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Country of Origin Information Report Ethiopia

Dutch Council for Refugees

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Any views expressed are solely those of the author.

Preface

This report presents country of origin information (COI) on Ethiopia up to 25 January 2016 on Terms of Reference provided by the UNHCR.

The COI presented is illustrative, but not exhaustive, of the information available in the public domain, nor is it determinative of any individual human rights or asylum claim. All sources are publicly available and a direct hyperlink has been provided. A list of sources and databases consulted is also provided to enable users to conduct both further research and source assessments.

This document is intended to be used as a tool to help to identify relevant COI and the COI referred to in this report can be considered by decision-makers in assessing asylum applications and appeals. However, this document should not be submitted in full or in isolation as evidence to refugee decision-making authorities. Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure accuracy, the authors accept no responsibility for any errors included in this report.

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Glossary of abbreviations

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AI	Amnesty International
AMISOM	African Union Mission In Somalia
ARM	African Rights Monitor
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BTI	Bertelsmann Foundation
CAT	United Nations Committee Against Torture
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CORI	Country of Origin Research and Information
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies
CSP	Charities and Societies Proclamation
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
EDF	Ethiopian National Defense Force
EEBC	Eritrean Ethiopian Border Commission
EFDUF	Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum
EFP	Ethiopian Federal Police
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defense Force
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EPDM	Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
FEACC	Federal Ethics and Anticorruption Commission
GPLM	Gambella People's Liberation Movement
GIZ	German Society of International Development Corporation
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Commission of the Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organization
INSA	Information Network Security Agency
MRG	Minority Rights Group
NCCR	National Centre for Competence in Research
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service
OFDM	Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement
OHRC	Ogaden Human Rights Committee
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONC	Oromo National Congress
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OPC	Oromo People's Congress
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organization
RVI	Rift Valley Institute
SEPDF	Southern Ethiopia Peoples Democratic Front
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front

TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TPDM	Tigray People's Democratic Movement
UDJ	Unity of Democracy and Justice
UNDP	United Nations Development Agency
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USDOS	US Department of State
VOA	Voice of America

1 Background Information

1.1 Map of Ethiopia



U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1999, [url](#)

1.2 Timeline of significant historical events (1974 to the present)

Emperor Haile Selassie ruled Ethiopia until 1974, when he was overthrown in a military coup, and the Marxist military junta known as the Derg came to power. The Derg (Amharic for “committee”) was led by Mengistu Haile Mariam.¹ According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), thousands of opponents were arrested, tortured and killed in what came to be known as the Red Terror. After years of insurgency by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and, to a lesser extent, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the EPLF and TPLF succeeded in ousting the Derg regime in 1991. Two years before, in 1989, the TPLF had already established the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition. The EPRDF included the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), and the Southern Ethiopia Peoples Democratic Front (SEPDM). The TPLF was dominant from the beginning.² In 1994, a new constitution was ratified, which defined Ethiopia as a multicultural federation that operates on the basis of ethno-national representation.³ The constitution led to the creation of nine ethnically-based regional states.⁴

In 1993, Eritrea became independent following a referendum.⁵ In May 1998, the seizure by Eritrea of a border village quickly escalated into a full-scale war that lasted two years. An estimated 100,000 people were killed and one million were displaced, according to ICG.⁶ Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports that during the war, the Ethiopian government forcibly expelled an estimated 75,000 people of Eritrean origin to Eritrea. The Eritrean government forcibly deported or took part in the voluntary repatriation of an estimated 70,000 Ethiopians.⁷ The warring parties signed an agreement in December 2000. The United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) notes in its Factbook that Ethiopia has refused to accept the 2007 border demarcation ruling by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Commission (EEBC).⁸ The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reports that a fragile truce between Ethiopia and Eritrea has held, but the UN says ongoing disputes over the demarcation of the border threaten peace.⁹

In 2005 and 2010, there were elections that were widely disputed. The 2005 elections resulted in a crackdown on protesters in which security forces killed almost 200 people and arrested tens of thousands, HRW reports.¹⁰ This election crisis is broadly considered to be a turning point when it comes to repression against political opponents and independent media.¹¹

¹ ICG, *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents*, 4/9/2009, p. 3, [url](#); Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Assessing Risks To Stability*, 6/2011, p. 4, [url](#)

² ICG, *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents*, 4/9/2009, pp. 3-4, [url](#); Abbink, *Ethnic-based federalism and ethnicity in Ethiopia: reassessing the experiment after 20 years*, 2011, p. 597, [url](#)

³ ICG, *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents*, 4/9/2009, p. 4, [url](#)

⁴ Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations, Gambella and Harar and two administrative cities, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. ICG, *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents*, 4/9/2009, pp. 4-5, [url](#); CIA, *The World Factbook, Ethiopia*, accessed 21/1/2016, [url](#)

⁵ ICG, *Beyond the Fragile Peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea: Averting New War*, 17/6/ 2008, p.9, [url](#)

⁶ ICG, *Beyond the Fragile Peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea: Averting New War*, 17/6/ 2008, p.24, [url](#)

