

Ethiopia (19)

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Ethiopia

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2001
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Ethiopia continued its transition from a unitary to a federal system of government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. In 2000 the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) won general elections to the federal and regional parliaments. The elections were the second held based on an organizational concept of ethnic federalism under the 1994 Constitution. Most opposition political parties competed in the election; however, due to lack of funds and often weak political organization, opposition parties contested only 20 percent of the seats to the federal parliament, where EPRDF and affiliated parties hold 518 of 547 seats. EPRDF and affiliated parties also hold all regional parliaments by large majorities, although opposition parties hold approximately 30 percent in the Addis Ababa region council and 9.5 percent in the Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS or Southern Region) council. According to international and local observers, the 2000 national elections generally were free and fair in most areas; however, serious election irregularities occurred in the Southern Region, particularly in Hadiya zone. Federal regions, largely organized along ethnic lines, increasingly are autonomous and have a large degree of local control over fiscal and most political issues. However, the relationship between the central Government and local officials and among various judiciaries lacks consistent coordination, and occasionally actions are taken at the local level that conflict with stated federal policy. Highly centralized authority, poverty, civil conflict, and unfamiliarity with democratic concepts combine to complicate the implementation of federalism. The federal Government's ability to protect constitutional rights at the local level is limited and uneven. Local administrative, police, and judicial systems remain weak throughout the country. During the year, local elections were held, which were considered generally free and fair by observers; however, opposition parties claimed that the ruling party interfered in the process. The judiciary is weak and overburdened but continued to show signs of independence; progress was made in reducing the backlog of cases.

The security forces consist of the military and the police, both of which are responsible for internal security. The police in previous years were subordinate to the Ministry of Justice and reported to the Security, Immigration, and Refugees Affairs Authority (SIRAA); however, after the October reorganization of the federal Government, the Federal Police Commission and the Federal Prisons Administration became subordinate to the new Ministry of Federal Affairs. The military consists of both air and ground forces and reports to the Ministry of National Defense. Following the end of fighting between Ethiopian and Eritrean armed forces in 2000, some Ethiopian troops were demobilized, and others were redeployed from the border area in Tigray to other regions throughout the country, which increased the internal military presence in some parts of the Somali, Oromiya, and the Southern Regions. Military forces continued to conduct an increased number of low-level operations against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Somalia-based Al'ittihad Al' Islami terrorist organization, and elements of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) both in the country and in southern Somalia and northern Kenya. Some local officials and members of the security forces committed human rights abuses.

The economy is based on smallholder agriculture, with more than 85 percent of the estimated population of 63 million living in rural areas under very basic conditions and engaged in subsistence farming. In September estimates for 2000 and the year indicated that agriculture accounted for approximately 45 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Industry accounts for approximately 12 percent of economic activity; in urban centers, the majority of economic activity is in the informal sector. Nominal GDP grew by approximately 5 percent during the year; GDP per capita was approximately \$100 (856 birr) per year. Exports consist primarily of coffee, chat, hides, skins, beans, and oilseeds. Coffee exports account for more than 40 percent of export earnings; hides and skins were the second highest foreign exchange earning exports. Exports decreased during the year due to the decrease in the world price of coffee. Inflation reportedly was 3.9 percent during the year. Military spending decreased during the year. The Government continued to implement an economic reform program designed to stabilize the country's financial position, promote private sector participation in the economy, and attract foreign investment; however, significant impediments to investment remained, and there were approximately 200 government-owned enterprises that had not been privatized by year's end.

The Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. Security forces committed a number of extrajudicial killings and at times beat and mistreated detainees. Prison conditions are poor. Arbitrary arrest and detention and prolonged pretrial detention remained problems. The Government continued to detain persons suspected of sympathizing with or being members of the OLF. The Government did not continue to detain and deport without due process Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin; however, approximately 1,800 prisoners of war (POW's) remained in internment camps at Dedesa at year's end. Despite some efforts, the judiciary continued to lack sufficient trained staff and funds, which limited its ability to provide citizens the full protection provided for in the Constitution. Thousands of suspects remained in detention without charge, and lengthy pretrial detention was

a consistent problem. The judiciary continued to show some signs of growing independence; however, the Judicial Administration Council took disciplinary action against a judge after he released suspects on bail on habeas corpus grounds.

The Government infringed on citizen's privacy rights, and the law regarding search warrants was ignored widely. The Government restricted freedom of the press and continued to detain or imprison members of the press. Journalists continued to practice self-censorship. The Government at times restricted freedom of assembly; security forces used excessive force to disperse demonstrations. The Government limited freedom of association, and while the nongovernmental organization (NGO) registration process continued to improve, the Government suspended temporarily the registration of a prominent NGO. In July the Speaker of the House of the Peoples' Representatives selected a nominating committee to elect members to the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the Office of the Ombudsman; however, neither entity was operational at year's end. The Government generally respected freedom of religion; however, on occasion local authorities infringed on this right. The Government restricted freedom of movement. Numerous internally displaced persons (IDP's) remained in the country.

Violence and societal discrimination against women, and abuse of children remained problems. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is widespread. The Government supported efforts to eliminate FGM and other harmful traditional practices. The exploitation of children for economic and sexual purposes remained a problem. Societal discrimination against persons with disabilities was a problem. Discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities continued. Child labor, particularly in the informal sector, continued to be a problem. Forced labor, including forced child labor, also was a problem, and there were reports of trafficking in persons.

The Government's Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO) continued to conduct the trials of persons accused of committing crimes under the Marxist regime (1974-91) of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. Charges have been brought against 5,198 persons. Some of the accused persons were indicted and arraigned, and the testimony of victims continued to be heard in open court. However, more than half of those accused are not in custody and were charged in absentia. Most SPO detainees have been held in custody for 7 or 8 years awaiting trial and judgment.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

The security forces committed a number of extrajudicial killings, including some alleged political killings during the year.

According to the Chairman of the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition (SEPDC), government forces killed at least 11 supporters of the SEPDC in the period leading up to the December elections. For example, in March in Kacha Bira, police from the zonal capital of Dorame reportedly killed for supporting the SEPDC Ermias Abuye, a farmer, while he was plowing his fields. Police reportedly initially refused to investigate the case despite a request from the farmer's family, and the responsible officer continued to work in the Dorame police station at year's end (see Section 3). However, the investigation into the case was pending at year's end. SEPDC officials also reported that rapid deployment forces of the federal and regional police killed two supporters during a January meeting organized by the Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (CAFPDE) in Siraro Woreda, Eastern Shoa zone, Oromia regional state. Authorities detained 13 SEPDC supporters (see Section 1.d.). No action was taken against the responsible police officers by year's end. In April in Badoacho in the Shone Woreda, the army killed four SEPDC members while they were searching for a particular SEPDC activist; no action was taken against the army by year's end (see Section 1.c.). There also were numerous unconfirmed reports of extrajudicial killings by government security forces from Oromiya and the Somali region.

On January 19 in Harar, armed forces reportedly shot and killed five persons during riots between Christian and Muslims (see Sections 1.d. and 5). No action was taken against the responsible military personnel by year's end.

Security forces killed and injured numerous persons while forcibly dispersing several demonstrations during the year (see Sections 1.c., 1.d., and 2.b.). On April 12, police forcibly dispersed a demonstration by students from Addis Ababa University (AAU); one female student was killed, and 50 persons were hospitalized for injuries (see Sections 1.c. and 2.b.). The demonstrations continued, and on April 17, police shot into a crowd of demonstrators after the demonstrations became violent (see Sections 1.c. and 2.b.). The official reports indicated that at least 31 persons were killed; however, there were credible reports that the actual numbers were significantly higher. No action was taken against the police by year's end. In April the body of an Oromo Mekelle University student was discovered on a riverbank outside the city 1 day after the student participated in a peaceful protest against the use of force by police at AAU. The perpetrators remained unknown, and there was no reported investigation into the case at year's end.

There were some deaths in prison during the year due to illness and disease; however, no statistics on the number of deaths in prison were available at year's end (see Section 1.c.). In July the All Amhara People's Organization (AAPO) filed a writ of habeas corpus on behalf of one opposition party member who was detained following the AAU student demonstrations in April (see Sections 1.d. and 2.b.). The police informed the AAPO at the habeas corpus hearing that the detainee was undergoing medical treatment and could not appear in court. However, on July 11, the police informed the AAPO that the detainee had died on June 13 as

a result of tuberculosis. His illness could not be confirmed because his family never received his medical charts indicating the treatment provided (see Section 1.c.). The authorities did not return the body to the family, and at year's end, it was unknown where the body was buried. No further investigation or action was taken in the case by year's end.

There were press reports that Ethiopian troops in Somalia killed some civilians during the year; however, the Government continued to deny the presence of troops in Somalia. In 2000 Ethiopian soldiers attacked Haji Salah village in Somaliland, killed two persons, and confiscated radio equipment. Somaliland President Egal wrote a letter to the Ethiopian Government and asked for an explanation for the attack. No further information was available at year's end.

During the year, landmines and unexploded ordnance remaining from the civil war exploded, killing several persons in several regions, primarily children. In 2000 it was reported in the border area and Tigray that 54 civilians were killed and 105 were injured by landmines; 72 percent of these deaths and injuries involved persons who were 18 years old or younger (see Section 1.c.). No statistics were available for the year. In March two children, ages 12 and 13, reportedly were killed after a hand grenade they found in the western part of the country exploded (see Section 5). During the fighting with Eritrea in previous years, the Ethiopian army reportedly laid large numbers of landmines in the Eritrean territories that it occupied. During the year, there continued to be reports of an unknown number of casualties from landmines and unexploded ordnance in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) in Eritrea and along former trench-lines in the border area.

An investigation was ongoing at year's end into the May 2000 case in which security forces killed two women while they were voting, allegedly because they refused to mark their ballots for an EPRDF candidate.

No action was known to have been taken against members of the security forces responsible for the following 2000 killings: The December beating to death of a man detained allegedly in retaliation for election activities; the December killing of a student during a demonstration in Awassa; the May killing of seven SEDPC supporters; the April killing of a student during a student demonstration in Dembi Dollo; the March killing of a student who was attempting to assist another person being arrested for the non-payment of taxes in Ambo; the March killing of Getu Driba in Ambo; and the February torturing and killing of two farmers in Soro.

In 1999 student protests against the arrest of two teachers who criticized new textbooks in the Welayita speaking sections of the SNNPRS led to widespread demonstrations and riots (see Sections 1.d. and 5). Special police units called in to suppress the riot killed up to 10 persons and injured hundreds of others. The Government conducted an investigation into the incident but had not released a report by year's end. No action was known to have been taken against members of the special police units responsible for killing approximately 10 persons while forcibly dispersing a demonstration in November 1999 in Soro in the Southern Region. No further action was taken by year's end against the undercover security officer arrested for shooting and killing a youth attending the funeral of AAPO founder Asrat Woldeyes in June 1999.

Preelection and postelection violence resulted in some deaths (see Section 3). According to figures from the SEPDC leadership in the Hadiya zone, by year's end, security forces killed 11 SEPDC members because of their affiliation with the opposition (see Sections 1.c., 1.d., and 3). On election day in May 2000, an EPRDF member threw a grenade into the home of an opposition party election observer; three persons were killed, including the observer. In 2000 in the Somali region, nine persons, including five election observers, one opposition candidate, and three other passengers were killed when the cars in which they were riding were struck by either rockets or landmines. The identity of the perpetrators remained unknown at year's end.

In 1997 the Federal High Court in Addis Ababa began the arraignment and prosecution of 5,198 persons formally charged with genocide and other war crimes, including extrajudicial killings, under the previous regime (see Section 1.e.). Of the 5,198 persons charged, 2,246 were detained, while the remaining 2,952 were charged in absentia. Between July 2000 and July, the Federal High Court delivered final judgements on 806 defendants, convicting 478 and acquitting 328. During the year, both the federal and regional courts adjudicated more genocide cases, and judges acquitted defendants when the Office of the Special Prosecutor (SPO) did not produce evidence against them. At year's end, witnesses still were being heard and evidence taken in the ongoing trials. During the year, the Government acquitted and released a number of prisoners for lack of evidence. In 1999 the Federal High Court handed down a death sentence in absentia to Getachew Tekeba, a former district governor and army lieutenant. Tekeba was convicted of ordering the detention, torture, and execution of five alleged opponents of the Mengistu Government. Tekeba's whereabouts remained unknown at year's end.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no known reports that the Government continued to provide financial support to a coalition of Eritrean opposition groups based in Sudan, which were reported to have laid landmines in Eritrea that resulted in several civilian deaths.

The OLF and the ONLF regularly used landmines, which resulted in numerous civilian deaths and injuries (see Section 1.c.). During the year, police detained several persons suspected to be responsible for laying landmines that allegedly derailed a freight train near Nazareth in 2000; two persons were killed and several were injured. Observers believe the landmines were laid by the OLF; police arrested and detained five alleged perpetrators during the year. There was no further information available on the case at year's end.

Ethnic clashes during the year resulted in a number of deaths (see Section 5). There were continued tensions between the Oromo Borena community and ethnic-Somali Garre pastoralists in the south, which resulted in at least 60 deaths and 200 injuries by year's end. Fighting between former drought victims from the Amhara region, who had been resettled in the East Wellega zone of the Oromia region, and Oromos in the Gida Kiremu district resulted in the death of one Oromo policeman and several Amharas (see Section 5). Press reports

indicated that there were hundreds of deaths throughout the year; however, the total number remained unknown at year's end.

