military detention facilities where suspected OLF fighters are held. ICRC visits to Eritrean POWs in Tigre state were restricted between April and August 1999. **[31]**

5.76 In 1999 foreign diplomats were permitted to visit prominent detainees held by the SPO for alleged war crimes committed under the Dergue. These detainees included Olympic marathon winner Mamo Wolde and former President of Addis Ababa University Dr Alemayehu Tefera. Dr Taye Woldesemayat, Secretary-General of the ETA, is also permitted diplomatic visitors. **[31]**

5.77 Prison food is inadequate and many prisoners have food delivered to them by their families or use their own funds to buy food. Prisoners are usually permitted daily access to a prison yard. Female prisoners are housed separately from males and rape does not appear to be a problem. Visitors are allowed. Prison letters are supposed to be written only in Amharic although this restriction is not strictly enforced. **[4][5][31]**

5.78 In June 1999 some 1,200 civilians of Eritrean origin and 172 Eritrean prisoners of war were moved from the Bilate detention camp south of Addis Ababa to the Dedesa camp in the western Oromo state. The new camp is in an area less prone to malaria. In July 1999 some 350 Eritrean POWs were moved to Dedesa from Tigre state. The ICRC and foreign diplomatic observers were allowed regular access to detainees. **[31]**

ANNEX A

CHRONOLOGY

1890 - Italy annexes Eritrea on Red Sea coast

1896 - Emperor Menelik's forces defeat Italians but Italy retains control of Eritrea

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

1935 - Italy invades Ethiopia

1941 - Allied forces end Italian occupation

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

1962 - Eritrea formally annexed by Ethiopia

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

9/1974 - Calls for democratisation, army mutinies, Eritrean resistance, economic problems and famine culminate in overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in a military coup. Haile Selassie dies in military custody in 8/1975. The Dergue takes control of Ethiopia and establishes Provisional Military Government (PMG) under Lt-Gen Aman Andom

11/1974 - Gen Aman assassinated. 57 former civil and military officials, including two former Prime Ministers executed without trial. Brig-Gen Teferi Benti, Chairman of the Dergue, becomes Head of State. Major (later Lt-Col) Mengistu Haile Mariam one of two Vice-Chairman of the Dergue

12/1974 - Dergue declares Ethiopia a socialist state. PMG replaced by Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC)

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

2/1977 - Col Mengistu assumes control as Head of State and Chairman of PMAC. Gen Teferi Benti and five other Dergue members executed. "Red Terror" campaign launched against Mengistu's political and armed opponents, particularly the EPRP. Tens of thousands killed or tortured

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

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

7/1977 - Somalia invades Ethiopia's Ogaden region

2/1978 - Ethiopia counter-attacks with large-scale Soviet and Cuban support; Somalia withdraws in 3/1978

6/1978 - Large Ethiopian offensive launched in Eritrea; most towns recaptured and EPLF retreats to Nakfa

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

1981 - Civil war in Eritrea between ELF and EPLF

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

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

1985-6 - Military successes against TPLF

6/1986 - Draft Constitution for eventual return to civilian government published

2/1987 - New Constitution endorsed by referendum

6/1987 - Elections held for new National Shengo (Assembly). First meeting of Shengo abolishes PMAC and renames country the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) under leadership of WPE; Mengistu elected President of PDRE

1988 - Serious military setbacks for Government in Eritrea and Tigre

1989 - Government abandons most of Tigre province to TPLF

9/1989 - TPLF establishes EPRDF as united front with Amhara-based EPDM. Unsuccessful peace negotiations between Government and EPLF

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

11/1989 - EPRDF forces close in on Addis Ababa

2/1990 - EPLF captures Masawa. Peace talks between Government and EPLF broken off

3/1990 - Peace talks between Government and TPLF collapse. Socialism effectively abandoned by Mengistu Government; WPE becomes the EDUP and open to non-Marxists. Moves towards market economy begin, but economy close to collapse

1/1991 - EPRDF announces moderate, non-Marxist programme, which wins United States support