⁷ HRW, *The horn of Africa war. Mass expulsions and the nationality issue*, 29/1/2003, p.5, [url](#)

⁸ CIA, *The World Factbook, Ethiopia*, [accessed 21/1/2016]

⁹ BBC, *Country Profile Ethiopia*, 4/12/2015 [url](#)

¹⁰ HRW, *Ethiopia's invisible crisis*, 22/1/2016, [url](#)

¹¹ HRW, *"They Want a Confession"; Torture and Ill-Treatment in Ethiopia's Maekelawi Police Station*, 18/10/2013, [url](#); Al, *"Because I am Oromo": Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p.17, p.26, [url](#); Freedom House, *Freedom on the Net 2012 - Ethiopia*, 24/9/2012, pp. 1-2, [url](#)

In December 2006, Ethiopia intervened in Somalia to oust the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) and return the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to Mogadishu.¹² In early 2014, the Ethiopian army joined the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).¹³

The EPRDF remain in power to date. After the death in August 2012 of long-time leader and prime minister Meles Zenawi, Hailemariam Desalegn was sworn in as his successor.¹⁴ The EPRDF won all parliamentary seats in the May 2015 elections.¹⁵

¹² CSIS, *Assessing Risks To Stability*, 6/2011, p.8, [url](#)

¹³ USDOS, *Country Report on Terrorism 2014 - Chapter 2 - Ethiopia*, 6/2015, [url](#)

¹⁴ BBC, *Country Profile Ethiopia*, 4/12/2015 [url](#); CIA, *The World Factbook, Ethiopia*, [url](#) [accessed 21/1/2016]

¹⁵ The Guardian, *Ethiopia's ruling party wins by landslide in general election*, 22/6/2015, [url](#); BBC, *Ethiopia election: EPRDF wins every seat in parliament*, 22/6/2015, [url](#)

1.3 General overview of ethnic, religious and linguistic groups

Ethiopia has more than 80 ethnic groups, of which the Oromo is the largest, making up approximately 35 percent of the population.¹⁶ Other ethnic groups include the Amhara (27%), Somali (6.2%), Tigray (6.1%), Sidama (4%), Gurage (2.5%), Welaita (2.3%), Hadiya (1.7%), Afar (1.7%), Gamo (1.5%), Gedeo (1.3%), Silte (1.3%), and Kefficho (1.2%).¹⁷

USDOS reports that "the 2007 census estimated 44 percent of the population belongs to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), 34 percent is Sunni Muslim, and 19 percent belongs to Christian evangelical and Pentecostal groups". While the EOC is predominant in the northern regions of Tigray and Amhara and also present in Oromia, Islam is the main religion in the Afar, Oromia, and Somali Regions. Established Protestant churches are prevalent in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), Gambella, and parts of Oromia. Religious minorities include Eastern Rite and Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and adherents of indigenous religion.¹⁸

The main languages spoken in Ethiopia are Oromo (33.8%), Amharic (29.3%), Somali (6.2%), Tigrigna (5.9%), Sidamo (4%), Wolaytta (2.2%), and Gurage (2%).¹⁹ Amharic is the official national language.²⁰ According to a 2007 census, over 21.5 million people in Ethiopia speak Amharic out of a total population of approximately 94 million people (World Bank 2013)²¹. According to Ethnologue, there are 14.8 million monolingual Amharic speakers, whereas 4 million people speak Amharic as a second language.

¹⁶ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

¹⁷ CIA, *The World Factbook, Ethiopia*, [url](#) [accessed 21/1/2016]

¹⁸ USDOS, *International Religious Freedom Report 2014 – Ethiopia*, 14/10/2015, section 1, [url](#)

¹⁹ CIA, *The World Factbook, Ethiopia*, [url](#) [accessed 21/1/2016]

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ethnologue, *Languages of Ethiopia*, [url](#) [accessed 21/1/2016]; USDOS, *International Religious Freedom Report 2014 – Ethiopia*, 14/10/2015, [url](#)

2 Security Information

2.1 Internal security treats

There are a number of armed groups in Ethiopia that are considered security threats, such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and Ginbot 7.

In 2011, the Ethiopian government designated these groups as terrorist organizations.²² They are known to receive support from the Eritrean regime.²³

2.1.1 OLF

The OLF operates in the South and South West of Ethiopia.²⁴ The Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) notes in 2011 that the EPRDF nearly destroyed the OLF in 1992 and that it has kept the rebels to a very low level of insurgency since then.²⁵ In its 2013 report, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs corroborates the demise of the OLF in the 1990s and states that the OLF has an estimated few thousand fighters. Fighters are mainly recruited through local leaders in Oromia.²⁶ Mention is made of OLF attacks in an October 2014 AI report.²⁷ It is not clear in which year these took place.

