

in Addis Ababa in May, and his sister Fatuma Idris, who «disappeared» in Harar in July after complaining about her brother's «disappearance»; and many alleged OLF and ONLF supporters. Several people who «disappeared» in previous years were feared to have been extrajudicially executed, including Hagos Atsbeha, held by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) since 1988 whom the authorities claimed had committed suicide in prison; four EORO military leaders captured in 1991; and Yoseph Ayele Bati, an OLF supporter abducted in 1992 (see Amnesty International Report 1994).

Torture of suspected government opponents, particularly OLF suspects was frequently reported. Torture survivors reported having their arms tied tightly behind their backs with plastic ties; beatings with sticks and guns; whippings with electric cable, mock executions and death threats and rape. Torture took place in secret security prisons and army camps, particularly in areas near anti-government fighting. Oromo demonstrators arrested in Addis Ababa in December 1993 and those arrested at Asrat Woldeyes' trial in September were beaten by soldiers. They were detained incommunicado in Sendefa Police College near Addis Ababa, had their hair roughly shaved without soap or water, were made to do rigorous physical exercises and were given little food or medical treatment.

Government soldiers were reported to have killed unarmed civilian opponents on several occasions. In February, troops fired on an ONLF demonstration in

Wardheer which was becoming violent, reportedly killing 60 people. Other ONLF supporters were also reported to have been extrajudicially executed by soldiers, including Mohamed Omer Tubar, a regional commissioner, in February and in May, Mirad Leli Sigale, former mayor of Gode, whom the authorities claimed was killed while escaping from detention. Among many OLF suspects killed by soldiers during 1994 was Bekele Arga, a former army colonel, shot dead at his home in Ambo in September.

There was still no reaction from the Council of Representatives (the interim parliament) to a report submitted by a commission of inquiry into the policing killing of a student demonstrator in January 1993 (see Amnesty International Report 1994).

Two people were sentenced to death for homicide but there were no executions.

Amnesty International appealed for the release of prisoners of conscience. It welcomed the start of trials of former officials charged with gross human rights violations but urged the authorities to rule out death sentences. It stressed that all political detainees should be charged and tried as soon as possible in accordance with international standards, or released. It called for impartial investigations into the emerging pattern of «disappearances», torture and political killings of government opponents. It recommended a series of measures to stop these serious human rights violations.

DOCUMENT

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

The following is the full text of a «confidential note» written by an expert who stayed in Ethiopia in 1994 on a mission to the world bank. What he writes on ravages of Tigray-Tigrigny narrow nationalism and its adverse consequences on ethnic relations in Ethiopia is not news to the people of this country... Cases of such and other abuses are reported almost as a matter of routine in the country's independent press both in Ethiopia and abroad. We believe it would make interesting reading not least because the author - a foreign national - cannot be accused of being ethnically biased.

The following information was collected while I was on a mission appraising capacity building efforts in Ethiopia. My investigation focused on only a few institutions. Time did not permit me to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the conditions of professionals in Ethiopia. The task of assessing institutions and the conditions of professionals in Ethiopia deserves a serious attention. I highly recommend that the Bank/ACBF should conduct an extensive evaluation of the impact of the present government's policy on professionals.

The following items include summaries of case studies on diverse topics collected from different

sources. Documents are available to substantiate many of these cases/allegations. However, because of security reasons, it was decided not to take the documents out of the country at this time. I have also presented my personal views based on discussions with many individuals who, I believe, are knowledgeable about the problem. I have tried to be as objective as possible in presenting the facts.

1. ERITREA

Money transferred: the Ethiopian Treasury transfers money regularly to Eritrea to pay for the recurrent

expenditure of the Eritrean Government. The latest transfer included 108 million birr in October 93, 9 million in August 93. The transfer is done by order of the Prime Minister.