Banditry remained a serious problem in parts of the country. Bandits, often heavily armed, killed civilians during robberies and attempted robberies. Most evidence suggests that their motives primarily were economic.

b. Disappearance

There were no confirmed reports of disappearances perpetrated by the Government, and unlike in the previous year, there were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

In 1997 the federal High Court in Addis Ababa began the arraignment and prosecution of 5,198 persons charged with genocide and other war crimes under the previous regime, including the disappearance of 14,209 persons (see Section 1.a.).

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading

Treatment or Punishment

The Constitution prohibits the use of torture and mistreatment; however, there were credible reports that security officials sometimes beat or mistreated detainees. Government media published occasional reports of officials who were detained or dismissed for abuse of authority and violations of human rights. There were credible reports that the military harassed SEPDC supporters (see Sections 1.a., 1.d., and 3).

Preelection and postelection violence resulted in some injuries and deaths (See Sections 1.a. and 3). In May in Soro, police beat Selfamo Kintamo, an elderly supporter of the SEPDC and the uncle of a SEPDC parliamentarian, reportedly because of his support of the SEPDC. On April 5, four SEPDC members were injured during clashes between the army and the SEPDC in Badoacho in the Shone Woreda (see Section 1.a.). In Badoacho police beat Ayele Amore, an SEPDC supporter. No action was taken against the police or the army for any of these cases by year's end.

There were credible reports that members of the military raped several women. In June members of the military raped two girls, ages 16 and 17, when they took food to family members who were detained in Hosana. In July security forces reportedly raped a woman from Soro while she was in temporary detention, allegedly for her husband's involvement with SEPDC, after her husband fled the area (see Section 1.d.). No further action was taken in the case by year's end.

Security forces killed and injured numerous persons while forcibly dispersing several demonstrations during the year (see Sections 1.a., 1.d., and 2.b.). For example, during demonstrations at AAU in April, there were several credible reports that police indiscriminately beat numerous persons and shot into a crowd of students; at least 253 persons were injured, although some reports estimated that the number was higher (see Sections 1.a., 1.d., 1.e., and 2.b.). There were several reports that students and opposition party members detained after the April demonstrations were beaten while in detention (see Section 1.d.). There also were credible reports that police beat a group of mothers who were attempting to visit their children detained at Sendafa, a police college that was used as a temporary detention center, following the demonstrations (see Section 1.d.). During the AAU demonstrations, police reportedly beat women and young children in their homes after the officers had entered them forcibly (see Section 1.f.). No further information was available on the reports by year's end.

In January in Harar, more than 20 persons were injured when the army was called in to restore order after a riot broke out between Muslims and Christians (see Sections 1.d. and 5).

There was no known action taken against members of the security forces responsible for torturing, beating, or abusing the persons in the following 2000 cases: The December beating to death of a man in detention; the March injuring of students during a demonstration; and the beating of a man who was detained allegedly in retaliation for election activities.

In 1999 student protests against the arrest of two teachers who criticized new textbooks in the Welayita speaking sections of the SNNPRS led to widespread demonstrations and riots. Special police units called in to suppress the riot injured hundreds of the demonstrators and killed up to 10 persons (see Sections 1.a. and 1.d.). The results of a government investigation into the incident were not released by year's end.

There continued to be reports during the year of persons killed or injured by landmines and unexploded ordnance laid by government forces, the government-supported coalition of Eritrean opposition groups based in Sudan, Eritrean forces, the OLF, the ONLF, and other groups during armed conflicts in previous years (see Section 1.a.). In 2000 in the border area and Tigray, 105 civilians reportedly were injured by landmines; 72 percent of persons killed or injured were 18 years old or younger (see Section 1.a.).

Ethnic clashes throughout the year resulted in numerous injuries and deaths (see Sections 1.a. and 5).

Prison conditions are poor, and overcrowding remains a serious problem. Prisoners often are allocated fewer than 21.5 square feet of sleeping space in a room that may contain up to 200 persons. Prison food is

inadequate, and many prisoners have food delivered to them every day by family members or use their own funds to purchase food from local vendors. Prison conditions are unsanitary, and access to medical care is not reliable. There were some deaths in prison during the year due to illness and disease (see Section 1.a.). Prisoners typically are permitted daily access to prison yards, which often include working farms, mechanical shops, and rudimentary libraries. Visitors generally are permitted; however, some family members were not permitted to visit relatives detained at Zeway prison following the April AAU demonstrations (see Sections 1.d., 2.b., and 6.c.). Prison letters all must be written in Amharic, making outside contact difficult for non-Amharic speakers; however, this restriction generally is not enforced. Female prisoners are housed separately from men; however, juveniles sometimes are incarcerated with adults (see Section 5). Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that prison guards raped female prisoners. In September 2000, the prison guard arrested for raping a female prisoner in 2000 was convicted and sentenced to 13 years in prison during the year. Pretrial detainees often are detained separately from convicted prisoners at local police stations or in the limited Central Investigation Division (CID) detention facility in Addis Ababa, until they are charged. By year's end, there were 75 detainees at CID. The law requires that prisoners be transferred to federal prisons upon conviction; however, it was believed that this requirement sometimes was not complied with in practice.

Approximately 2,000 Eritrean soldiers were captured as a result of fighting in 2000. These POW's were interned in camps in Tigray region, in addition to those captured during earlier combat and imprisoned in an internment camp at Dedesa in western Oromiya. The Dedesa camp is in an area less prone to malaria. Conditions in the camp are spartan, but there are adequate housing, food, water, and sanitation facilities. In 2000 the Government repatriated 359 severely injured or ill POW's to Eritrea; 879 POW's were repatriated during the year. Approximately 1,800 POW's remained in detention at year's end despite the December 2000 peace agreement with Eritrea that called for the rapid exchange of POW's.

The Government permits independent monitoring of prisons and police stations by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and by diplomatic missions. The ICRC generally had access to federal and regional prisons, civilian detention facilities, and police stations throughout the country during the year. In addition to visiting the CID detention facility, which held 75 persons whose cases were under investigation at year's end, the ICRC was permitted to regularly visit all of the 29 police stations in Addis Ababa during the year. Unlike in the previous year, the ICRC did not have access to the Tatek military detention facility in the east nor did the ICRC receive government permission to visit any other military detention facilities where suspected OLF fighters were held. The Government generally permitted the ICRC access to detention facilities holding Eritrean POW's, including the main camp at Dedesa. The ICRC also regularly visited civilian Eritrean nationals and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin detained on national security grounds. The ICRC also was permitted access to Zeway Prison, Showa Robit Prison, and other detention facilities where several thousand persons were being held in connection with the student riots in April (see Section 1.d.); however, diplomats were not permitted access either to Showa Robit or the other facilities.

Government authorities continued to permit diplomats to visit prominent detainees held by the SPO for alleged involvement in war crimes and terrorist activities. These detainees include former housing ministry official and governor of Sidamo under Mengistu Abera Yemane-Ab, 1968 Olympic marathon winner Mamo Wolde, and former AAU president Alemayehu Tefera. Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA) president Taye Woldeamayyat also is permitted visitors from the diplomatic community (see Section 1.d.). Unlike in the previous year, delegations from Education International, an NGO, were permitted to visit Woldeamayyat.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The Constitution and both the criminal and civil codes prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention; however, the Government does not always respect these rights in practice. Under the criminal procedure code, any person detained must be charged and informed of the charges within 48 hours and, in most cases, be offered release on bail. The Constitution provides that arrested persons have the right to be released on bail; however, some offenses, such as murder, treason, and corruption, are not bailable. In most cases, bail is set between approximately \$120 (1,000 birr) and approximately \$1,200 (10,000 birr). Those persons believed to have committed serious offenses may be detained for 14 days while police conduct an investigation, if a panel of judges orders it, and for additional 14-day periods while the investigation continues. In practice and especially in the outlying regions, authorities regularly detain persons without a warrant, do not charge them within 48 hours, and—if persons are released on bail—never recall them to court. There were reports that in small towns, persons were detained in police stations for long periods without access to a judge and that sometimes these persons' whereabouts were unknown for several months. Thousands of criminal suspects remained in detention without charge; many of the detainees were accused of involvement in OLF terrorist activities or arrested after the April student demonstrations. Often these lengthy detentions are due to the severe shortage and limited training of judges, prosecutors, and attorneys; however, detainees often remain in custody without charge or without bail for long periods of time in high profile cases that are considered to be somewhat political, including those detained for corruption or detainees who are opposition members. Such cases have been remanded at least 10 to 15 times, for 2 weeks each time, and courts allow police to conduct investigations that continue for months. In addition judges have been shifted among cases, judges fail to show up for hearings, or new judges are not reassigned upon the death or incapacity of assigned judges in time for hearing dates. Detention conditions were poor.

Federal and regional authorities arrested and detained persons without charge or trial for activities allegedly in support of armed opposition groups.

Following a riot between Christians and Muslims on January 19, authorities arrested and detained 194 persons and charged them with mob activity resulting in the destruction of property, inflicting bodily harm, and disturbing the peace; all of the detainees reportedly were released by September, and there were no pending charges at year's end (see Section 5).

There were credible reports that local authorities in the Oromiya, Amhara, and the Southern Region periodically arrested and detained supporters of opposition parties in the period prior to and following the 2000 national and February, March, and December regional elections (see Section 3). Although many were arrested during the first half of the year, regional prosecutors did not file charges against them until November. There also were credible reports that access to a court hearing and reasonable bail was denied routinely to members of opposition parties, particularly in the Southern Region (see Section 1.e.). According to figures from the SEPDC, police arrested approximately 1,000 opposition members (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., and 3). According to reports from the SEPDC leadership in the Hadiya zone where 666 members were arrested, all of their members were charged with the same four counts: Incitement against the government; incitement not to pay taxes and fertilizer loans; cutting government-owned forest; and illegal use of grazing lands. Most of those detained were not presented with a warrant at the time of arrest; however, many detainees who later were released were provided with a list of charges at that time. Some detainees were granted but could not post bail because it was set at a high amount, and some detainees were required to find a guarantor who also was a homeowner. Most of those detained during the year were released on bail by year's end; however, detainees who were in detention on capital charges or who were unable to afford bail remained in detention at year's end. According to SEPDC leaders, 104 members remained in zonal prisons in Hosana and Durame at year's end; government officials reported a lower number.

Police arrested and charged with illegal assembly numerous persons at several SEPDC meetings during the year (see Section 2.b.). In the months immediately before the regional elections, authorities harassed and detained supporters of parties belonging to the SEPDC opposition coalition. Prior to the December regional elections, negotiations between the National Election Board (NEB) and officials in the Hadiya and Kebatta-Alaba-Tamboro zones resulted in the November release of more than 150 SEPDC supporters.

Two representatives of the SEPDC in the Regional Council were arrested without having their parliamentary immunity formally removed; parliamentary immunity protects members of the House from arrest or prosecution except in the act of committing a crime ("flagrante delicto."). The two representatives reportedly were charged with the killing of a police officer and one other person. Another parliamentarian also was charged separately in connection with the killing of the police officer; however, his immunity reportedly was removed. The two representatives remained in detention, and there was no official action by the Regional Council to remove their immunity by year's end.

In July a woman from Soro was raped while she was in detention in an abandoned home that had become a temporary detention center run by the military (see Section 1.c.). The woman claimed that she was detained for her husband's SEPDC involvement (see Section 3). The woman's husband reportedly fled the area after members of the military began searching for him to question him about his SEPDC involvement. Members of the military reportedly also detained the woman's brothers; when she went to the detention facility to request their release, the officers reportedly detained the woman and her child and released her brothers. She reportedly remained in detention for approximately 1 month before she was released.

Following the April AAU demonstrations, security forces arrested and detained approximately 5,000 persons (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., 1.f., and 2.b.). During the demonstrations, security forces arrested AAU students and other demonstrators and looters; security forces also arrested students who had taken refuge in churches and mosques throughout the city. In the days following the riots, security forces, often in plainclothes, arbitrarily arrested youth throughout the city. There were credible claims that street children were detained in Addis Ababa at night, and then left at unknown locations outside the city limits. All of the arrests were made without warrants, and no formal charges were filed nor were detainees brought before the court within 48 hours as required by law.

The majority of those detained after the riots were taken to the Sendafa police training facility or the Tatek military camp; however, the Government did not release information about the whereabouts and identities of many detainees for several months. Detainees who were released a few months after the arrests reported that detainees at Sendafa and the Showa Robit Prison were subjected to extreme overcrowding, very limited food, and lengthy interrogations upon arrival (see Section 1.c.). Alleged punishment also included forced strenuous physical activity. For example, detainees reportedly were forced to jog around the camp for several hours and run barefoot on gravel; detainees who lagged behind were beaten. The Government did not permit access to students detained at Sendafa in the days following the riots. Police held detained persons incommunicado and refused to give information to the families of detainees who tried to determine the location of their relatives. There were credible reports that many detainees who were held temporarily in police stations and detention centers in and around Addis Ababa subsequently were moved to the Showa Robit Prison, northeast of Addis Ababa and Zeway Prison to the south (see Sections 1.c. and 6.c.). Detainees often must rely upon family assistance; however, the distance from Showa Robit to Addis Ababa made access by family members difficult. Many family members who were able to travel to Showa Robit were not allowed to visit their relatives.