2.1.2 ONLF

According to the Ethiopian government, the ONLF poses a security threat.²⁸ HRW reports that the ONLF and Ethiopian security forces are engaged in a long-standing low-level conflict in the Somali region. According to HRW, the ONLF increased armed attacks against government targets and oil exploration sites in 2007, which triggered a harsh crackdown by the authorities.²⁹ RVI details that an ONLF attack on the Abole oil field in Degehabur in April 2007, in which at least 65 Ethiopian soldiers and oil workers and nine Chinese employees of a Chinese oil and gas company were killed, marks a turning point in the Ogaden conflict.³⁰ On 13 October 2014, the UN Security Council reported that in 2013, the ONLF decided to move its bases to Mogadishu and now operates from Somalia. As noted above, it receives logistical and financial support from Eritrea.³¹ In January 2015, Freedom House noted that “sporadic violence resumed” in the Ogaden, after peace talks between the government and the ONLF failed in 2013.³² In June 2014, RVI reported that in early 2014, the parties were preparing for another round of talks.³³ In January 2014, two ONLF delegates were

²² HRW, “*Journalism Is Not a Crime*”, 21/1/2015, p. 19, [url](#); USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#)

²³ UNSC, *Letter dated 10 October 2014 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the president of the Security Council*, S/2014/727, 14/10/2014, p. 7, p. 32, [url](#)

²⁴ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.57, [url](#)

²⁵ CSIS, *Ethiopia – Assessing risks to stability*, 6/2011, p.18, [url](#)

²⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.14, [url](#)

²⁷ AI, *Ethiopia: ‘Because I am Oromo’: Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia* 28/10/2014, p. 49, [url](#)

²⁸ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 3, [url](#); RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p.32, [url](#)

²⁹ HRW, “*They Know Everything We Do*”; *Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/3/2014, p.16, [url](#)

³⁰ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p. 21, [url](#)

³¹ UN Security Council, *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to the Security Council resolution 2111 (2013) [S/2014/727]*, 13/10/2014, [url](#)

³² Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

³³ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p. 8, [url](#)

forcibly relocated from Nairobi to Ethiopia, which RVI states raises doubts about the Ethiopian governments commitments to the negotiations with the ONLF.³⁴ Freedom House refers to the events as kidnappings and states this effectively ended the peace talks.³⁵ The resumption of fighting after the ending of the peace talks is corroborated by a 2016 report by the Bertelsmann Foundation.³⁶

2.1.3 Ginbot 7

According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is unknown whether and, if so, in what way Ginbot 7 is involved in the armed resistance against the Ethiopian government.³⁷ On 25 July 2015, Voice of America (VOA) reported that Ginbot 7 had decided to start using armed resistance against the Ethiopian government. Ginbot 7's leader, Berhanu Nega, reportedly moved from the US to Eritrea for this purpose.³⁸

³⁴ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p. 11, [url](#)

³⁵ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

³⁶ BTI, *Ethiopia Country Report*, 2016, p.3, [url](#)

³⁷ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.15, [url](#)

³⁸ VOA, *Ethiopian Opposition Group Threatens Armed Resistance*, 25/7/2015, [url](#)

2.2 External Security Threats

2.2.1 Al-Shabaab threat

According to a report by the Rift Valley Institute, one of the main security aims of the Ethiopian government in the Somali Region is securing the porous border between Ethiopia and Somalia from enemy infiltration, particularly by radical Islamic groups like al-Shabaab.³⁹ USDOS mentions security concerns in the Somali Region during 2014 due to reports of an increase in al-Shabaab terrorists operating in this region, especially in the areas bordering Somalia. As a consequence, access to parts of the region worsened.⁴⁰

In contrast to countries like Kenya, Ethiopia has been able to avoid a large-scale attack by al-Shabaab.⁴¹ Ethiopian security forces and regional special police successfully prevented al-Shabaab attacks on Addis Ababa and other major towns in 2014, USDOS reports.⁴² However, one bomb did explode inside a central Addis Ababa house on 13 October 2013, when two suspected al-Shabaab operatives detonated an explosives-laden vest while preparing for a suicide attack.⁴³ Both persons, who were identified by the Ethiopian government as Somali nationals, were killed.⁴⁴

Following this attempt to a bomb attack, for which al-Shabaab claimed responsibility a day later, Ethiopian security intensified counterterrorism efforts in 2014.⁴⁵ The al-Shabaab threat contributed to the Ethiopian army joining the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) early 2014.

According to USDOS, Ethiopian operations in Somalia “have been instrumental in preventing al-Shabaab’s dispersion into Ethiopia”.⁴⁶

³⁹ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p.29, [url](#)

⁴⁰ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2d, [url](#)

⁴¹ VOA, *Ethiopia Successful in Preventing Al-Shabab's Attacks*, 18/9/2015, [url](#)

⁴² USDOS, *Country Report on Terrorism 2014 - Chapter 2 - Ethiopia*, 6/2015, [url](#)

⁴³ Voice of America, *Ethiopia Successful in Preventing Al-Shabab's Attacks*, 18/9/2015, [url](#); USDOS, *Country Report on Terrorism 2013 - Chapter 2 – Ethiopia*, 30/4/2014, [url](#)

⁴⁴ USDOS, *Country Report on Terrorism 2013 - Chapter 2 – Ethiopia*, 30/4/2014, [url](#)

⁴⁵ IPS, *Al-Shabaab Takes 'Last Gasp' in Ethiopia*, 21/10/2013, [url](#); USDOS, *Country Report on Terrorism 2014 - Chapter 2 - Ethiopia*, 6/2015, [url](#)