4/1991 - Further gains by EPRDF forces near Addis Ababa. EPLF close in on Assab

21.5.1991 - Mengistu flees Ethiopia and goes into exile in Zimbabwe; Vice-President Lt-Gen Tesfaye Gebre Kidan assumes control of Government

28.5.1991 - EPRDF forces enter Addis Ababa, with public support of United States; EPRDF establishes interim Government. At the same time EPLF establishes provisional administration in Eritrea, effectively seceding from Ethiopia

7/1991 - National conference attended by 20 political and ethnically-based groups establishes Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE); TPLF leader and EPRDF Chairman Meles Zenawi becomes President, with Tamirat Layne Prime Minister. 32 political groups represented on Council of Representatives, including the OLF, which also holds four Ministerial positions on Council of Ministers

8/1991 - EPRDF and OLF supporters clash, although OLF remains in TGE

11/1991 - 14 new autonomous administrative regions established, broadly reflecting ethnic boundaries

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

6/1992 - OLF and other groups boycott regional elections. EPRDF and allies win 90% of votes cast. OLF withdraws from TGE and goes into armed opposition. OLF forces capture Asbe Teferi but Government forces retake the town

10/1992 - Talks between TGE and OLF unsuccessful; hostilities continue

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

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

4/1993 - Referendum in Eritrea approves independence from Ethiopia

24.5.1993 - Eritrea achieves formal independence, with recognition from Ethiopia

7/1993 - Differences emerge within elements of EPRDF over regionalisation and economic reform

6/1994 - EPRDF wins large majority of seats in elections to new Constituent Assembly. Polls boycotted by OLF, AAPO and CAFPDE

10/1994 - Constituent Assembly inaugurated

12/1994 - Constituent Assembly approves new Constitution, establishing federal system of government with nine ethnically-based national states and the federal capital territory. Constituent Assembly replaced by bicameral Federal Parliamentary Assembly (FPA), made up of the Council of People's Representatives (CPR) and the Council of the Federation

12/1994 - Trial of Dergue officials begins, including Mengistu. Trials held by SPO, created in 1992 to investigate and try cases of human rights abuses committed under the Mengistu administration

5/1995 - Elections to the CPR and national state assemblies, boycotted by most opposition parties, produce landslide win for EPRDF and allies. Largest participating opposition party, the ENDM, fails to win a single seat. Elections deemed to be largely free and fair by international observers

6/1995 - Pro-EPRDF parties secure narrow victory in Afar and Somali national state elections

7/1995 - Ethiopian forces make raids into Somalia to attack bases of al-Ittihad al-Islamia terrorists; further raids made 1996-1999

21.8.1995 - Legislative power transferred to new FPA

22.8.1995 - TGE wound up as new Constitution becomes effective. Country renamed the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). Dr Negasso Gidada, an ethnic Oromo, elected first President of FDRE by FPA

23.8.1995 - Meles Zenawi, President under TGE, elected first Prime Minister of FDRE by CPR

9/1995 - Government launches drive against corruption

10/1995 - Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Tamirat Layne removed from office on suspicion of corruption

9/1997 - SPO trial of 5,198 accused of genocide and other war crimes committed under Mengistu administration commences at Federal High Court in Addis Ababa

6.5.1998 - Border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea leads to armed clashes along the border, centred on the Badme area

5.6.1998 - Eritrea aircraft bomb Mekele in northern Ethiopia, killing 44. Ethiopia launches air attacks on Asmara airport in Eritrea

15.6.1998 - Ethiopia and Eritrea accept a US-brokered agreement to halt air-strikes against each other

12/1998 - AAPO Chairman Professor Asrat Woldeyes released from prison and leaves Ethiopia for USA for medical treatment

2/1999 - Resumption of heavy fighting in border dispute with Eritrea; Ethiopian aircraft and helicopters used in violation of moratorium on air strikes agreed in 6/1998

4/2000 - Ethiopia and Eritrea agree to attend peace talks in Algiers

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

5/2000 - Ruling EPRDF coalition wins national elections but loses ground to opposition parties and independents in some regional elections

18.6.2000 - Ethiopia and Eritrea sign cease-fire agreement; Eritrea agrees to UN border monitoring force within its territory

