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Minority and indigenous communities in Ethiopia include Afar, and indigenous Anuak, Oromo, Somalis and many other ethnic groups. Muslims also are a significant religious minority in the predominantly Coptic Christian nation. Despite a federalist constitutional structure that provides important autonomy and cultural rights for Ethiopia's diverse communities, many of Ethiopia's minorities and indigenous peoples continue to be marginalized. Repeated reports of human rights violations as a result of the Ethiopian government's development strategy in the Lower Omo Valley and the Gambella led the US Congress to take action through its 2014 Appropriations Act. The legislation specifies that funds for development cannot be used to support activities that directly or indirectly involve forced evictions, and that the use of funds shall be subject to a process of prior consultation with affected communities. While this was a significant victory for communities in the Lower Omo Valley and the Gambella, the impact of these provisions on the government's policies remains to be seen.

The creation of large-scale agricultural plantations in the Gambella region continued in 2014. Indigenous communities in Ethiopia's Gambella region have been in conflict with the government over plans to convert thousands of hectares into large-scale agricultural plantations. Anuak communities took action through the World Bank's Inspection Panel to protect their rights to land and culture in the face of large-scale land dispossession. Controversies over the development of the Gibe III dam also continued during the year. The dam threatens to damage the local environment and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of indigenous people who have lived in the Lower Omo region for centuries. Despite significant concerns about the social and environmental impact of the dam, particularly on pastoralist communities, the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation reported at the end of the year that the project was 89 per cent complete.

Reports indicate that Majengir hunter-gatherers have also been the victims of land loss and increasing violence in relation to plans for large-scale coffee production, including the detention of Majengir leaders in 2014. Evidence from satellite imagery indicates that development projects in the Lower Omo Valley have significantly reduced grazing lands for the multiple pastoralist communities who live in the region. These changes in land use patterns have led to increased conflict in the region. For example, indigenous Suri pastoralists have come into conflict with neighbouring communities and with the government as a result of being accused of trespassing on traditional grazing lands that were converted into a palm oil plantation. The Ethiopian government

has initiated a process of small-scale urbanization, known as *sefara*, to induce or coerce the non-sedentary Suri into giving up their traditional pastoralist lifestyle and settling in small towns.

Similarly, the government's controversial use of 'villagization' has continued for a number of years and involved the planned relocation of the majority of Gambella region's rural residents to officially designated settlements. The process has been widely criticized by human rights groups, who have reported evictions, violence, intimidation and sexual assault by police and military enforcing the policy. Though justified by authorities as a means to provide communities located in underpopulated areas with better access to basic services and livelihood opportunities, the relocation sites have in practice often proved inhospitable, with much of the promised development and infrastructure failing to materialize. In some instances, according to previous research by Human Rights Watch (HRW), Anuak families have been forcibly relocated from urban areas to government villages with limited services or infrastructure, undermining access to essential services such as education. The organization expressed concern that the underlying motive in these cases was to release valuable land for private investment.

Ethiopia, though largely rural, is urbanizing rapidly. Addis Ababa – the capital and home to the offices of the African Union – is projected to grow by more than 60 per cent between 2010 and 2025. The city reportedly has the highest slum incidence in the world, with poor access to basic services even for those living outside the slums. This is placing increasing pressure on the surrounding Oromia region, particularly with the proposed implementation of the government's Addis Adaba Integrated Development Master Plan. The plan to expand Addis Ababa would bring multiple towns in the surrounding Oromia region under its jurisdiction.

However, the Ethiopian Oromo community, the largest ethnic group in the country, has long been in conflict with the central government. The conflict has deep historical roots in the displacement of Oromos from their traditional territory, which is now home to Addis Ababa, and in Ethiopia's constitutionally established federal structure. Currently, towns in the Oromo region fall under the administration of the Oromo regional authority, and the Oromo language is officially used for education, business and public service. Should the towns be absorbed into Addis Ababa, they would fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government and, among other changes, the official language would change to Amharic. The announcement of the central government's plans to expand the boundaries of Addis Ababa provoked protests by Oromo students during the year. As with past protests by other Ethiopian minority groups, the government reportedly used excessive force, including beatings of protesters, arbitrary arrests and detentions which led to the deaths of dozens of students.

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