⁴⁶ USDOS, *Country Report on Terrorism 2014 - Chapter 2 - Ethiopia*, 6/2015, [url](#)

3 Rule of Law and Administration of Justice

3.1 Security and law enforcement

3.1.1 Military forces (ENDF)

According to the CIA World Factbook, the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) consists of Ground Forces and the Ethiopian Air Force. There is no compulsory military service, but the military does conduct call-ups when it is deemed necessary and compliance with these call-ups is compulsory.⁴⁷ According to the US based opposition news website Ethiomedia and (armed) opposition group Ginbot 7, the leadership of the military is made up of people of predominantly Tigrean ethnicity.⁴⁸

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) notes that the ENDF continues to be involved in an armed struggle with the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in the Somali Regional State. The ENDF works together with the regional Special Police Forces, which are also referred to as the Liyu police. The ENDF is also involved in military operations in Sudan with the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei and the African Union/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur and in Somalia, as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).⁴⁹

Amnesty International (AI) reported in October 2014 that sources had reported that the ENDF targets local communities in Oromia after an Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) attack on an army base or a confrontation between the OLF and the army has taken place. Community members in areas where OLF actions had taken place were questioned, harassed and subjected to brief periods of arrest, on the suspicion of passing information to the OLF or failing to inform the army about the planned attack.⁵⁰

There are reports of grave human rights violations perpetrated by the Ethiopian military. On 6 January 2016, AI reports that the military, amongst other security forces, used excessive force against peaceful protesters in Oromia in the preceding weeks.⁵¹

According to a July 2013 report by the Oakland Institute, an independent policy think tank, the Ethiopian army is a “central player” in the execution of the government's forced resettlement program in the Lower Omo Valley. The Oakland Institute claims the Ethiopian military has committed, among other things, forced evictions, beatings, killings, rape and imprisonment.⁵²

In 2011, the Committee against Torture (CAT) expressed its concern about the routine use of torture by, among other government officials, members of the military. The CAT notes that allegations of torture were not investigated and the perpetrators were not brought to justice.⁵³ In

⁴⁷ CIA, *World Factbook*, [url](#) [accessed 10/12/2015]

⁴⁸ Ginbot 7 website, *TPLF's Minority Ethnic Monopoly of the Armed forces in Ethiopia (A revisit after four years)*, 6/10/2014, [url](#); Ethiomedia, *Minority ethnic domination of the military in Ethiopia*, 28/5/2009, [url](#)

⁴⁹ ICRC, *Annual Report 2014 – Ethiopia*, 9/6/2015, p.145, [url](#)

⁵⁰ AI, *Ethiopia: 'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia* 28/10/2014, p. 49, [url](#)

⁵¹ AI, *Urgent Action: 001/16 [AFR 25/3148/2016]*, 6/1/2016, [url](#)

⁵² Oakland Institute, *Ignoring Abuse in Ethiopia: DFID and USAID in the Lower Omo Valley*, 7/2013, p. 3, [url](#)

⁵³ CAT, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention; Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture; Ethiopia [CAT/C/ETH/CO/1]*, 20/01/2011, p.3, [url](#)

2010, African Rights Monitor (ARM) reported about the killing of thousands of civilians and the widespread use of torture in the Ogaden by the military since 2007.⁵⁴

3.1.2 Paramilitary forces (Liyu Police)

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes in its country report about the Ogaden that the federal government founded paramilitary Special Police Forces (SPF/Liyu Police) in 2009.⁵⁵ HRW reports that the Liyu Police were headed by Abdi Mohamed Omar, who later became regional president. The legal status of the Liyu Police remains unclear, but uniforms, weapons and salaries were supposedly delivered by the Ethiopian government through the regional authorities.⁵⁶ ICG reports that the Liyu Police have increasingly substituted for the Ethiopian army in the battle against the ONLF and its sympathisers.⁵⁷ According to Freedom House, forces such as the Liyu Police sometimes operate independently from the federal government.⁵⁸ Estimates of the total number of Special Police Force troops vary from 8,000 to 40,000 people.⁵⁹

According to the NGO Rift Valley Institute (RVI), the Liyu Police has been running counter-insurgency activities against the ONLF since 2010.⁶⁰ ICG reports that considering that the majority of the Special Police Forces stem from the same Ogadeni sub-clans as the ONLF combatants, the battle has taken on an increasingly intra-clan character.⁶¹

Based on confidential sources, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that the Special Police Forces are mainly active in Jijiga and the Ogaden and less so in the rest of the Somali region. According to several anonymous sources consulted by the Dutch Foreign Ministry, the Special Police Forces sometimes also conduct actions outside of the region and just across the border in Kenya and Somalia.⁶²

According to confidential sources consulted by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of the Special Police Forces are recruited locally. Many recruits are young nomadic Ogadeni with little education and training.⁶³ Members of the Reer Abdullah clan (of the Abdi Mohamed Omar mentioned above) fulfil important positions within the Special Police Forces. Their reasons for joining the Special Police Forces include: money, respect and clan loyalty.⁶⁴ According to a confidential source consulted by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, young Ogadeni may also join to provide security for their own family against the Special Police Forces. New troops are trained and recruited on a yearly basis. None of the sources consulted by the Dutch Foreign Ministry is