10/2000 - Ethiopia and Eritrea agree to further talks in Algiers aimed at resolving border dispute and making 6/2000 cease-fire permanent

ANNEX B

MAIN POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

- **Abugda Ethiopian Democratic Congress** - ethnic-based organisation seeking self-determination

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

- **Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF)** - armed opposition group seeking self-determination for the Afar people, in on-going negotiations with Federal Government

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

- **All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPO)** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination for the Amhara people. Former Chairman Professor Asrat Woldeyes, imprisoned 1994 to 12/1998, died in USA 5/1999

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

- **Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM)** - formed as the EPDM by the TPLF to campaign in Amhara-populated areas, re-named the ANDM in 1/1994. Formed the EPRDF with the TPLF in 9/1989. Secretary-General Deputy Prime Minister Tefera Walwa

- **Burji People's Democratic Organization** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination

- **Coalition of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (CAFPDE)** - formed 1993, broadly-based coalition of groups opposed to the EPRDF. Granted official registration 7/1996. EPRDF pressure and influence over the media, as well as CAFPDE's own divisions, have limited the group's impact. Chairman Dr Beyene Petros (also Chairman of SEPDU)

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

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

- **Daworo People's Democratic Movement** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination

- **Democratic Unity Party** - opposed to EPRDF. Chairman Ahmad Abd al-Karim

- **Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF)** - fought in alliance with TPLF/EPRDF against Mengistu Government, formed provisional administration of Eritrea 5/1991 and Government of independent Eritrea 5/1993

- **Ethiopian Democratic Action Group** - Chairman Ephrem Zemikael

- **Ethiopian Democratic Organization** - see **ENDP**

- **Ethiopian Democratic Organization Coalition** - see **ENDP**

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

- **Ethiopian Democratic Unity Party (EDUP)** - replaced the WPE in 3/1990 and abandoned the WPE's reliance on Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the sole legal party until 5/1991. Secretary-General Lt-Gen Tesfaye Gebre Kidan

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

- **Ethiopian National Democratic Movement (ENDM)** - largest opposition group to participate in 5/1995 CPR & National State elections, failing to win a single seat

- **Ethiopian National Democratic Organization** - opposed to EPRDF

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

- **Ethiopian National Patriotic Front (ENPF)** - Amhara-based opposition group accused by the Government of involvement in terrorist acts (see Sections 3.40 & 5.35)

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

- **Ethiopian People's Democratic Unity Organization** - opposed to EPRDF. Leader Tadese Tilahun

- **Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)** - formed 9/1989 by the TPLF as an alliance of anti-Mengistu/WPE groups. Ousted Mengistu Government 5/1991 in alliance with EPLF. Dominant party in the TGE from 7/1991 onwards. Present governing party of the FDRE. Leader Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The EPRDF comprises the TPLF, the ANDM and the OPDO

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

- **Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL)** - formed 1994 by the merger of 11 Ethiopian Somali organisations. Merged with other Somali groups 6/1998 to form the Somali Democratic Party (SDP) - see **SDP**

- **Gedeo People's Democratic Organization** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination. Leader Alesa Mengesha

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

- **Hadia People's Democratic Organization** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination

- **Harer National League** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination

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

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

- **Jarso Democratic Movement** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination

- **Kaffa People's Democratic Union** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination

- **Kefa People's Democratic Movement** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination

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

- **MEDHIN** - see Ethiopian Medhin Democratic Party

- **MEISON** - see All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement

- **Moa Ambessa Party** - opposed to EPRDF, monarchist party

- **National Democratic Union** - opposed to EPRDF

- **Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)** - Somali organisation, elements of which are in armed opposition to the Government and, from 7/1996, in alliance with the OLF; other elements merged with the ESDL to form the SDP

- **Oromo Abo Liberation Front (OALF)** - Oromo organisation operating in coalition with OPDO and UOLF. Chairman Mohammed Sirage

- **Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)** - became active in the 1980s, participated in the TGE until 6/1992, since when it has been in armed opposition to the TGE and the EPRDF-led Government of the FDRE. In alliance with armed wing of the ONLF from 7/1996. Secretary-General Gelassa Dilbo, Vice Secretary-General Lencho Letta