On April 26, approximately 1,200 students were released from custody. At year's end, no charges were pending against those who were released; however, there were reports that detainees were fingerprinted and required to sign statements that admitted to participation in an illegal act. On July 4, the Addis Ababa Police Commission released 107 detainees from detention centers in Addis Ababa, and Kewet Woreda court near Showa Robit released 150 detainees; most of those released had no formal charges pending against them. At year's end, approximately 230 persons remained in detention in connection with the riots reportedly because they were unable to pay the bail amount (see Section 5). Those detainees who were released on bail were charged with disturbing the peace, inciting violence, and looting. There were no statistics available on the number of cases that remained pending from the original 5,000 at year's end. Due to the distance from Addis Ababa to the Kewet Woreda Court, at year's end, the Government announced that pending cases would be transferred from the Kewet Court to the Federal First Instance Court in Addis Ababa.

The authorities also arrested 162 members of opposition parties in connection with the April riots; all of the detainees were released by year's end. On April 19, authorities arrested and detained four members of the EDP; on June 7, they were released on bail by a federal court in Abbis Ababa on habeas corpus grounds. On June 19, after the jurisdiction of these cases was shifted to the Kewet Woreda near Showa Robit, the four were detained again. On July 13, the four were released again on bail by the regional court. None of the EDP members remained in detention at year's end.

On May 8, authorities arrested Berhanu Nega and Mesfin Woldemariam, two prominent academics and human rights activists; 3 weeks later, they were charged with inciting the AAU students to riot during an April 8 panel discussion on human rights and academic freedom that was organized by the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) and with organizing a clandestine political party, the Ethiopian Democratic League (EDL). On June 5, they were granted bail and released; the case was remanded again and their next hearing was rescheduled for April 2002 (see Sections 1.f., 2.b., and 4).

On May 24, the Government established the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, which was vested with the authority to release corruption suspects on bail. Between May 24 and June 12, 24 businessmen and government officials were arrested in connection with the anti-corruption campaign, including former Minister of Defense Seye Abraha and Bitew Belay, Minister in charge of Regional Affairs. On June 12, the Government announced that Parliament passed an amendment to the Anti-Corruption Special Procedures and Rules of Evidence, which revoked the right to bail for persons suspected of corruption; the denial of bail was applied retroactively to those already in detention. Both the Federal First Instance Court and the Supreme Court remanded the corruption cases for a series of successive 14-day periods after the police requested more time for investigation. In October 12 suspects were charged with several counts of corruption. In December the court requested that the prosecution provide the court with a detailed justification of the charges. None of the detainees were charged formally by year's end (see Section 1.e.). After attorneys representing the detainees complained to the court about the conditions of detention in the CID temporary holding facility, several detainees were moved to the federal prison in Addis Ababa where they were given access to some services, including medical care (see Section 1.c.).

In August authorities arrested the Eritrean official driver of the Eritrean Embassy. He remained in detention at year's end; however, no further information on his case was available.

A total of 12 journalists were detained during the year, and 3 journalists remained in detention at year's end (see Sections 2.a. and 2.c.). During the year, 14 journalists were released, including 8 who were released on bail, with charges against them pending at year's end. The other six were released after serving all or part of their sentences; no charges were pending against them at year's end.

In response to attacks by armed opposition groups operating out of Somalia and Kenya (see Sections 1.a. and 1.c.), the military has conducted operations in and around the areas bordering Somalia and Kenya. These operations have resulted in the capture and detention of hundreds of opposition fighters and their suspected supporters on both sides of these borders. The vast majority of these incidents took place in the Oromiya and Somali regional states. Several thousand persons allegedly associated with armed opposition groups remained in detention at year's end. Most detainees were accused of participating in armed actions by the OLF or the ONLF. In typical cases, security forces arrested and held these persons incommunicado for several days or weeks before eventually releasing them.

In October authorities arrested Moga Frissa, vice president of the Macha-Tulema Self Help Association, an Oromo civic organization, and Aberra Aguma, another member of the organization, for suspected involvement with the OLF. In November Frissa was released on bail and charged with subversion and aligning with and supporting a terrorist organization. Frissa was arrested in 2000 on similar charges and was released after 1 month in detention after a judge rejected the charges for lack of evidence.

In December 2000, ethnic tensions between Oromo and Tigrayan students at AAU led to some fighting and vandalism, and authorities arrested some Oromo students. The Oromo students claim that the arrests were out of proportion to their involvement in the fighting. All of the detained students were released by year's end.

Numerous SEPDC supporters whom authorities in the Southern Region detained in retaliation for voting for the opposition in the 2000 national elections, and some SEPDC candidates for office remained in detention at year's end. At year's end, 104 remained in detention, including potential candidates for local elections and two regional parliamentarians (see Section 3).

In 1999 the Government arrested 26 Nuer tribal political activists associated with the Gambella People's Democratic Congress (GPDC); all of the detainees were released by year's end (see Sections 3 and 5). Some of the activists were arrested for inciting Nuer students to demonstrate for the use of the Nuer language in school, while others were arrested on suspicion of supporting the OLF.

Approximately 50 elders, teachers, and civil servants remained in detention pending trials at year's end; they were charged with subversion following the 1999 student demonstrations against the arrests of two teachers in the SNNPRS (see Section 5). Bail was set for the detainees from between \$6,060 and \$12,121 (50,000 and 100,000 birr); however, none of the detainees was able to post bail by year's end.

In July several detainees at the Gondar Prison complained to officials that they were detained without charge, some for 2 to 5 years, while the police investigated their cases.

Federal prosecutors from the Oromiya region announced that 600 criminal detainees were not charged, pending ongoing investigations; the majority of the 1,200 detainees in Oromiya who were charged formally have been in detention since 1999. No further information was available on the detentions by year's end.

In 1999 ETA president Taye Woldesemayat was convicted of treason and alleged involvement in an underground terrorist organization and sentenced to 15 years in jail (see Section 6.a.). In handing down the sentence, the court referenced two alleged terrorist acts that had been dropped from the list of charges against Woldesemayat during the trial. Woldesemayat's attorney appealed the conviction. One of three Supreme Court judges hearing the appeal did not appear for the July court date, and Woldesemayat's appeal was rescheduled again for October and December. At year's end, the appeal was rescheduled for March 2002. Woldesemayat was held separately from other prisoners, and although diplomats continued to visit Woldesemayat in prison during the year, he was not permitted to confer with his attorney without prison guards present (see Section 1.c.).

The closed trial of 65 Oromos suspected of involvement in OLF terrorist acts and arrested in 1997 and indicted in 1998 continued. In May, 28 of the defendants, including 8 members of the Human Rights League (HRL), were released without charges due to insufficient evidence; charges against the remaining 37 defendants were pending at year's end (see Section 2.b.).

In 1997 the SPO formally charged 128 defendants with politically motivated genocide dating back to the 1976 "Red Terror" (see Section 1.e.). The SPO has the authority to arrest and interrogate any person suspected of involvement in the Red Terror Campaign under Mengistu. In 1998 the SPO began presenting prosecution testimony in the case of former AAU president Alemeyehu Tefera, imprisoned since 1993, although the charges on which he originally had been detained were dropped the same year. His petition to separate his case from the 127 other defendants was denied (see Section 1.a.). The court also started hearing testimony in 1998 on the case of former Olympic marathon champion Mamo Wolde, who was charged with genocide for the state-sponsored killing of 14 teenagers during the prior regime. Wolde has been detained since 1992. Both trials were ongoing at year's end. During the year, the courts acquitted a number of SPO defendants (see Section 1.e.). Opposition groups allege that some of the persons detained by the SPO are held for political reasons. The Government denies that it holds persons for political reasons.

Some civilian residents of Eritrean origin have been detained since the outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Government justified these detentions on grounds of security. Approximately 200 civilian residents of Eritrean origin remained detained in the internment camps at Dedesa at year's end (see Sections 1.c. and 2.d.).

The ICRC participated in some repatriations to Eritrea; the ICRC had facilitated the repatriation of 2,892 Eritreans by year's end. In 1999, authorities began releasing Eritrean civilian detainees if they could obtain visas to a country other than Eritrea. Approximately 90 detainees left Ethiopia in 1999, mostly to other African countries, particularly Uganda and Malawi. However, following a violent confrontation in 2000 in Malawi between some former detainees and Malawi police, the Government reportedly decided not to permit detainees travel to other African countries (see Section 2.d.).

The ICRC repatriated 879 Eritrean POW's during the year; approximately 1,800 Eritrean POW's, captured in fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea, remained in detention at year's end. In September the Government stopped POW repatriations until it received information from Eritrea on a captured Ethiopian pilot; in October there was one exchange of POW's, but they did not resume otherwise by year's end.

Exile is illegal, and the Constitution provides that citizens shall not be deprived of their nationality against their will; however, during the 1998-2000 conflict with Eritrea in 1998, the Government detained and deported as many as 75,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin on national security grounds. Some of the deportees were voluntary returnees who had requested return to Eritrea; however, the vast majority were deported forcibly. Deportation orders originated from the SIRAA in Addis Ababa. The Government's actions raised serious issues of due process since there were no preliminary hearings to determine the merits of the deportations, no right to counsel was provided to detainees, and detainees only had a very circumscribed opportunity to register protests. In addition the issue of the nationality of Eritrean-origin Ethiopians has not been settled yet. Heads of households were taken without warning, detained, and often deported via overland routes within 48 hours. Remaining family members were given arbitrary deadlines to sell property and sometimes were subjected to departure taxes based on estimated annual income and unpaid balances on government bank loans. The Government stopped deporting forcibly Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin after it signed the cessation of hostilities agreement with Eritrea in June 2000. The ICRC repatriated 2,892 Eritreans or Ethiopians of Eritrean origin during the year. In 1999 all Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin over 18 years of age who had taken part in the 1993 referendum on Eritrean independence were required to register with the SIRAA and complete residence application forms. After registration applicants received identity cards and residence permits valid for 6 months. According to authorities, all Eritreans or Ethiopians of Eritrean descent were registered by year's end (see Section 2.d.).

A number of persons remained abroad in self-imposed exile, including 40 journalists.

There were reports that students fled to Kenya and Djibouti after the April riots at AAU (see Section 2.b.).

Another SEPDC representative whose parliamentary immunity was removed by the Regional Council in July remained in hiding in the country at year's end.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, the judiciary remained weak and overburdened. Although the federal and regional courts continued to show signs of judicial independence, in practice severe shortages of adequately trained personnel in many regions, as well as serious financial constraints, combined to deny many citizens the full protections provided for in the Constitution.

Consistent with the Constitution, the Government continued to decentralize and restructure the judiciary along federal lines with the establishment of courts at the district, zonal, and regional levels. The federal High Court and federal Supreme Court hear and adjudicate original and appeal cases involving federal law, transregional issues, and national security. The regional judiciary is increasingly autonomous, with district (woreda), zonal, high, and supreme courts mirroring the structure of the federal judiciary. In 2000 the president of the federal High Court created two new three-judge benches at the High Court level to handle criminal cases. The Special Prosecutor's Office has delegated some of the war crimes trials to the supreme courts in the regions where the crimes allegedly were committed, which has increased the efficiency of the process.

The Constitution provides legal standing to some preexisting religious and customary courts and gives federal and regional legislatures the authority to recognize other courts. By law all parties to a dispute must agree before a customary or religious court may hear a case. Shari'a (Islamic) courts may hear religious and family cases involving Muslims. In addition other traditional courts still function. Although not sanctioned by law, these courts resolve disputes for the majority of citizens who live in rural areas and who generally have little access to formal judicial systems.

The outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea adversely impacted the military justice system. Most foreign assistance to train officers and noncommissioned officers was suspended at the same time that the rapid expansion of the military greatly increased the need for trained military lawyers and judges; this suspension in assistance continued during the year.

Regional offices of the federal Ministry of Justice monitor local judicial developments, and the regional courts have jurisdiction over both local and federal matters, but the federal judicial presence in the regions is limited nevertheless. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some local officials believe they will no longer be held accountable to a higher authority. However, unlike in the previous year, local government officials in some areas did not ignore instructions from the NEB on the acceptance of candidate endorsement signatures from opposition party candidates (see Section 3).

To remedy the severe lack of experienced staff in the judicial system, the Government continued to identify and train lower court judges and prosecutors, although officials acknowledge that the pay scale offered does not attract the required numbers of competent professionals. Senior government officials charged with judicial oversight estimate that the creation of a truly independent and skilled judicial apparatus would take decades. The Government has welcomed foreign financial and technical assistance to accelerate this process. Pending the passage by regional legislatures of laws particular to their region, all judges are guided by the federal procedural and substantive codes.

According to the Constitution, accused persons have the right to a public trial by an ordinary court of law within a reasonable time after having been charged. Accused persons have the right to be represented by legal counsel of their choice. However, in practice, lengthy pretrial detention was common, closed proceedings occurred, and at times, detainees were allowed little or no contact with their legal counsel. The public defender's office provides legal counsel to indigent defendants, although its scope remains severely limited, especially with respect to SPO trials. The law does not allow the defense access to prosecutorial evidence before the trial.

The Constitution provides that persons arrested have the right to be released on bail (see Section 1.d.). Certain offenses such as capital crimes and corruption are not bailable.