⁵⁴ ARM, *Submission from African Rights Monitor to the Committee Against Torture in its 45th session 1-19 November 2010*, 10/2010, p. 8, [url](#)

⁵⁵ Unofficial translation by Dutch Council for Refugees; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thematisch Ambtsbericht Ogaden*, 29/11/2015, p.11, [url](#)

⁵⁶ HRW, *Ethiopia: 'Special Police' Execute 10. Investigate Paramilitary Abuses, Permit Access to Closed-Off Somali Region*, 28/5/2012, [url](#)

⁵⁷ ICG, *Ethiopia: Prospects for Peace in Ogaden*, 6/8/2013, p. 13, [url](#)

⁵⁸ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015: Ethiopia*, 28/01/15, [url](#)

⁵⁹ Unofficial translation by Dutch Council for Refugees; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29/11/2015, *Thematisch Ambtsbericht Ogaden*, p.11, [url](#)

⁶⁰ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden. The search for an end to conflict in the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia*, 2014, p. 26, [url](#)

⁶¹ ICG, *Ethiopia: Prospects for Peace in Ogaden*, 6/8/2013, p. 13, [url](#)

⁶² Unofficial translation by Dutch Council for Refugees; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thematisch Ambtsbericht Ogaden*, 29/11/2015, p.11, [url](#)

⁶³ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thematisch Ambtsbericht Ogaden*, 29/11/2015, p.11, [url](#)

⁶⁴ Ibid.

aware of forced recruitment.⁶⁵

There are reports about human rights abuses by the Liyu Police. USDOS noted in June 2015 that the abuses include killings. USDOS does not specify who is targeted by these killings.⁶⁶ HRW reported on 28 May 2012 that the Liyu Police had summarily executed ten men during an operation in the Ogaden region in March of that year. According to HRW, the Liyu Police have been implicated in numerous serious abuses against civilians throughout the Somali region in the context of counterinsurgency operations.⁶⁷ Similarly, RVI states that dozens of these types of events have taken place in the region since the Liyu Police were created. According to RVI, the Liyu Police are not held accountable for their actions and can be considered a paramilitary force that is beyond the reach of the law.⁶⁸ USDOS also notes that the Liyu Police operate with impunity.⁶⁹

3.1.3 Intelligence and security apparatus (NISS, INSA)

According to HRW, there are three main government departments formally involved in gathering intelligence: the Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), the military, and the Federal Police. The NISS and Federal Police form the anti-terrorism task force.⁷⁰

USDOS reports that the NISS has extensive jurisdiction and operates in the fields of intelligence, border security and criminal investigation. It is responsible for counter-terrorism, which it coordinates with the ENDF and the Ethiopian Federal Police (EFP).⁷¹ According to RVI, the prime minister determines and authorises operational budget and additional secret funds. The head of the NISS reports directly to the prime minister. The RVI reports that, in the Ogaden region, the NISS has an elaborate network of thousands of informants and has ample financial resources.⁷²

In March 2014, HRW published an extensive report about telecom and internet surveillance in Ethiopia.⁷³ HRW states that although the passage in July 2013 of the NISS Proclamation should have clarified the NISS's unclear mandate, the law contains vague language which provides the NISS with broad powers to investigate threats “against the national economic growth and development activities” and to collect information on serious crimes and terrorist activities.⁷⁴ According to HRW, the law leaves disproportionate discretion to the NISS, which raises concerns about abuse of these powers to target potential government opponents.⁷⁵

According to RVI, the NISS has the mandate to watch and neutralise people in the Ogaden region who are within and outside of the regional government structure, to penetrate and control the ONLF,

⁶⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thematisch Ambtsbericht Ogaden*, 29/11/2015, p.11, [url](#)

⁶⁶ USDOS, *2014 Human Rights Reports: Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#)

⁶⁷ HRW, *Ethiopia: ‘Special Police’ Execute 10. Investigate Paramilitary Abuses, Permit Access to Closed-Off Somali Region*, 28/5/2012, [url](#)

⁶⁸ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden. The search for an end to conflict in the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia*, p. 49, 2014, [url](#)

⁶⁹ USDOS, *2014 Human Rights Reports: Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#)

⁷⁰ HRW, *“They Know Everything we Do”; Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/03/2014, p. 29, [url](#)

⁷¹ USDOS, *2014 Human Rights Reports: Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#)

⁷² RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden. The search for an end to conflict in the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia*, p. 34, 2014, [url](#)

⁷³ HRW, 25/03/2014, [url](#)

⁷⁴ HRW, *“They Know Everything We Do”; Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/03/2014, p. 29, [url](#);

⁷⁵ HRW, *“They Know Everything e Do”; Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/03/2014, p. 97, [url](#)

to control border movements and to predict developments in the region that might affect regional security.⁷⁶ It is unclear whether this mandate applies nationally or is specific to the Ogaden region.