Refinery: According to the agreements between the Eritrean and Ethiopian Governments, Ethiopia pays 20 per cent of the crude oil in kind for use of the Aseb refinery. However, Ethiopia is also paying for the upkeep of the refinery. The payment for the upkeep is being made outside of the agreements. On January 27, 1993 the Prime Minister ordered the Treasury to pay the amount of Birr 19,250,152.00 converted into dollars (hard currency) for the maintenance of the refinery. In short, Ethiopia pays for use of the refinery and also for the maintenance of the refinery.

University: On August 30, 1993, Hibret Berhe, Cultural and Educational Attaché of the Eritrean Government in Addis Ababa, asked Dr. DurI Mohammed, President of the University, to accept Eritrean students who have not completed their undergraduate studies in the University's Masters degree programs: The following is an excerpt from the letter: « .. admitting some students who were not able to complete their first degree but had many years of experience in their respective fields to be transferred as masters students and be allowed to join the Masters Program in your esteemed University.»

The letters also notes that the preferred fields are economics, public administration, social work, agriculture, medicine and engineering. There are already a number of Eritrean students accepted into the various Masters Degree programs of the University under this agreement.

UNDP Funds: The Ethiopian Government requested UNDP to transfer \$ 6 million from Ethiopia's Fourth Country Cycle allocation (1993/94) to Eritrea. I could not verify if the transfer had occurred.

Aseb Port: Ethiopia's businessmen and corporations are losing merchandise worth millions of dollars at Aseb port. Many of these items are reported as «lost at port». However, the allegation is that Eritreans are taking the merchandise away from port warehouses. The following are some examples of items lost:

Ethiopian Import and Export Corporation lost merchandise worth 23,916,678.45 birr.

Ethiopian Household and Furniture Corporation lost merchandise worth 2, 918,000.00 birr.

Ethio-Eritrean Protocol: The Ethio-Eritrean Protocol details the relationships between the

Ethiopian and the Eritrean Governments. The Protocol has not been officially adopted since there are points that the Ethiopian Government has not agreed on. However, the Eritrean side of the deal is being implemented. Many Ethiopians complain that the Protocol does not protect Ethiopia's interest. For details, one needs to see the entire protocol.

2. TIGRAY / MEKELE

Technical Institute: In a letter written Tahsas 22, 1986 (December 1993), the Prime Minister ordered the Treasury to release 21,069,589.00 birr to establish a Technical Institute in Mekele.

University: In a letter dated 16/3/93, the Minister of Education wrote to Mr. Francis X. Coleen of the World Bank to allocate \$ 85,6621,001.19 for the construction of a university in Mekele. The letter states that the project is a major priority of the Ethiopian Government. The money was to come from the following funds: \$ 45 million from funds set aside by the previous government for the expansion of Asmara University and an additional \$ 40 million from new allocations.

Special Students: In a letter written 7/3/93, the Defense Department asked the Addis Ababa University to accept former guerrilla members (Tagays) as special students to the university. These are students who cannot meet the university entrance requirements. Many have already enrolled under this arrangement.

Road Construction: The Gondar-Hyumera Highway construction project that was included in the transportation plan of the previous government is now canceled and replaced by the Enda Selassie-Humera road construction project. (In Tigray).

Cement Factory: A heavy cement factory that was supposedly to be one of the largest in Ethiopia, was to be located in one of the southern provinces. The project is now transferred to Mekele. (In Tigray).

3. OTHER MATTERS

Bank: The top positions of both the National and Commercial bank of Ethiopia are now occupied by Tigreans and Eritreans. In the commercial Bank alone, the top positions are now occupied by mainly Eritreans and a few Tigreans.

Gafat Ammunition Production: Gafat continues to produce ammunition. The following is a sample of the items produced as of the end of June 1994:

Automatic guns: 20,000
Light machine guns: 1,400
Yearly production of bullets:

60mm (50,000), 82mm (160,000), 100mm (30,000), 125mm (50,000), 130mm (20,000)

Trade : The business community is very much upset with the Government because it allows Eritreans to undersell Ethiopian businessmen illegally. I was able to ascertain this fact not just from businessmen but also from some government officials who know well what is going on. Eritreans import goods through Moyale, Djibouti and even Addis Ababa airport as «goods in transit» supposedly going directly to Asmara. But the same goods are sold locally at a lower price thereby undercutting Ethiopian businessmen. This problem is widely talked about in Addis Ababa. I believe the government is well aware of the problem, but chose to ignore it.