Authorities detained hundreds of persons without charge for supposed involvement with the OLF and the ONLF (see Section 1.d.). Such cases often reflect arbitrary actions on the part of local officials but also result from an overburdened and cumbersome judicial system marked by a shortage of trained and competent prosecutors and judges.

The SPO was established in 1992 to create an historical record of the abuses committed during the Mengistu Government and to bring to justice those criminally responsible for human rights violations (see Sections 1.a. and 1.c.). The SPO has the authority to arrest and interrogate anyone suspected of involvement in the Red Terror Campaign under Mengistu. The federal High Court has considered the cases of 2,658 defendants accused of genocide, war crimes, and aggravated homicide. Trials began in 1994 and continued during the year; however, the process is subject to frequent and lengthy adjournments. Court appointed attorneys, sometimes with inadequate skills and experience, represent many of the defendants, following claims that they could not afford an adequate defense. Of the 5,198 defendants, the Government is trying 2,952 in absentia, including former dictator Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, who remained in exile in Zimbabwe. Cases continued to be handled more quickly than in previous years; however, most cases still were in progress at year's end. Between July 2000 and July, several SPO defendants were released on bail, and 328 were acquitted. During the same period, 478 defendants were convicted, with sentences ranging from death to release for time already served. During the year, the SPO opened a new case against persons accused of participating in the 1987 Hawzein Massacre; the majority of those named in the file have been charged already with other offenses (see Sections 1.a. and 1.c.). There was no further action taken on the case by year's end.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home or

Correspondence

The law requires judicial search warrants; however, they seldom are obtained outside of Addis Ababa in practice.

In May federal police closed the offices of EHRCO for several days while they searched for evidence related to the arrest of Mesfin Woldemariam, the founder and first chairman of EHRCO, and Berhanu Nega (see Section 1.d.). A court search order allowed police to search all documents in the EHRCO offices dating back to 1999; however, EHRCO appealed that order. The court issued a second order, which limited the search to cassettes, computer disks, and leaflets that allegedly were used during the panel discussion on April 8. According to EHRCO, police also confiscated other unrelated documents in violation of the revised court order (see Sections 2.a. and 4).

During the April riots in Addis Ababa, there were unconfirmed reports that police officers forcibly entered the homes of civilians residing in the area (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., 1.d., and 5). There also were credible claims that security forces took persons from their homes in the middle of the night without warrants (see Section 1.d.).

According to a few NGO's, the Government had conscripted forcibly young men from eastern and southern states; however, repeated investigations by other international observers found no evidence to support these claims. Ethiopia maintains an all-volunteer military.

There were credible but unconfirmed reports that in certain rural areas local officials used threats of land redistribution and withholding of food aid and fertilizer to enforce support for the ruling coalition (see Section 3). There also were credible reports that teachers and other government workers have had their employment terminated if they were not of the dominant ethnic group in their region (see Section 5). According to the SEPDC, some SEPDC supporters were suspended or dismissed from their jobs in retaliation for voting for the opposition in the 2000 elections (see Section 3).

During the conflict with Eritrea, Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin lost their jobs, business licenses, and access to government services including health care facilities, and many were deported without due process (see Sections 1.d. and 2.d.). Individuals often were taken without warning and at night, separated from their families, detained, and deported via overland routes within 48 hours. Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that remaining family members were given arbitrary deadlines to sell property and sometimes were subjected to departure taxes based on estimated annual income and unpaid balances on government bank loans; however, there may be local harassment of such persons (see Section 1.d.).

Security forces on occasion detained the family members of persons they were looking for when those persons were missing (see Section 1.d.).

Unlike in the previous year, Ethiopian forces did not loot or cause extensive damage to Eritrean towns and villages.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for the freedom of speech and of the press; however, the Government used legal and other mechanisms to restrict these rights in practice. For example, the Government continued to prosecute journalists and editors for publishing articles that violated the law. Some journalists practiced self-censorship; however, the private press was active and often published articles extremely critical of the Government.

According to the Constitution, citizens generally are free to discuss publicly any topic they choose; however, on occasion the Government restricted this right in practice. The Government opposed the activities and operations of groups critical of the Government such as the ETA and the HRL (see Sections 2.b. and 4). During the year, several groups critical of the Government held press conferences and public meetings without retribution, and several opposition parties held press conferences that were covered by both the private and the government press.

During the year, two journalists were detained and charged with defamation after writing articles critical of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (see Section 2.c.).

The official media, including broadcast, wire service, and print media receive government subsidies; however, they legally are autonomous and responsible for their own management and partial revenue generation. Government reporters practice self-censorship. The Government's press and information department acts as an official spokesperson and manages contacts between the Government, the press, and the public. The office of the Government spokesperson and information sections of government ministries routinely refused to respond to queries from the private press and limited their cooperation with the press to the government-run Ethiopian News Agency, to the ruling party-run Walta news agency, and to correspondents of international

news organizations. Unlike in the previous year, the Government permitted private newspapers and news organizations to attend government briefings and press conferences, and some government officials provided information and granted interviews to private journalists.

There are approximately 28 private Amharic-language weekly newspapers, 1 independent Tigrigna-language weekly, 7 English-language weeklies, and 1 English-language daily. Circulation figures range from 2,000 to 20,000 copies each. In addition to the private press, there are 5 ruling party coalition papers, in Amharic, Oromifa, and Tigrigna that have a total circulation figure of 110,000. There are 2 government dailies, the English-language Ethiopian Herald (circulation 40,000) and the Amharic Addis Zemen (circulation 50,000), and a government Arabic-language weekly, Al-Alam (circulation 10,000). Three new weeklies began publication during the year: Wegahta, a Tigrigna-language paper allied with the Tigrayan opposition faction of the TPLF; Business Weekly, an English-language business paper; and Ze-Press, an Amharic weekly staffed by editors and reporters from the discontinued Amharic daily Eletawi Addis. In December Wegahta, which was highly critical of the ruling party and was alleged to be sympathetic to a splinter group of the TPLF, closed. Berhan Hailu, the editor of Wegahta, reportedly was harassed by security forces and called in for questioning at the CID several times during the year; she reportedly had left the country by year's end.

The majority of private papers as well as government papers are printed at government-owned presses. However, a few private papers have started using smaller private printing presses, one of which is owned by the publisher of the Daily Monitor. All EPRDF publications are printed at the party-run Mega Publishing Enterprise.

The Government used statutory provisions concerning publishing false information, inciting ethnic hatred, and libel to justify the arrest and detention of journalists (see Section 1.d.). During the year, 12 journalists were arrested, and 3 remained in detention at year's end. In May Tamret Zuma, the editor-in-chief of the closed Amharic weekly "Akturut," was detained and charged with defamation in connection with an article alleging mismanagement at a factory and inciting violence for a 1999 article in which a retired general predicted the imminent overthrow of the Government. He remained in detention because he was unable to post bail of \$1,300 (11,000 birr). On November 1, authorities summoned 14 journalists to the CID and informed them of charges against them. In late November, authorities detained two of the journalists, Tsegaye Ayelew, editor of Genanew, and Robel Mitiku, editor of Goh; they were released on bail and not charged by year's end. In July several editors of Amharic weeklies were detained briefly for false reporting of a rift between the Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister. A total of 14 journalists were released during the year. Of these, 8 detainees were released on bail and 6 were released after serving all or part of their sentences. Charges were dropped against five of the released detainees (see Section 1.d.).

In May and June, three journalists of the Oromo-oriented private weekly "Urjii," arrested in October and December 1997 along with 62 other ethnic Oromos indicted for involvement in OLF terrorist activities, were released, and charges against them were dropped (see Section 1.d.).

No further information was available on the following cases involving journalists at year's end: Zemedkur Mogus of the newspaper Atkurot; Melasse Shine of the newspaper Ethop; Solomon Nemera, deputy editor-in-chief of Urjii and Garoma Bekele, former Urjii publisher and president of the Human Rights League. Approximately 24 journalists had trials pending at year's end.

At year's end, 40 journalists remained abroad in self-imposed exile rather than face charges upon returning, including Dawit Kebede, editor-in-chief of the defunct Fiameta, who had 12 press charges pending in court and Israel Seboka, the editor-in-chief of Seife Nebelbal newspaper, and Samson Seyoum Kebede, the former editor of Goh. In 1999 Seyoum had been convicted on charges of incitement to war and attempting to spread Islamic fundamentalism; he was sentenced to 4 1/2 years' imprisonment but was released pending an appeal of his conviction. Six charges were pending against Seboka in court, and he had posted bail on two other charges; he remained in exile at year's end. On November 9, Yohannes Abebe, a journalist for Goh, reportedly fled to Kenya after he was told that there were six charges pending against him for violating the press law.

Despite the constant threat of legal action, the private press remained active and continued to publish articles critical of the Government and to report on human rights abuses. Many private newspapers continued to publish inaccurate information, unsubstantiated stories, and harsh antigovernment articles without any official sanction. The Government has not banned any newspaper or publication. Between June 7 and 12, the Government shut down the English-language Monitor, the only private daily newspaper in the country. The authorities shut down the newspaper and sealed the offices after the owner was arrested on corruption charges in June. Newspapers critical of government leaders and their policies are available widely in the capital but scarce elsewhere, although circulation in the regional capitals increased during the year.

While much of the private press continues to lack professionalism in its reporting, some print media are developing into more responsible publications. Others actually are opposition newsletters that often purvey unsubstantiated criticism of the Government. Several are tied to distinct ethnic groups, especially the Amharas and Oromos, and severely criticize the Government for being ethnocentric.

The Ministry of Information and Culture requires that newspapers show a bank balance of \$1,200 (10,000 birr) at the time of their annual registration for a license to publish. In previous years, papers have been shut down for failure to meet this requirement. Although the requirement has not been enforced strictly, the Ministry of Information and Culture has noted publicly that many papers are not in compliance and could be closed down on short notice.

During the April riots in Addis Ababa, security forces rounded up 90 newspaper vendors in various parts of the capital, stopping the dissemination of reporting that was critical of the Government's actions. However, within 1

week the vendors were allowed back on the streets, and the newspapers were back in circulation.

Radio remains the most influential medium for reaching citizens, especially those who live in rural areas. Although the law allows for private radio stations, regulations have not been implemented, and there are no truly independent radio stations. Two nongovernmental stations, Radio Fana, a station controlled by the ruling EPRDF coalition, and the TPLF radio, which broadcasts in the Tigrigna language from Mekele, have close ties to the Government. Broadcasting time on the state-run Radio Ethiopia is sold to private groups and to individuals who want to buy spots for programs and commercials. The Government operates the sole television station, and news is controlled tightly. The state-run ETV continued to broadcast "TV Africa," which is contracted from a South African company. There are no restrictions on access to international news broadcasts. Ownership of private satellite receiving dishes and the importation of facsimile machines and modems are permitted; however, access to this technology is limited by its cost.

In 1999 the Government issued a broadcast proclamation creating a broadcasting authority to review applications for private radio and television licenses; however, the authority had not been established by year's end. The broadcast proclamation prohibits political parties and religious organizations from owning stations; foreign ownership also is prohibited. Private entities that would like to be broadcasters continue to claim that the delay in implementing the broadcast law is deliberate.

Foreign journalists continued to operate freely and often wrote articles critical of government policies. They or their local affiliates were granted greater access to government officials than were local independent journalists. Several foreign news organizations maintain bureaus or offices in Addis Ababa; the majority of these are staffed with local journalists, and they usually operate free of government restriction. During the April riots in Addis Ababa, reporters from both British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America (VOA) reportedly suffered some government harassment. For example, during the riots in April, police officers confiscated the tape recorder of a BBC correspondent and a VOA employee (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., 1.d., and 2.b.).

The Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFPJA) continued to be active during the year. The Ethiopian Journalists Association (EJA), which includes only government and party journalists, was not active during the year.

The Ethiopian Women's Media Association (EWMA), which includes both government and private journalists, was active during the year; the EWMA organized training and workshops and printed a journal.

Internet access is provided through the government-controlled telecommunications company, which maintained a waiting list for new accounts. Internet service remained highly expensive, but a major technical upgrade in May made the service more reliable, and greatly expanded the number of available subscriptions. The Government issued further regulations for licensing private Internet service providers (ISP's); however, no private ISP's were operating at year's end. Private satellite transmission uplinks generally are not allowed. Internet services were planned in towns outside the capital city. Internet services were installed in eight cities outside the capital by year's end.

The Government generally respects academic freedom; however, political activity is discouraged on university campuses. In addition the Government requires that it appoint all deans and the presidents at all eight public universities. In May the country's first private university, Unity College, began offering a 2-year diploma course in journalism and communication.

On a few occasions, police killed and injured numerous persons while forcibly dispersing student demonstrations during the year (see Section 1.a., 1.c., 1.d., and 2.b.). In April AAU students boycotted classes to protest for several demands, including: The reinstatement of the student council; the right to have council representatives nominated by students; resumption of publication of the banned student newspaper; representation in the university senate; and participation in the nomination of the university president and the drafting of the university charter. Police forcibly dispersed the students' demonstration, and in the ensuing riots, numerous persons were killed, injured, arrested, or detained (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., 1.d., 1.f., and 2.b.). After the demonstrations, AAU students who wanted to register in order to complete the school term were required to complete a form in which they testified to involvement in "illegal student riots." Most students, with the exception of graduating seniors, refused to sign the form, and continued to boycott classes. In August the Government announced the creation of a committee to address the issue of registration for the fall term. That committee, along with the university senate, decided that all students, including those who had boycotted classes or who had not signed any forms admitting guilt, were eligible to reenroll in classes for the spring semester. Students opposed this compromise because it required students to forfeit 1 year of study and 1 year of school fees; however, most of the students were expected to return to class.