HRW states that Ethiopia has a complete monopoly over its telecommunications sector and maintains strict control over telecommunication and internet activities.⁷⁷ The only telecommunication company, Ethio Telecom, is state-owned. According to HRW, in practice the NISS does not seem to go through particular procedures when they access customer data or phone call recordings from Ethio Telecom. Ethiopia uses advanced technology to monitor internet activities of its citizens.⁷⁸

Freedom House notes that the Information Network Security Agency (INSA) is a government agency established in 2011 and is controlled by people who are close to the regime. According to Freedom House, INSA has considerable power in the regulation of the internet, under the mandate of the protection of Ethiopia's communications infrastructure and the prevention of cybercrimes.⁷⁹

According to HRW, while relatively new, INSA is an increasingly powerful branch of the security apparatus. It is increasingly integrated with Ethio Telecom and other departments involved in intelligence.⁸⁰

3.1.4 Police forces

According to USDOS, the Federal Police force reports to the Ministry of Federal Affairs, which is subject to parliamentary oversight. This oversight is loose in practice. Each of Ethiopia's nine regions has a state or special police force that reports to the regional authorities. Local militias operate in some degree of coordination with regional and Federal Police and the military. The degree of coordination differs per region. The law requires authorities to obtain judicial warrants to search private property, but the police do not comply with this legal obligation. According to USDOS, there were no reports of courts excluding evidence because of the absence of a warrant.⁸¹ According to both AI and USDOS, the Ethiopian police forces committed human rights violations, such as abuse of detainees and using force against peaceful protesters.⁸²

On 6 January 2016, AI reported that the Federal Police, amongst other security forces, had used excessive force against peaceful protesters in Oromia in the preceding weeks.⁸³

⁷⁶ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden. The search for an end to conflict in the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia*, p. 34, 2014, [url](#)

⁷⁷ HRW, *"They Know Everything We Do"; Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/03/2014, p. 2, [url](#);

⁷⁸ HRW, *"They Know Everything We Do"; Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/03/2014, p. 39, [url](#);

⁷⁹ Freedom House, *Freedom on the Net 2015: Ethiopia*, 2/11/2015, [url](#)

⁸⁰ HRW, *"They Know Everything We Do"; Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/03/2014, p. 29, [url](#);

⁸¹ USDOS, *2014 Human Rights Reports: Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#)

⁸² USDOS, *2014 Human Rights Reports: Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#); AI, 25/2/2015, [url](#)

⁸³ AI, *Urgent Action: 001/16 [AFR 25/3148/2016]*, 6/1/2016 [url](#)

3.2 Rights abuses by security forces

3.2.1 Extrajudicial killings

USDOS mentions alleged arbitrary killings as one of the human rights problems in Ethiopia.⁸⁴ According to AI, federal and regional security services were responsible for violations throughout the country, including extrajudicial executions.⁸⁵ HRW reports that Ethiopian security forces in the Somali region have committed, amongst other serious abuses, extrajudicial killings based on ethnicity or perceived support for the ONLF.⁸⁶

AI has documented apparent targeted killings of opposition political party members throughout the period of the May 2015 elections and has urged the Ethiopian authorities to investigate and bring those responsible to justice.⁸⁷

On 22 January 2016, HRW reported about large-scale protests in Oromia since mid-November 2015, during which countless students and farmers were killed by security forces.⁸⁸ In a 7 January 2016 article, HRW put the number of protesters killed by security forces at 140.⁸⁹ The students were protesting against a government proposal, known as the “Master Plan”, to expand Addis Ababa into the surrounding farmland of the Oromia region. It is feared that mass evictions will take place and farmers will lose their land. The Guardian reports that in May 2014, when the “Master Plan” was first announced, at least nine students were killed during protests.⁹⁰ According to HRW, both opposition politicians and peaceful protesters are treated with an iron fist.⁹¹ HRW notes that the protests echo the events of April and May 2014, when federal forces shot at groups of largely peaceful Oromo protesters. Dozens were killed and at least hundreds of students were arrested, of whom many are still being detained. According to HRW, the trigger for the demonstrations is the planned expansion of Addis Ababa's municipal boundary into the Oromia region, but the protests are also about the broader feeling of being marginalized and discriminated against by successive Ethiopian governments.⁹²

On 3 June 2015, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child noted that several children had died or were injured as a result of the use of excessive force by federal forces during the April 2014 demonstrations in Ambo, Oromia.⁹³

Human Rights Watch has documented the extrajudicial execution of ten men during an operation in the Ogaden in March 2012.⁹⁴

3.2.2 Enforced disappearances

USDOS reports that in 2014, there were fewer credible reports of disappearances of civilians after

⁸⁴ USDOS, *2014 Human Rights Reports: Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#)

⁸⁵ AI, *Amnesty International Report 2014/15 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Ethiopia*, 25/2/15, [url](#)

⁸⁶ HRW, *“Journalism Is Not a Crime”*, 21/1/2015, p. 38, [url](#)

⁸⁷ AI, *Ethiopia: Investigate suspicious murders and human rights violations*, 23/6/2015, [url](#)

⁸⁸ HRW, *Ethiopia's Invisible Crisis*, 22/1/2016, [url](#)