- **Oromo National Congress** - see section 5.30

- **Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO)** - formed 1990 by the TPLF to campaign in Oromo areas, opposed to the OLF. Part of the EPRDF alliance. Operates in coalition with OALF and UOLF. Deputy Secretary-General Kuma Demeksa. The OPDO's Dr Negasso Gidada has been President of the FDRE since 8/1995

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

- **Sidama Liberation Movement** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination

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

- **Somali Democratic Party (SDP)** - formed 6/1998 by merger of the ESDL and elements of the ONLF. Leader Dr Abd-al Majid Husayn, Federal Transport and Communications Minister

- **Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Union (SEPDU)** - alliance formed 1992 by 10 ethnically-based political groups in southern Ethiopia, represented in the Council of Representatives, although 5 of the 10 groups were expelled from the Council in 4/1993. Chairman Dr Beyene Petros (also Chairman of CAFPDE)

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

- **United Oromo Liberation Front (UOLF)** - formed 1995 by merger of Oromo People's Liberation Front and Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia. Operates in coalition with OALF and OPDO. Chairman Ahmad Muhammad Saro

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

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

- **Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE)** - formed 1984 by Mengistu, renamed the EDUP in 3/1990, the sole legal party until 5/1991

- **Yem Nationality Movement** - ethnic-based group seeking self-determination

[1][2][4][5][10b][26]

ANNEX C

PROMINENT PEOPLE PAST & PRESENT

- Lt-Col Atnafu **Abate** - Vice-Chairman of the Dergue, along with Col Mengistu, 1974

- Muhammad Ma'lim **Ali** - Vice-Chairman of the Somali Democratic Party (SDP) and President of the Somali National State 1998

- Lt-Gen Aman Andom (General **Aman**) - Head of State and Chairman of the Dergue 9/1974, assassinated 11/1974

- Professor **Asrat** Woldeyes, Chairman of the AAPO, held in prison from 1994 to 12/1998 when he left Ethiopia for the USA for medical treatment, died in USA 5/1999

- Brig-Gen Teferi **Benti** - replaced General Aman as Chairman of the Dergue and Head of State 11/1974, executed by Mengistu 2/1977

- Dr **Beyene** Petros - Chairman of CAFPDE

- Ambassador Muhammad **Dirir** - Secretary of the SDP 1998

- **Fekadu** Gedamu - Chairman of the ENDP

- **Gelassa** Dilbo - Secretary-General of the OLF

- Dr Abd-al Majid **Husayn** - Chairman of the SDP and Federal Transport and Communications Minister 1998

- Tamirat **Layne** - Vice-Chairman of the EPRDF, Chairman of the ANDM, Prime Minister of Ethiopia 7/1991, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia 8-10/1995. Removed from office 10/1995; facing trial on corruption charges

- **Lencho** Letta - Vice Secretary-General of the OLF

- **Meles** Zenawi - TPLF leader and Chairman of the EPRDF, President of Ethiopia 7/1991-8/1995, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 8/1995 to the present

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

- Lt-Col Mengistu Haile Mariam (Col **Mengistu**) - doctrinaire Marxist who assumed power 2/1977, Secretary-General of the WPE from 1984, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia from 1987 until he fled in 5/1991; lives in exile in Zimbabwe

- **Mersha** Yoseph - Chairman of COEDF

- Ali **Mirah** - leader of the APDO

- Dr **Negasso** Gidada - President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 8/1995 to the present, ethnic Oromo, member of the EPRDF-allied OPDO

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

- Dr **Taye** Woldesemayat - Secretary-General of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, arrested 8/1996 and held in detention since, charged with involvement in terrorist acts allegedly committed by the ENPF

- **Tefera** Walwa - Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the FDRE since 10/1995, Secretary-General of the EPRDF-allied ANDM

- Lt-Gen **Tesfaye** Gebre Kidan - Vice-President under Mengistu who briefly assumed control of the PDRE after Mengistu fled Ethiopia in 5/1991; Secretary-General of the EDUP

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