In 2000 SEPDC representatives alleged that some teachers in the Southern Region who served as SEPDC election observers in the 2000 elections were subject to retaliation by local authorities (see Section 3); teachers reported that they were not able to collect their salaries and that they were denied entry to summer update courses.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides for the right of peaceful assembly; however, on occasion the Government restricted this right in practice. Organizers of large public meetings or demonstrations must notify the Government in advance and obtain a permit. There were no reports that any permits were denied; however, there were long

unexplained delays in issuing permits and last minute revocations of permits, which hindered the ability of groups to organize events. EHRCO and some opposition political parties reported that they had difficulties renting halls from local government officials. Although organizers repeatedly attempted to get official approval, an EDP forum was cancelled the day before the event was scheduled to take place on August 25; it later was permitted to take place on November 3. The ETA was not permitted to organize seminars in certain regions, despite prior Ministry of Education assurances in 1998 that it would be allowed to do so.

Police arrested and charged with illegal assembly numerous persons at several small SEPDC meetings during the year; the meetings were not large enough to require a permit (see Section 1.d.). For example police arrested and charged with illegal assembly 14 SEPDC members and party officials from the zonal capital of Durame who were assembled for a party meeting in the town of Damboya in the KAT Zone; the SEPDC is registered in Durame and Damboya. The 14 members who were arrested, including the chairman of the party, were candidates for the regional elections. Some of those members who were arrested for illegal assembly were released on bail, with charges pending at year's end; others remained in detention pending trial at year's end (see Sections 1.d. and 3). SEDPC officials also reported that rapid deployment forces of the federal and regional police killed two supporters and arrested and detained 13 others during a January meeting organized by the Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (CAFPDE) in Siraro Woreda, Eastern Shoa zone, Oromia regional state; at year's end, 10 remained in custody on charges of inciting the public to violence and the killings of other CAFPD members.

On April 10, students began boycotting classes at AAU to protest for several demands for additional student participation in the university's administration (see Section 2.a.). On April 11, police forcibly dispersed a peaceful student demonstration on the AAU campus. Police beat students with batons and shot into a crowd of students, which resulted in one death and numerous injuries (see Sections 1.a. and 1.c.). The boycott and student demonstrations continued over the next several days, and students demanded that the federal police be removed from the campus. On April 16, after the Ministry of Education and student representatives failed to agree on the timing of the withdrawal of police from the campus, the Ministry gave students a deadline within which to return to classes or face permanent expulsion from the AAU (see Section 2.a.). On April 17, at least 20,000 university and high school students attended a rally to protest the Ministry's ultimatum. The demonstration then moved off campus, and other youth joined the demonstrations. There were credible reports that riot police attempted to disperse forcibly the protestors after some of them threw rocks at police. By April 18, rioting and looting had spread to other areas of the city; federal riot police shot at the protesters and looters. Police restored order on April 19; however, during the week of demonstrations, riots, and looting, official reports indicated that at least 31 persons were killed and 253 persons were injured, and several thousand students, opposition leaders, and other youth were arrested or detained (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., and 1.d.). Officials blamed opposition political party leaders and several well-known intellectuals for inciting the riots during a panel discussion on human rights at the AAU on April 8 (see Sections 1.d. and 1.f.). Several international journalists reportedly were harassed while covering the riots (see Section 2.a.).

No action was taken against the security forces responsible for killing or injuring persons while forcibly dispersing demonstrations in the following months of 2000: December in Awasa, April in Dembi Dolo, and March in Ambo.

Approximately 50 elders, teachers, and civil servants remained in detention pending trials at year's end; they were charged with subversion following the 1999 student demonstrations against the arrests of two teachers in the SNNPRS (see Section 5).

During the year, all Nuer tribal political activists and leaders associated with the GPDC on charges of inciting the Nuer students to demonstrate for the use of the Nuer language in schools in 1999 were released (see Section 5).

The Constitution provides for freedom of association and the right to engage in unrestricted peaceful political activity; however, the Government limited this right in practice. Although the NGO registration process has improved significantly, a number of policy issues regarding NGO's remained unresolved. Primary registration rests with the Ministry of Justice. In 2000 an inter-ministerial committee convened by the Ministry of Justice completed a draft of the revised NGO registration legislation without consulting NGO's; no further action was taken on the proposed legislation by year's end. In September the Ministry of Justice suspended the registration of the EWLA. The Ministry did not officially inform EWLA of the reasons for the closure (see Section 4). In October the Ministry lifted the suspension. Authorities closed the offices of the HRL in 1998, on the grounds that some HRL board members wished to use the organization as a front for the OLF. Board members denied any connection to the OLF. The HRL had been operating without a license; however, it had fulfilled the prerequisites for licensing and has been waiting 3 years to get a license (see Section 4). The Government investigation of the HRL was ongoing at year's end, and the contents of its office, confiscated by the Government in 1998, have not been returned. In May after more than 3 years in detention, eight members of HRL were acquitted of charges of terrorist activity and alleged ties to the OLF; they were released (see Section 1.d.).

The Government requires political parties to register with the NEB. Parties that do not participate in two consecutive national elections are subject to deregistration. Registered political parties also must receive permission from regional governments to open local offices. There are 58 organized political parties; 8 are national parties, and the remainder operate only in limited areas. The opposition party AAPPO complained that in 1999 the Oromiya region government refused its application to open branch offices in the region.

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice;

however, on occasion local authorities infringed on this right.

The Government requires that religious groups be registered. Religious institutions, like NGO's, are registered with the Ministry of Justice and must renew their registration every year. Unlike NGO's, religious groups are not subject to a rigorous registration process. Under current law, a religious organization that undertakes development activities must register its development wing separately as an NGO. Religious groups are not accorded duty-free status. Religious groups are given free government land for churches, schools, hospitals, and cemeteries; however, the title to the land remains with the Government, and the land, other than that used for prayer houses or cemeteries, can be taken back at any time. Unlike in previous years, Jehovah's Witnesses were allotted land by the Government outside of Addis Ababa; however, because there are no unoccupied lots available in Addis Ababa, Jehovah's Witnesses residing there lease land from private owners. Religious groups, like private individuals or businesses, must apply to regional and local governments for land allocation. An interfaith effort was underway during the year to promote revision of the law in order for religious organizations to obtain duty-free status.

Minority religious groups have complained of discrimination in the allocation of government land for religious sites. Protestant groups occasionally complain that local officials discriminate against them when seeking land for churches and cemeteries. Evangelical leaders have complained that because they are perceived as "newcomers" they remain at a disadvantage compared with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) and the Supreme Islamic Council when it comes to the allocation of land. The Supreme Islamic Council has complained that it has more difficulty obtaining land from the government bureaucracy than the EOC while others believe that it is favored for mosque locations. Jehovah's Witnesses have stated that due to the lack of good donated plots in the capital, they have purchased their own.

The Government does not issue work visas to foreign religious workers unless they are attached to the development wing of a religious organization.

Evangelical leaders have complained of strict regulations on the importation of Bibles, as well as heavy customs duty on Bibles and other religious articles; however, Bibles and religious articles are subject to the same customs duty as all imported books and most imported items.

Muslim leaders complained that public school authorities sometimes interfered with their free practice of Islam. Certain public school teachers in the SNNPR, Addis Ababa, and in the Amhara region objected to Muslim schoolgirls covering their heads with scarves while at school. Muslim leaders stated that in some schools, Muslim girls go without head coverings in order to avoid similar problems.

The Government has interpreted the constitutional provision for separation of religion and state to mean that religious instruction is not permitted in schools, whether they are public or private schools. Catholic, Orthodox, evangelical, and Muslim-owned and operated schools are not permitted to teach religion as a course of study. Most private schools teach morals courses as part of school curricula, and the Government Education Bureau in Addis Ababa has complained that such courses are not free of religious influence. Churches are permitted to have Sunday schools, the Koran is taught at mosques, and public schools permit the formation of clubs, including those of a religious nature.

Under the press law, it is a crime to incite one religion against another. The press law also allows for defamation claims involving religious leaders to be prosecuted as criminal cases. During the year, two journalists were detained and charged with defamation after writing articles critical of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. By year's end, Tilahun Bekele, publisher of Netsanet, and Daniel Gezahegn, deputy editor-in-chief of Magedwere were released on bail; however, the charges against them were pending.

The case against Samson Seyoum Kebede, the former editor of Goh, still was pending at year's end (see Section 2.a.).

There are more than 6,000 members of Jehovah's Witnesses in the country. The Government continued its policy of not deporting members of Jehovah's Witnesses of Eritrean origin, who might face religious repression in Eritrea (see Section 2.d.).

Despite the country's broad level of religious freedom and tolerance for established faiths, there were instances of open conflict among religious groups during the year (see Sections 1.a., 1.d., and 5).

In most interreligious disputes, the Government maintains neutrality and tries to be an impartial arbitrator (see Section 5). Some religious leaders have requested the establishment of a federal institution to deal with religious groups. The Government considered the request but had taken no action to establish such a federal institution by year's end.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no complaints of inadequate police protection during interreligious conflict.

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution provides for freedom of movement, including the right of travel, emigration, and repatriation; however, the Government restricted these rights in practice. Some AAPO codefendants, convicted in 1992 on charges of treason, completed their prison sentences in 1998 and 1999 but have not been permitted to leave the country.

In principle citizens can freely change their residence or workplace; however, after the outbreak of fighting with Eritrea in 1998, Eritreans and Ethiopian citizens of Eritrean origin were subjected to detention and deportation to Eritrea. The Government stopped deporting Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin after it signed a cessation of hostilities agreement with Eritrea in 2000. On June 27, the Government repatriated 723 Eritreans without notifying the ICRC in advance according to established procedures. The ICRC monitored the deportation or repatriation of 2,892 Eritreans or Ethiopians of Eritrean origin during the year.

It is estimated that approximately 80,000 to 100,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin remain in Ethiopia. In 1999 the Government decreed that all Eritreans 18 years of age and above residing in Ethiopia, who either had taken part in the 1993 referendum on the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia or who had been granted Eritrean citizenship, had to register as aliens with the SIRAA. Those registering would be issued an identity card and given a 6-month residence permit, which was allowed to expire. Those who were not registered were required to demonstrate that they were unable to do so at the registration time and to provide evidence of their whereabouts during that time to obtain an identity card and a residence permit. Those individuals without registration cards did not have access to hospitals or other public services. Authorities believe that all Eritreans or Ethiopians of Eritrean descent were registered by year's end.

In 1999, the Government adopted a policy of releasing those Eritrean detainees from the Bilate and Dedesa internment camps who could obtain visas to a country other than Eritrea. Approximately 90 detainees took advantage of this opportunity, with most going to African countries, particularly Uganda and Malawi. However, following an incident in 1999, in which 25 detainees obtained fraudulent Malawian visas, traveled to Malawi with government-issued laissez-passers, and were returned forcibly to Ethiopia after a violent confrontation with Malawi police in which one former detainee was killed and at least six others were injured, the Government reportedly decided not to permit detainees to depart for other countries in Africa.

The law requires citizens and residents to obtain an exit visa before departing the country. Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin have been able to obtain exit visas but often are not permitted to return to the country.

During the year, the ICRC repatriated 879 Eritrean and 653 Ethiopian POW's to their respective countries (see Section 1.d.).

In Addis Ababa and western Gondar in the Amhara region, there are very small concentrations of Ethiopian Jews (Falashas) and those who claim that their ancestors were forced to convert from Judaism to Ethiopian Orthodoxy (Feles Mora). Approximately 3,000 Feles Mora migrated voluntarily from the western Amhara region to Addis Ababa in 1991 at the time of "Operation Solomon," when a large number of Falashas were airlifted to Israel. The Feles Mora also seek to emigrate to Israel. The number of Feles Mora in the country is approximately 23,000. Israeli officials evaluate the Feles Mora immigration claims on a case-by-case basis and estimate that by year's end approximately 100 individuals were emigrating to Israel under the law of return each week. All of the eligible Falashas from Ethiopia have immigrated to Israel.

As a result of the conflict with Eritrea, numerous persons have been displaced internally; no accurate statistics were available by year's end. The Government has presented relief and rehabilitation proposals for these IDP's to bilateral donors and NGO's. By year's end, the Government, with international assistance, returned at least half of the IDP's to their homes and granted other assistance, including food and money, to the remaining IDP's.

The law provides for the granting of refugee and asylee status in accordance with the provisions of the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Government generally cooperates with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees and returning citizens.

Ethiopia hosts approximately 160,000 refugees; most are from Somalia and Sudan. The Government in cooperation with the UNHCR continues to provide first asylum to refugees from Sudan and Somalia. Along the border of northwest Somalia, approximately 70,000 Somali refugees were resident in 6 camps at year's end, a significant decrease from 195,345 Somali refugees in 2000. Three out of eight Somali refugee camps were closed by year's end. Along the Sudanese border approximately 84,000 Sudanese refugees were resident in 5 refugee camps around Gambella and Asossa at year's end. By year's end, the Government and the UNHCR repatriated a group of approximately 600 Djiboutian Afars who never had been granted formal registration as refugees by the Ethiopian Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). There were approximately 4,000 Eritrean Kunama refugees and a small population of urban refugees from other African countries in the country at year's end.