Ethiopian airlines : Twenty seven (27) top Ethiopian Airlines officials were dismissed from their job because they have refused to sign the paper the government drew alleging that the airlines was in trouble; it was losing money; the corporate level was too bureaucratic, etc. A list of the dismissed officials is attached. I talked to a few airline employees that are still on the job and some that are among those that were dismissed; the overwhelming consensus is that the government's decision was politically motivated. The airline is not losing money (in fact at the time they said it was losing money, it had made over 50 million birr profit), the corporate level is not that bureaucratic and the airline's salary level is not way out of line as the public was led to believe. A copy of the response from management is attached.

Morale at Ethiopian Airlines is at all-time low. A lot of people believe the government is not making a business decision; rather it is a political decision. According to some employees, the plan is to weaken Ethiopian Airlines so that the Government can go ahead with its reorganization plan. The ultimate objective is to help Eritrean Airlines.

Ethnic politics : In my opinion, the most serious problem that is affecting Ethiopia today is the ethnic politics that the government is fanning. Ethiopians have now become ethnic sensitive more than any time in the last twenty years. The sensitivity and bias is down to the individual level. Businesses owned by Eritreans and Tigreans are being boycotted. Many are convinced that they lost their job because they are non-Eritreans or non-Tigreans. The attached list indicating school directors in Addis Ababa alone seems to bear this fact. Another evidence is the case of the University Professors. Over 90 per cent of those dismissed are Amharas;

Regionalization : The regionalization program of the government is aggravating the ethnic politics in Ethiopia. It is a program that is beginning to have an impact on the economy as well. Regions now wield a significant amount of power. Private

investment has virtually ceased in many areas because regional governments are blocking investment programs after the central government has approved them. I have talked to a number of investors that could not get their permits from regional governments after the central government approved their request for developing projects.

American Embassy : Many people are bitter about the position that the American Embassy staff have taken vis-a-vis the Ethiopian politics; The people I talked to believe (and some claim that they have personally witnessed or experienced it) that the staff in the American Embassy maintain the Amhara are responsible for all the problems that the country faces. The Embassy use the code «C» when referring to Amharas, meaning colonialists. Many Ethiopians believe that the American government is not getting a true picture of the situation. Contrary to what the embassy staff believe, it is not just Amharas only who are being affected by the government's ethnic politics. Many non-Amhara ethnic groups are affected as well. As far as the present government is concerned, the only Ethiopians that count are the Tigreans and Eritreans, and a few minorities such as Aderes.

Consultants : Many professionals who are dismissed from their jobs have organized themselves to establish consulting firms. I was able to identify over 80 consultants (see attached list) engaged in various types of consulting work ranging from medical services to management and accounting to education. Many of these consultants try to work with NGOs and International organization. Many, however, complain that the government is forcing NGOs and international organization to exclude non-Eritrean and non-Tigrean consultants from their team. Two firms that had formed a team with a Dutch and a French company to work on Tekeze and Blue Nile Development projects respectively were advised to drop the names of their Ethiopian counterparts after the firms won the bids; Both Ethiopian consultants have copies of the letter written to their counterparts ordering them to drop the names of the Ethiopian consultants from the projects. The letters could be secured if confidentiality of the firms could be protected. A UNDP official told me that he was advised to drop the name of the private consultants he presented to the government, and in its place, the official was given another list from which he could choose.

There are several cases that one could cite to illustrate the problem that institutions and Ethiopian professionals are experiencing today. What I have tried to do here is briefly mention some of the problems that were brought to my attention. I believe that an effort must be made to document the seriousness of the problem and to assess the extent to which government policies today are affecting the capacity building initiatives of the country.