⁸⁹ HRW, *Dispatches: Arrest of Respected Politician Escalating Crisis in Ethiopia*, [url](#)

⁹⁰ The Guardian, *Violent clashes in Ethiopia over 'master plan' to expand Addis*, 11/2/2015, [url](#)

⁹¹ HRW, *Arrest of Respected Politician Escalating Crisis in Ethiopia*, 7/1/2016, [url](#)

⁹² HRW, *Dispatches: Yet Again, a Bloody Crackdown on Protesters in Ethiopia*, 5/12/2015, [url](#)

⁹³ CRC, *Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Ethiopia [CRC/C/ETH/CO/4-5]*, 3/6/2015, p. 6, [url](#)

⁹⁴ HRW, *Ethiopia: 'Special Police' Execute 10. Investigate Paramilitary Abuses, Permit Access to Closed-Off Somali Region*, 28 May 2012, [url](#)

clashes between security forces and rebel groups than in previous years.⁹⁵

According to AI, large numbers of Oromo people were arbitrarily arrested in the Oromia region in 2014 because of their peaceful expression of dissent, or suspected involvement with the opposition. Many people were detained without trial and in unofficial detention centres, especially military camps in the region. AI reports that there was no accountability for enforced disappearances or extrajudicial executions during 2014 or previous years.⁹⁶

In October 2014, AI published a report about the arrests of at least 5,000 Oromos between 2011 and 2014 based on their actual or suspected peaceful opposition to the government. In most of these cases, the arrests amounted to enforced disappearance, as the government refused to confirm the arrests and concealed the whereabouts or fate of the disappeared persons. There were no judicial reviews of the lawfulness of the detention and the detainees were held incommunicado without contact with the outside world. Amnesty International reports that there were also many reports about enforced disappearances before 2011.⁹⁷

In 2007, the Ogaden Human Rights Committee (OHRC) documented more than 3,000 disappearances between 1995 and 2007, of mostly Ogadeni people.⁹⁸

3.2.3 Torture

In its report about the human rights situation in 2014, USDOS states that while torture is prohibited by law and the constitution, there were reports that detainees were tortured and otherwise abused by members of the security forces. According to sources, police investigators often used violence to extract confessions in the central police investigation headquarters in Addis Ababa, Maekelawi.⁹⁹ USDOS states that NGOs reported cases of torture of people who criticized the government.¹⁰⁰ It further reports that requests from the UN special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment to visit Ethiopia remained unanswered.¹⁰¹

According to Amnesty International, torture and ill-treatment were widespread in 2014, often used as part of a system to silence actual or suspected opposition. Torture took place in local police stations, the Maikelawi federal police station, federal and regional prisons, and in military camps. According to AI, the torture methods that were reported included: "beating with sticks, rubber batons, gun butts and other objects; burning; tying in stress positions; electric shocks; and forced prolonged physical exercise." Some detention conditions also amounted to torture, such as detaining people underground without light, and detaining people shackled and in prolonged solitary confinement. Torture often took place in the early stages of detention, combined with interrogation. It was used to force a confession, to make detainees sign incriminating evidence and to make them incriminate others. While complaints about being tortured were brought forward in several court cases, no investigation took place.¹⁰² On 17 October 2013, HRW published an

⁹⁵ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#)

⁹⁶ AI, *Amnesty International Report 2014/15 - The State of the World's Human Rights – Ethiopia*, 25/2/2015, [url](#)

⁹⁷ AI, *Ethiopia: 'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/14, p. 63, [url](#)

⁹⁸ OHRC, *Ogaden: Ethiopian government forces: massacre, displace and starve out the civilian population with impunity*, 8/8/2007, p. 8, [url](#)

⁹⁹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1.c, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2.a, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 5, [url](#)

¹⁰² AI, *Amnesty International Report 2014/15 - The State of the World's Human Rights – Ethiopia*,

elaborate report about the use of torture and ill-treatment in the Maekelawi police station in Addis Ababa.¹⁰³

Landinfo, the Norwegian country of origin information department, noted in its 2013 report about prison conditions that being whipped with wires and electrical cords and threats of being injected with HIV-infected blood are among the abuses prisoners in Ethiopia face.¹⁰⁴

On 20 January 2011, the Committee Against Torture (CAT) expressed its concern about “numerous, ongoing and consistent allegations concerning the routine use of torture by the police, prison officers and other members of the security forces, as well as the military, in particular against political dissidents and opposition party members, students, alleged terrorist suspects and alleged supporters of insurgent groups such as the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).” The CAT further states that it is concerned that there are credible reports that this often occurs with the participation or consent of commanding officers and that torture is commonly used to extract confessions.¹⁰⁵ CAT further notes that it is deeply concerned that Ethiopia appears to fail to investigate allegations of torture and prosecute perpetrators.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ 25/2/2015, [url](#)
HRW, *"They Want a Confession". Torture and Ill-Treatment in Ethiopia's Maekelawi Police Station*, 17/10/2015, p. 1, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Landinfo, *Etiopia: Fengselsforhold*, 6/11/2012, p. 3, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵ CAT, *Concluding observations*, C/ETH/CO/1, 20/1/2011, p. 3, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