During the year, 1,362 armed rebels of the Sudanese Alliance Forces (SAF) reportedly fled Sudan for 3 towns, El Mehal-Menza, Berdan, and Aswar, which are located close to the Blue Nile where it crosses into Sudan. UNHCR coordinated efforts to inspect and assist the rebels. UNHCR reported that the rebels were interviewed, and many were repatriated voluntarily; 450 were awaiting transfer to a refugee camp in the western part of the country at year's end.

In August UNHCR recognized more than 220 Ethiopian students as refugees who arrived in Kenya in April after the riots in Addis Ababa (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., 1.d., 2.a., and 2.b.). The UNHCR reported that many of the students feared detention if they returned to Ethiopia. The students were residing at the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya at year's end.

There were no reports of the forced return of persons to a country where they feared persecution.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

Citizens exercised the right to vote for a national government in 2000 during elections for the House of People's Representatives (HPR), and during local elections held in February, March, and December. According to observers organized by EHRCO, local U.N. staff, diplomatic missions, political parties, and domestic NGO's, both the 2000 national elections and the regional elections held during the year were generally free and fair in most areas; however, serious election irregularities occurred in the SNNPRS region, particularly in Hadiya zone, during the national elections. As a result, the NEB, acting on its constitutional authority, investigated complaints of the irregularities and determined that many of them had merit. These included incidents of election officials instructing voters for whom to vote, candidates campaigning at polling stations, and candidates being pressured into quitting. There also were credible reports of ballot stuffing, vote count fraud, voter intimidation or bribery, dismissals from work, withholding of salaries, detentions, abductions, and killings (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., and 1.d.). The NEB ordered new elections in some areas of SNNPRS that were held later in 2000; they were declared generally free and fair by international observers. In 2000 the NEB agreed to bring charges against those suspected of the worst election abuses in the SNNPRS; however, no action had been taken by year's end. Elections in the Somali region took place in August 2000, after delays due to a food emergency and voter registration irregularities.

In the 2000 national elections, 17 opposition political parties contested the election, including the AAPO, the SEPDC, and the Oromo National Congress. The better-funded and better-organized incumbent party, the EPRDF, generally dominated over candidates of the relatively weaker and less-organized opposition parties and independent candidates, except in the SNNPRS, where the opposition made significant gains. EPRDF candidates won 481 seats in the HPR, EPRDF affiliate candidates won 37 seats, opposition party candidates won 16 seats, and independent candidates won 13 seats. The Government established a donor supported fund for opposition party candidates, provided opposition candidates access to state-owned electronic media, and changed the law to permit civil servants to run for office without first resigning their positions. The Government was willing to engage opponents in open debate at candidate and party forums. Many of these debates were broadcast live on national radio and television and reported on in both government and private newspapers. Free radio broadcast time was set aside for the elections, and 225 independent candidates and 33 political parties made use of it.

By the end of 2000, the NEB had begun investigating abuses of election laws related to candidate registration for the national elections in the SNNPRS and the Gambella region; however, the NEB later decided there were no irregularities in this region. There were credible reports that local officials throughout the country ignored NEB instructions on the acceptance of candidate endorsement signatures from opposition party candidates. There were instances in which the NEB had to force local authorities to accept nominations. There were credible reports that during candidate registration, many kebele (village or municipal unit) offices were closed for holidays or were otherwise unstaffed, hindering the registration process of opposition candidates. In the Somali region prior to the August 2000 elections, thousands of ballots were reprinted to rectify the fact that a female opposition candidate had not been listed despite having met NEB requirements for candidate registration. Due to election irregularities in various constituencies of the region, the NEB ordered that new elections be held in the Hadiya zone in June 2000 and agreed to bring charges against those suspected of the worst election abuses in the SNNPRS; however, no action had been taken by year's end.

There were credible reports that during the 2000 national elections citizens who tried to register to vote were told by government personnel that they had to prove their citizenship in order to register; under the law only citizens can vote. Reportedly Ethiopians of Eritrean origin were not allowed to register or to vote.

During the 2000 elections, there were a number of killings as a result of preelection and postelection violence; numerous persons also were arrested and detained, some because they voted for the opposition (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., and 1.d.). Several SEPDC candidates for the national or municipal elections were detained, and two SEPDC members elected to the regional council in 2000 were detained without having their parliamentary immunity formally removed (see Section 1.d.). Another representative elected in 2000 whose parliamentary immunity was removed by the regional council in July remained in hiding in the country (see Section 1.d.).

There were numerous credible reports that persons who supported or voted for the opposition during the 2000 elections were harassed. For example, there were credible reports that ruling party personnel withheld fertilizer and food aid in the SNNPRS region as retaliation for voters electing opposition candidates. According to the SEPDC, some SEPDC supporters were suspended or dismissed from their jobs in retaliation for voting for the opposition, and some teachers in the Southern Region who served as SEPDC election observers were not able to collect their salaries and were denied entry to summer update courses. Civil servants who were removed from their positions after supporting the opposition were not allowed to return to their positions by year's end.

In February, March, and December, local elections at the kebele and woreda levels were conducted in all regions and administrative zones except in the Somali regions. In February after the EPDRF overwhelmingly won the woreda elections, opposition groups reported intimidation of candidates and voters by the ruling party cadres, including the killing of two supporters (see Section 1.a.); opposition groups also accused the NEB of failing to address these problems during the period prior to the elections. Opposition parties subsequently announced their withdrawal from the February elections, which was followed by the withdrawal of opposition party members from seats in the Addis Ababa municipal council. Observers considered the elections to be free and fair. In August the NEB made a statement indicating that the Government was aware of election

irregularities and that the harassment of persons in the SNNPRS had impeded the organization of local elections. The NEB also called for the unconditional release of those detained for their affiliation with the SEPDC.

The December elections in the Southern Region were affected by the harassment of opposition parties in the region following the May 2000 elections. Opposition participation in the elections was hampered by difficulty in registering candidates and limitations on time remaining to campaign. After claiming that election fraud occurred during the zonal and woreda (county) elections, most parties belonging to the SEPDC coalition did not participate in the kebele elections, citing the inability of the NEB to ensure free and fair elections.

There were credible reports from SEPDC representatives that at least 11 of their members were killed in the period leading up to the November regional elections (see Section 1.a.).

There were credible reports that local authorities in the Oromiya, Amhara, and Southern Region periodically arrested and detained supporters of opposition parties in the period prior to and following the regional elections in those areas (see Section 1.d.).

During the year, all Nuer tribal political activists and leaders associated with the GPDC on charges of inciting the Nuer students to demonstrate for the use of the Nuer language in schools in 1999 were released (see Section 5). The GPDC claimed that the charges were without merit and that the Government was attempting to interfere with the political process for the May elections. The NEB sent investigators to the region; however, the NEB determined that there were no irregularities.

Political participation remains closed to a number of organizations that have not renounced violence and do not accept the Government as a legitimate authority. These groups include MEDHIN, the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, the OLF, some elements of the ONLF, and several smaller Somali groups. The opposition AAPO complained that in 1999 the Oromiya region government refused its application to open branch offices in the region.

The percentage of women in government or politics does not correspond to their percentage of the population. One of the 19 members of the Council of Ministers is a woman, 2 other women hold ministerial positions, and a number of other women hold senior positions. There are 42 women among the 547 members of the HPR, and 9 of 113 members in the House of Federation are female. Of the 14 members of the Supreme Court, 3 are women.

The percentage of minorities in government or politics does not correspond to their percentage of the population; however, the government policy of ethnic federalism led to the creation of individual constituencies to help ensure representation in the HPR of all major ethnic groups. Small ethnic groups were not represented in the legislature. There are 23 nationality groups in 6 of the regional states that do not have a sufficient population to qualify for constituency seats; however, individuals from these nationality groups competed for 23 special seats in the 547-seat HPR in the 2000 elections.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Human rights organizations include EHRCO, the HRL, the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association (EWLA), the Inter-Africa Group, the National Committee on Traditional Practices, the Peace and Development Committee, the Society for the Advancement of Human Rights Education, Enwayay, the Center for Local Capacity Building and Studies, African Initiatives for a Democratic World Order, and Hundee. These and numerous other groups primarily are engaged in civic and human rights education, legal assistance, and trial monitoring. The HRL, founded by prominent Oromo civic leaders in 1997, continued to be investigated by the Government at year's end for its alleged ties to the OLF. During the year, the HRL sued the Government, and the court ordered the Ministry of Justice to reply to the HRL petition for registration by February 2002 (see Section 2.b.). In September the Ministry announced that it had suspended the registration of the EWLA; the registration subsequently was reinstated. The Ministry did not provide the organization with an official explanation for the action; however, in statements to the press, the Ministry cited EWLA's violations of the letter of authorization, which is the letter of response to the request for registration, and the code of conduct for NGO's as the reasons for the closure (see Section 5). The EWLA's primary function is the legal representation of women, particularly in civil matters involving the new family law, such as spousal abuse cases, divorce and child custody cases, as well as criminal matters (see Section 5). In May federal police closed the offices EHRCO while they conducted a search for evidence (see Sections 1.d. and 1.f.). In 1999 the Ministry of Justice decertified the Ethiopian Congress for Democracy, reportedly for financial irregularities.

Several international human rights groups visited the country during the year. The Government continues to encourage international human rights groups and foreign diplomats to observe the war crimes trials that began in 1994. In 2000 the chairman of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) visited to investigate Eritrean complaints regarding government deportations of Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin. His program included meetings with senior officials of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The ACHPR did not release a report by year's end.

In 1999 160 domestic and international NGO's signed a code of conduct, which details standards of conduct for numerous areas including moral and ethical integrity, transparency and accountability, good governance, gender equity, and environmental consciousness. The NGO's also formed a code observance committee, composed of five members elected by the NGO general assembly and two representatives from civil society at large, which hears and decides matters in all instances involving a violation or breach of the code.

During the year, the ICRC was allowed to visit most federal and regional prisons, civilian detention facilities, and police stations throughout the country, including the facilities where several thousand persons were in detention at year's end in connection with the student riots in April (see Sections 1.c. and 1.d.). The ICRC was granted access to the Tatek military detention facilities but not to other military detention facilities where suspected OLF fighters are held. The ICRC generally was permitted access to detention facilities holding Eritrean POW's, including the main camp at Dedesa (see Sections 1.c. and 1.d.). In 2000 Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed that the ICRC would be the supervisory organization for the exchange of expellees or deportees. In 2000 Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed that the ICRC would facilitate all POW exchanges (see Section 2.d.). In 2000 the ICRC suspended emergency relief flights to Dire Dawa and Gode because Ethiopian Airlines demanded a high "handling fee" for each flight.

Unlike in the previous year, delegations from Education International, an NGO, were permitted to visit Taye Woldesemayat (see Section 1.d.).

Officials of the Federal Security Authority generally have been responsive to requests for information from the diplomatic community.

The Government is required under the Constitution to establish a Human Rights Commission and Office of the Ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman is expected to have the authority to receive and investigate complaints with respect to misadministration by executive branch offices. Parliament completed legislative action to create both entities in July 2000, and in July the parliamentary committee was selected to appoint members to the Ombudsman office; however, neither entity was operational by year's end.

Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution states that all persons are equal before the law. The law provides that all persons should have equal and effective protection without discrimination on grounds of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, wealth, birth, or other status. However, the Government has not yet fully put into place mechanisms for the effective enforcement of these protections.

Women

Domestic violence, including wife beating and marital rape, is a pervasive social problem. While women have recourse to the police and the courts, societal norms and limited infrastructure inhibit many women from seeking legal redress, especially in rural areas. Social practices obstruct investigations into rape and the prosecution of the rapist, and many women are not aware of their rights under the law. It is estimated that there are more than 1,000 rapes a year in Addis Ababa alone; however, only 168 rape convictions were handed down nationwide from September 1999 to September 2000. The number of reports by rape victims to police and the amount of press reporting of rape cases have increased. For example, there were several articles in the government press about violence against women during the year. The major exception is in cases of marriage by abduction where the perpetrator is not punished if the victim agrees to marry him (unless the marriage is annulled); even after a perpetrator is convicted, the sentence is commuted if the victim marries him. Rape sentences have increased incrementally from 10 to 13 years, in line with the 10 to 15 years prescribed by law; however, rapists generally remain in prison for a period of between 7 and 10 years. A prison guard arrested for raping a female prisoner in 2000 was convicted and sentenced to 13 years in prison. There were credible reports that members of the military who were redeployed from border areas to other regions sexually harassed and raped some young women.

Although illegal, the abduction of women and girls as a form of marriage still is practiced widely in the Oromiya region and the SNNPRS. Forced sexual relationships often accompany most marriages by abduction, and women often are abused physically during the abduction. Abductions have led to conflicts between families, communities, and ethnic groups.

The majority of girls undergo some form of female genital mutilation (FGM), which is condemned widely by international health experts as damaging to both physical and psychological health. The National Committee on Traditional Practices of Ethiopia (NCTPE) conducted a survey that was published in 1998, which indicated that 72.7 percent of the female population had undergone FGM, down from an estimated 90 percent of the female population in 1990. Clitoridectomies typically are performed 7 days after birth and consist of an excision of the labia. Infibulation—the most extreme and dangerous form of FGM—is performed at any time between the age of 8 and the onset of puberty. The law does not specifically prohibit FGM, although it is discouraged officially, and the Government has been very supportive of the NCTPE. The Government also is working to discourage the practice of FGM through education in public schools.

Thousands of women traveled to the Middle East as industrial and domestic workers. There were credible reports that some female workers were abused in these positions (see Section 6.f.).

The Constitution provides for the equality of women; however, these provisions often are not applied in practice. Furthermore, these provisions often are in conflict with the Civil Code and the Penal Code, both of which are under review by the Ministry of Justice. The Civil Code is based on a monarchical constitution that treated women as if they were children or disabled. Discriminatory regulations in the Civil Code include recognizing the husband as the legal head of the family and designating him as the sole guardian of children over 5 years old. Family arbitration councils, which in the past had the power to dissolve marriages, engaged only in arbitration and reconciliation counseling, and only the courts have the legal power to dissolve marriages. Domestic violence is not considered a serious justification under the law to obtain a divorce. There

is only limited juridical recognition of common-law marriage. Irrespective of the number of years the marriage has existed, the number of children raised, and the joint property, the woman is entitled to only 3 months' financial support should the relationship end. However, a husband has no obligation to provide financial assistance to his family and, as a result, women and children sometimes are abandoned when there is a problem in the marriage. In 1999 the Ministry of Justice completed a revision of the 1957 Penal Code, and a national debate on the revisions continued during the year.

All land belongs to the state; however, women may obtain government leases to land, and the Government has an explicit policy to provide equal access to land for women. Discrimination is most acute in rural areas, where 85 percent of the population lives. In urban areas, women have fewer employment opportunities than do men, and the jobs available do not provide equal pay for equal work.

To enhance the status of women, the Government established a national program of action. The program seeks to expand educational and work opportunities for women, improve women's access to health care, and educate women about certain unhealthy traditional practices such as early marriage. There have been few improvements in the status of women since the inception of this program; however, according to a study published by the NCTPE in 1998, certain harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and marriage by abduction appeared to be on the decline. Neither the HRC nor the Office of the Ombudsman was operational by year's end; however, once operational, both organizations are expected to have a representative responsible for the rights of women (see Section 4).

In 2000 Parliament adopted a new family law, which raised the legal age for marriage for girls from 15 to 18, the same as for boys; puts civil law above customary and religious law; allows for the legal sharing of property for unmarried couples who have lived together for at least 5 years (previously, there was no property sharing for couples separating, even if they had lived together their entire adult lives); eliminates family arbitrators as a means of settling marital disputes in lieu of the court system (historically women have fared poorly under the family arbitration system); allows for the joint administration of common marital property (previously a man could sell joint property without the consent or knowledge of his wife); and requires the courts to take into account the situation of children or the weakest member of the family in the event of a divorce or separation (previously women and children often were forced out of the family home in such cases).

Children

The Government has encouraged efforts by domestic and international NGO's that focus on children's social, health, and legal issues. For example, local officials provided transportation and free facilities to NGO activities. Neither the HRC nor the Office of the Ombudsman was operational by year's end; however, once operational, both organizations are expected to have a representative responsible for the rights of women (see Section 4). However, the Government has limited ability to provide improved health care and basic education.

By law primary education is compulsory, free, and universal; however, despite efforts by the Government to increase the number of schools, there are not enough schools to accommodate the country's youth. The Government uses a three-shift system in all primary and secondary schools to maximize the utilization of classrooms and to provide an opportunity for working children to attend school. Nationwide the total enrollment of children who are of school age is 57.4 percent. Only 67.3 percent of male primary age children and 47 percent of female primary age children attend school, and many do so in shifts. Unlike in previous years, girls attended school in lower numbers than boys, except in Addis Ababa, where the ratio was equal between female and male attendance. Government reports show that approximately 30 percent of the children who attend school leave the system before they reach grade two of primary school, and the total drop out rate was 17.8 percent. Approximately 38 percent of children reach grade five. The overall literacy rate was approximately 20 to 30 percent, and only 17 percent of women were literate compared with 26 percent of men; however, it was difficult to estimate literacy rates accurately due to a lack of government statistics. Only 14.8 percent of boys and 10.9 percent of girls attend secondary school. During the year, a new education policy was implemented that compressed 12 years into 10 years of general education for students who were not planning to attend college; however, those students who plan to attend a university continued to complete 12 years of general education. During the year, students in grades 11 and 12 continued to take the school-leaving certificate exam (ESLCE). Students in grade 10 also were required to take the ESLCE exam during the year. Of the 94,508 students in grade 12 who took the exam, 37,375 students passed; of the 106,334 students in grade 10 who took the exam, 58,507 passed. There is space in institutions of higher education for only a small percentage of these graduates.

In 1999 student protests against the arrest of two teachers who criticized new textbooks in the Welayita speaking sections of the SNNPRS led to widespread demonstrations and riots (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., and 1.d.).

In Addis Ababa's police stations, there are 10 Child Protection Units, which are staffed by members of an NGO and protect the rights of children by assisting them when they become involved in crime. Some police officers have completed training on procedures for handling cases of child abuse and juvenile delinquency. Nevertheless there is a clear need for reform of the juvenile justice system. Three federal judges sit on one bench to hear all cases of juvenile offenses. There is a large backlog of juvenile cases and accused children often remain in detention with adults until their cases are heard. There is only 1 juvenile remand home with a capacity of 150 for children under age 15, and the juveniles who cannot be accommodated at the juvenile remand home are incarcerated with adults (see Section 1.c.).

Societal abuse of young girls continues to be a problem. FGM is performed on the majority of girls (see Section 5, Women).

Other harmful traditional practices surveyed by the NCTPE included uvulectomy, milk-teeth extraction, early marriage, marriage by abduction, and food and work prohibitions (see Section 6.f.). A new family law adopted in 2000 defines the age of consent as 18 for both females and males; however, early childhood marriage is common in rural areas where girls as young as age 9 are subjected to arranged marriages. In the Afar region of the east, young girls continue to be married to much older men, but this traditional practice is coming under greater scrutiny and criticism. The Tigray Women's Association also has had an impact in changing societal attitudes toward early marriage. Pregnancy at an early age often leads to obstetric fistulae and permanent incontinence. Treatment is available at only 1 hospital in Addis Ababa that performs over 1,000 fistula operations a year. It estimates that for every successful operation performed, 10 other young women need the treatment. The maternal mortality rate is extremely high due, in part, to food taboos for pregnant women, poverty, early marriage, and birth complications related to FGM, especially infibulation.

There are approximately 200,000 street children in urban areas, of which 150,000 reside in Addis Ababa; however, the figures are difficult to estimate, and observers believe the problem is growing. These children beg, sometimes as part of a gang, or work in the informal sector (see Section 6.d.). Government and privately run orphanages are unable to handle the number of street children, and older children often abuse younger children. Due to severe resource constraints, abandoned infants often are overlooked or neglected at hospitals and orphanages. There are a few credible reports that children are maimed or blinded by their "handlers" in order to raise their earnings from begging. Following the April riots, there were reports that authorities rounded up street children; some children reportedly were as young as 7 years old (see Section 1.d.).

Child prostitution continues to be a problem and is perceived widely to be growing. There are no laws that criminalize child prostitution or prostitution in general. The National Steering Committee Against Sexual Exploitation of Children is chaired by the Children, Youth, and Family Affairs Department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. In 1999 the committee reported that child prostitution is on the increase especially in major urban centers; however, there are no statistics available. NGO's report that girls as young as age 11 are recruited to work in houses of prostitution where they are kept ignorant of the risks of HIV/AIDS infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. There have been many press reports of the large-scale employment of children, especially underage girls, as hotel workers, barmaids, and prostitutes in resort towns and rural truck stops. Unlike in the previous year, there were no reported cases that poor rural families sold their young teenage daughters to hotel and bar owners on the main truck routes; however, the practice is believed to exist (see Sections 6.c. and 6.f.). Social workers note that young girls are prized because their clients believe that they are free of sexually transmitted diseases. The unwanted infants of these young girls usually are abandoned at hospitals, police stations, welfare clinics, and adoption agencies. There were numerous anecdotal accounts of young girls going to the Middle East to work as domestic workers and nannies, some of whom were abused, including sexually (see Section 6.f.). Factors aggravating the problem of child prostitution are pervasive poverty, migration to urban centers, early marriage, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and limited educational and job opportunities. There are several NGO's that work with child prostitutes, including the Forum on Street Children-Ethiopia, which provides shelter and protection for child prostitutes trying to get off the streets.

Child labor is pervasive, especially in the informal sector, and child laborers sometimes are subjected to abuse, including neglect, and, among children working as domestic servants, sexual abuse and rape (see Sections 6.c., 6.d., and 6.f.).

It is the policy of the Ministry of Defense not to permit persons under the age of 18 to join the armed forces, and the Government made efforts to enforce this policy. There were reports that some children under the age of 18 were recruited into the military in 1999, and military officers have admitted that underage applicants sometimes were enlisted (see Section 1.f.). Ethiopia has an all-volunteer military; however, scarce birth certificates, poor educational opportunities, patriotism, and pervasive poverty conspired to entice underage applicants to try to circumvent restrictions on underage soldiers. If young boys are found to be under the age of 18, they are prohibited from doing military service; however, in rural areas children often do not have birth certificates. If a unit commander suspects but cannot prove that a soldier is underage, he can transfer the soldier from a front-line combat unit to a rear-area command. There is evidence that children as young as age 14 were permitted to join local militia units in an effort to keep them close to home and prevent them from attempting to join the regular army.

There were unconfirmed reports that children from the southern part of the country were transported into Kenya and adopted as other nationalities. The Government has closed down adoption agencies operating in the country that fail to observe proper rules and regulations.

Persons with Disabilities

The Constitution stipulates that the state shall provide rehabilitation and assistance to persons with physical and mental disabilities; however, the Government devoted few resources for these purposes. There are approximately six million persons with disabilities in the country. At year's end, the Government had not yet put into place mechanisms to enforce a law mandating equal rights for persons with disabilities. The Government does not mandate access to buildings or government services for persons with disabilities, and persons with minor disabilities sometimes complain of job discrimination. The conflict with Eritrea resulted in numerous soldiers losing limbs, many from landmine explosions. Wheelchairs are rare in the country. According to a 1998 NGO report, only 500 of the approximately 700,000 visually impaired persons in the country have access to employment opportunities. Although there are approximately 800,000 mentally ill persons estimated in the country, there is only 1 mental hospital and only 10 psychiatrists. In the past several years, the mental hospital trained 117 psychiatric nurses to work in 33 rural clinics; however, half of these nurses subsequently left their jobs.

The Oromo students arrested in 2000 reportedly were released by year's end.

There has been a long history of tension between the Nuer and Anuak tribal groups. During the year, all Nuer tribal political activists and leaders associated with the GPDC who were arrested on charges of inciting the Nuer students to demonstrate for the use of the Nuer language in schools in 1999 were released (see Section 3).

The expansion of the military to approximately 285,000 to 300,000 personnel in 2000 aided greatly in the goal of bringing more ethnic groups into the military. By most accounts, the military is an ethnically diverse organization with very little friction between the various groups represented, at least in the lower ranks. At the higher ranks the officer personnel is much less ethnically diverse. Promotions awarded in 2000 were disproportionately high among the Tigrayan ethnic group, although promotions were given to officers from a range of ethnic groups; Oromos were represented among those promoted in higher numbers than the previous year. There were reports that soldiers redeployed from the war front to other regions abused civilians, particularly in the Amhara, Oromia, and SNNPRS regions (see Sections 1.c. and 1.d.). There were reports that soldiers targeted Oromos for abuse during the year.

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

The Constitution provides most workers with the right to form and join unions, but the law specifically excludes teachers and civil servants, including judges, prosecutors, and security services, from organizing unions. The minimum number of workers required to form a union is 20. Only 300,000 workers are unionized. The law also prohibits workers who provide essential services from striking. Essential services are defined broadly to include air transport services, railways, bus service, postal, police and fire services, banking, telecommunications, and medical services.

The law stipulates that a trade organization may not act in an overtly political manner. The law explicitly gives workers the right to strike to protect their interests, but it also sets forth restrictive procedures that apply before a legal strike may take place. These apply equally to an employer's right to lock out workers. Strikes must be supported by a majority of the workers affected. The law prohibits retribution against strikers, but labor leaders state that most workers are not convinced that the Government would enforce this protection. Both sides must make efforts at reconciliation, provide at least 10 days' notice to the Government, include the reasons for the action, and in cases already before a court or labor board, the party must provide at least a 30-day warning. If an agreement between unions and management cannot be reached, the Minister of Labor may refer the case to arbitration by a Labor Relations Board (LRB). The Government has established LRB's at the national level and in some regions. The Minister of Labor and Social Affairs appoints each LRB chairman, and the four board members include two each from trade unions and employer groups. Some efforts to enforce labor regulations are made within the formal industrial sector. Some private sector workers, including construction workers and Ethiopian Airlines mechanics, went on strike during the year over salary issues. Labor officials have stated that in view of high unemployment and long delays in the hearing of labor cases, some workers are afraid to participate in strikes or other labor actions.

The ETA formerly had a membership of 120,000; however, that number has decreased significantly due to government intimidation and restrictions on ETA activities. In 1995 the leadership of the ETA filed with the ILO a freedom of association complaint against the Government. Security forces harassed members of the ETA and closed their offices; however, the ETA still is registered. In 2000 the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association issued a strong criticism of the Government for its restrictions on freedom of association. The president of the ETA was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 1999 for inciting violence (see Section 1.d.). In 1999 the Government encouraged and publicly supported the organization and registration of a second teachers' association.

There is no requirement that unions belong to the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), which includes all nine federations organized by industrial and service sectors rather than by region.

In January employees of the Chinese Addis Ababa Road Authority began to strike after 60 workers were dismissed. The employees accused the Authority of not allowing them to organize. After the intervention of the CETU, most of the employees who were fired were allowed to return to work; however, the union leader was dismissed, allegedly for theft.

Independent unions and those belonging to CETU are free to affiliate with and participate in international labor bodies. Some unions have affiliated with international organizations.

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of union activities. Employer interference was not a major problem; however, there was government interference, and the Government has the authority to cancel union registration. Collective bargaining is protected under the law and under the Constitution for most workers and is practiced freely throughout the country. Labor experts estimate that more than 90 percent of unionized workers are covered by collective bargaining agreements. Wages are negotiated at the plant level.

The law prohibits antiunion discrimination by employers against union members and organizers; however,

There are approximately 70 NGO's that work with persons with disabilities. For example, the Amhara Development Association operates a project to provide vocational training to disabled war veterans in Bahir Dar. The Tigray Development Association operates a center in Mekele that provides prostheses and seed money for business development, training, and counseling for persons with disabilities. The international NGO Landmine Survivors provides a number of services to victims of landmine explosions including counseling and referrals to rehabilitation services.

Religious Minorities

Despite the country's broad level of religious freedom and tolerance for established faiths, there continued to be pockets of interreligious tension and criticism during the year. Newer faiths such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals encountered overt opposition from the public. Muslims and Orthodox Christians complained about proselytization by Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses. Ethiopian Orthodox leaders complained that at times Protestants fail to respect Orthodox holy days and Orthodox customs. Muslims complained that some Pentecostal preachers disparage Islam in their services. There were complaints by Muslim leaders that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's desire to "show supremacy" sometimes caused irritation in the country's various regions. Protestant and Pentecostal leaders complained that, on occasion, Orthodox or evangelical adherents interrupted Protestant and Pentecostal religious meetings and attempted to prevent the construction of Protestant churches in predominately Orthodox or evangelical areas; however, there were no such cases reported during the year.

On January 19 in Harar, a riot broke out between Muslims and Christians after several members of a Christian procession entered a mosque and disrupted Muslim services. Both groups accused each other of destroying religious property. After the local police were no longer able to control the rioting, the army was called in to restore order and reportedly shot and killed five persons; it was not known whether the rioters fired weapons in return. More than 20 persons were injured by thrown rocks and stray bullets. Police arrested and detained numerous persons (see Section 1.d.). In January and February, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) and the Supreme Islamic Council worked together and with local, regional, and national level government representatives in Harar to restore relations between the two faiths.

In August fighting started between Muslims and Christians in Addis Ababa after Muslims began constructing a mosque next to a church. Church leaders asked that the construction stop, and when the Muslims refused, church leaders called upon neighborhood Christians to pray in front of the site. Many of the Christians began to destroy the construction site, and violence broke out. Police shot into the air after they were called in to restore order. Construction at the site had not resumed by year's end.

In 1999 two Muslim communities in the Dire Dawa and north Welo areas attempted to construct new mosques but abandoned the construction when local Orthodox church members caused damage to the construction sites and beat one Muslim who tried to prevent their actions. The Government intervened, and the mosques were nearly complete at year's end.

In most sections of the country Orthodox Christians and Muslims participated in each other's religious observances, and there is tolerance for intermarriage and conversion in certain areas, most notably in Welo, as well as in urban areas throughout the country. In Addis Ababa, persons of different faiths often live side by side. Most urban areas reflect a mixture of all religious denominations. Longstanding Evangelical Protestant denominations, particularly the Mekane Yesus church and Kale Heywet churches, provide social services such as health care and education to nonmembers as well as to members.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

There are more than 80 ethnic groups. Although many of these groups influenced the political and cultural life of the country, Amharas and Tigrayans from the northern highlands played a dominant role. The largest single group is the Oromos. In an attempt to address ethnic concerns, the Government has established a federal system with political boundaries drawn roughly along major ethnic lines. With federalism regional states have much greater control over their affairs. For example, in Oromiya in 1999, the regional government required that all primary schools adopt Oromiffa as the language of instruction. This drew protests from groups that reside in Oromiya whose mother tongue is not Oromiffa and who believe that their children are now at a disadvantage. There are credible reports that teachers and other government workers have had their employment terminated if they are not of the dominant ethnic group in the region.

Ethnic clashes during the year resulted in a number of deaths and injuries. During several incidents throughout the year, at least 60 persons were killed and 200 were injured in violent conflicts between the ethnic-Somali Garress and Borena Oromo tribes near the Kenyan border. The clashes often result from disputes over water and grazing rights.

Fighting between former drought victims from the Amhara region who had resettled in the East Wellega zone of the Oromia region and the Oromos in the Gida Kiremu district resulted in the death of one Oromo police officer and several Amharas. Although no statistics were available, press reports indicated that hundreds of deaths occurred as a result of ethnic strife during the year.

In November there were reports of ethnic clashes between the Zeyle and the Deresh in Argoba in the Southern Region. There were unconfirmed reports that 40 persons were killed and several hundred were displaced as a result of the fighting.

unions reported that union activists frequently are fired. Unlawful dismissal suits often take years to resolve because of case backlogs in the labor courts. There are grievance procedures for hearings on allegations of discrimination brought by individuals or unions. Employers found guilty of antiunion discrimination are required to reinstate workers fired for union activities. Labor leaders point to a number of court cases that are 4 or 5 years old in which workers have been terminated for union activities as examples of inattention by the courts to worker rights. Seasonal and part-time agricultural workers are not organized even on state-owned plantations. Seasonal workers' compensation, benefits, and working conditions are far below those of unionized permanent plantation employees.

There were several labor disputes reported during the year; through the intervention of the CETU, most were resolved in the favor of the workers. In April and July, employees at two private companies were dismissed from their jobs; among those fired were union leaders who had been lobbying for improved salaries and benefits. After the CETU intervened and negotiated on behalf of the employees with their employers, most were able to return to work, and in both cases, they returned with additional benefits.

In 2000 a private company dissolved its labor union after a disagreement between management and workers. A total of 586 workers were expelled from the company, including union leaders. The Government attempted to mediate the dispute, but the employer did not cooperate; the case was expected to be referred to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs during the year.

There are no export processing zones.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The Criminal Code, which applies to persons over the age of 15, specifically prohibits forced labor; however, forced labor can be used by court order as a punitive measure. For example, there were credible reports that persons detained after the April riots in Addis Ababa were subjected to forced labor at Sendafa police facility, Showa Robit rehabilitation center, and the Zeway prison (see Sections 1.c. and 1.d.). The Constitution proscribes slavery, and involuntary servitude. There were no reports of slavery within the country.

The law prohibits forced and bonded labor by children; however, young girls reportedly were forced into prostitution by family members (see Sections 5 and 6.f.). Unlike in previous years, there were no reports that young girls were sold into prostitution or that poor rural families sold their young teenage daughters to hotel and bar owners on the main truck routes; however, the practice is believed to exist. There also were numerous anecdotal accounts of young persons, especially girls, traveling to the Middle East to work as house servants and nannies, some of whom were abused, including sexually (see Section 6.f.).

d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

Under the law, the minimum age for wage or salary employment is 14 years; special provisions cover children between the ages of 14 and 18, including the prohibition of night work or hazardous work. The Government defines hazardous work as work in factories or involving machinery with moving parts, or any work that could jeopardize children's health.

Children between the ages of 14 and 18 years may not work more than 7 hours per day, work between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., work on public holidays or rest days, or perform overtime work. While the Government has made some effort to enforce these regulations within the formal industrial sector, social welfare activists, civic organizers, government officials, and employers agree that child labor is pervasive throughout the country, especially in the informal sector. In urban areas, numerous children can be seen working in a variety of jobs, including shining shoes, hustling passengers into cabs, working as porters, selling lottery tickets, and herding animals. Child domestic workers are common.

Child laborers often are abused. A research study published in 1999 reported that the prevalence of child abuse among urban child laborers is 70 percent, compared with 24.5 percent among non-economically active children from the same urban district. The study concluded that physical and emotional abuse were twice as common among child workers compared with nonworkers, sexual abuse was five times as common, and neglect was eight times as common. Among child workers surveyed, rapes occurred exclusively among child domestics.

A second 1999 research study of child labor sponsored by the CETU's National Federation of Farm, Plantation, Fishery, and Agro-industry Trade Unions focused on rural locations. The study reported that 30 percent of the workers on state farms surveyed were between the ages of 7 and 14. Child workers, who worked alongside parents hired by the state, typically worked 6 days a week, received no benefits, and earned less than \$10 (80 birr) a month. At 1 plantation, 75 percent of the children worked 12-hour days. There also is evidence that children as young as 14 years old are permitted to join local militias with the consent of village leaders. This reportedly is part of an effort to keep children in local areas despite limited educational or employment opportunities (see Section 5). The Government maintains that most economically active children are engaged in family-based, nonexploitative child work that is part of the socialization process and maintains that there is not a child labor problem.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is the authority designated to enforce child labor laws. The Government's definition of worst forms of child labor includes prostitution and bonded labor; however, the Government is not a signatory to ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labor. In 1999 a forum on child labor was launched by over 80 governments, NGO and foreign entities, including the ILO, to combat such problems as child prostitution, which is perceived widely to be growing (see Section 5). The forum concluded

that the worst forms of child labor have increased in recent years, particularly child prostitution and the use of children in agricultural work where they are exposed to pesticides and insecticides. The forum submitted some recommendations to the Ministry of Labor; however, no further action was taken by year's end.

The law prohibits forced and bonded labor by children; however, there are reports that it occurs (see Sections 6.c. and 6.f.).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The Government mandates a minimum wage of approximately \$15 (120 birr) per month for all wage earners in both the private and public sectors; in addition each industry and service sector has established its own minimum wage. For example, public sector employees, the largest group of wage earners, earn a minimum wage of approximately \$22 (175 birr) per month; employees in the banking and insurance sector have a minimum wage of \$25 (200 birr) per month. According to the Office of the Study of Wages and Other Remuneration, these wages are insufficient to provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. Consequently most families must have at least two wage earners to survive, which is one of the reasons children leave school early. In addition only a small percentage of the population is involved in wage labor employment, which is concentrated largely in urban areas.

The legal workweek, as stipulated in the Labor Law, is 48 hours, consisting of 6 days of 8 hours each, with a 24-hour rest period. However, it is not enforced effectively, and in practice, most employees work a 40-hour workweek consisting of 5 8-hour days.

The Government, industry, and unions negotiate to set occupational health and safety standards; however, the inspection department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs enforces these standards ineffectively, due to a lack of human and financial resources. Enforcement also is inhibited by a lack of detailed, sector-specific health and safety guidelines. Workers have the right to remove themselves from dangerous situations without jeopardy to continued employment; however, most workers fear losing their jobs if they were to do so.

f. Trafficking in Persons

The law and the Constitution prohibit trafficking in persons; however, Ethiopia is a country of origin for trafficked women, and there are reports of internal trafficking. Unlike in previous years, there were no reports that rural families sold their daughters to hotel and bar owners on the main truck routes; however, the practice is believed to exist. In 2000 there was a report that a girl was sold by her father to a local man in exchange for cattle; the girl's mother brought the case to the EWLA. The case was prosecuted in the courts, and the father was convicted and sentenced to 2 years in prison; this was the first case of this kind. Although illegal, the abduction of women and girls as a form of marriage still is practiced widely in Oromiya regions and the SNNPRS (see Section 5).

The Government no longer acts as an employment agency for workers going abroad. Private entities now arrange for overseas work and, as a result, the number of women being sent to Middle Eastern countries, particularly Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, as domestic or industrial workers increased significantly. There reportedly is a network of persons based in the tourism and import-export sectors who are involved heavily in soliciting potential clients, recruiting young girls, arranging travel, and fabricating counterfeit work permits, travel documents, and birth certificates. There continued to be credible reports that some domestic workers abroad were subjected to abusive conditions, including sexual exploitation (see Section 5). In addition the employers of the domestics sometimes seize passports, fail to pay salaries, and overwork the domestics, and some domestics were forced to work for their employers' relatives without additional pay. Domestics have been forced to pay a monetary penalty for leaving their employment early. There are reports of confinement and obstruction of contacting family. Reports of abuse decreased after the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs began reviewing the contracts of prospective domestic workers and denying exit visas if the contracts did not appear satisfactory.

Training programs have been implemented for police officers on the criminal aspects of trafficking. These institutions have limited resources and jurisdiction to protect or intervene in cases of prosecution of offending employers. Various laws prohibit trafficking and provide for fines and prison sentences of up to 20 years; however, there have been no reported prosecutions or investigations, due in part to limited resources.

In 1999 the Government formed a committee to study trafficking in persons and develop anti-trafficking programs. The federal police's Women's Affairs Bureau, in collaboration with the media, created a public awareness program on the dangers of migrating to Middle Eastern countries. In 2000 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs opened a consulate in Beirut to assist women who were trafficked to Lebanon.

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