3.3 Judicial system

3.3.1 Judicial independence

According to USDOS, the law provides for an independent judiciary. Whereas civil courts operated with a large degree of independence, criminal courts remained weak, overburdened, and politically influenced.¹⁰⁷

The NGO the Bertelsmann Foundation (BTI) notes that while the constitution states that the judiciary is an independent pillar of the political system, reality is different. Courts receive direct orders from the executive branch of government and corruption is widespread. According to BTI, the judiciary has never had the ability to review legislative or executive acts.¹⁰⁸

Freedom House notes the lack of an independent judiciary, as does HRW.¹⁰⁹ According to HRW, no justice can be found in the courts in politically motivated prosecutions, because of the lack of judicial independence.¹¹⁰

3.3.2 Arbitrary arrest and detention

USDOS reports that although the constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, there were many reports in 2014 of arbitrary arrest and detention by police and security forces throughout Ethiopia.¹¹¹

AI also reports about arbitrary arrests by federal and regional security services. AI states that many people were arbitrarily detained without charge in the initial stages of their detention, or throughout the entire period. Arbitrary detention took place in both official and unofficial detention centres. Many detainees were held incommunicado, without access to their lawyers and family members. In its report on 2014, AI has documented numerous cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, including of political prisoners. Access to detention centres for the purposes of monitoring and documenting the treatment of detainees was severely restricted.¹¹² HRW also mentions that arbitrary arrests continued in 2014.¹¹³

Several sources report about arbitrary arrests and detention during the Master Plan protests of November 2015-January 2016 mentioned above.¹¹⁴

3.3.3 Access to fair trial and due process

USDOS reports that the law provides for a fair public trial by a court of law within a reasonable time. The law further provides for the presumption of innocence, the right to be represented by a legal representative of choice, the right to appeal, the right not to self-incriminate, the right to present witnesses and evidence in defence, the right to cross-examine witnesses the prosecution presents and the right to access government-held evidence. According to USDOS, judicial inefficiency and a

¹⁰⁷ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1.e, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ BTI, *Ethiopia Country Report*, 2014, pp.9-10, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ Freedom House, *Freedom of the Press 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/04/2015, [url](#); HRW, “*Journalism Is Not a Crime*”, 21/1/2015, p. 20, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ IPS, *Ethiopian Journalists Hope New Council Will Ease Restrictions*, 10/5/2013, [url](#)

¹¹¹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1.d, [url](#)

¹¹² AI, *Amnesty International Report 2014/15 - The State of the World's Human Rights – Ethiopia*, 25/2/2015, [url](#)

¹¹³ HRW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/01/2015

¹¹⁴ AI, *Urgent Action: 001/16 [AFR 25/3148/2016]*, 6/1/2016 [url](#); HRW, *Ethiopia's Invisible Crisis*, 22/1/2016, [url](#)

lack of qualified staff often lead to delays. Many defendants only became aware of the charges against them at the start of the trial, leading to defence attorneys' inability to prepare. Access to legal counsel was limited.¹¹⁵

According to USDOS, the law recognizes religious and traditional or customary courts. In rural areas, citizens generally have little access to formal judicial systems. They rely on traditional dispute resolution. All parties must agree to the use of a traditional or religious court before the case is heard.¹¹⁶

In its October 2014 report about human rights violations by security forces against actual or suspected dissenters in Oromia, AI notes that there were repeated reports about the use of false and coerced witnesses. In order to be released, some people were forced to give false testimony incriminating others. Sometimes, the only witnesses were the police officers arresting the person. Furthermore, information and/or confessions that were the result of torture were admitted into evidence.¹¹⁷

Freedom House notes that journalists have few guarantees of due process or a fair trial due to the selective enforcements of laws and the lack of an independent judiciary. Charges are often filed arbitrarily in response to personal disputes. Court cases can take years, and many journalists have multiple charges pending against them.¹¹⁸

In July 2015, AI reported about the case of four members of the Semayawi (Blue) opposition party who were not released from detention, even though there were several court orders dictating their release.¹¹⁹

HRW states that it has serious concerns about the right to a fair trial and due process in the case of six bloggers and three journalists who were arrested on 24 and 25 April 2014. They were charged under the criminal code and the anti-terrorism law for links to banned opposition groups and trying to violently overthrow the government. They had no access to lawyers and their case had been adjourned 27 times at the time of the HRW article.¹²⁰ According to AI, six of the group claimed to have been forced to sign confessions. Three had stated that they had been tortured. The court did not investigate.¹²¹ Various sources report the Zone 9 bloggers have been released in July and October 2015.¹²²

On 2 April 2013, HRW reported that 29 Muslim protest leaders who are prosecuted under the anti-terrorism law have limited access to legal counsel and have had their hearings closed to the media and their families. Some claim to have been subjected to ill-treatment in pre-trial detention.¹²³

In December 2012, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded that the detention of journalist Eskinder Nega was arbitrary and that he should be released.¹²⁴ After nine months in

¹¹⁵ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1.e, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, pp. 72-74, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ Freedom House, *Freedom of the Press 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/04/2015, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ AI, *Respect court rulings and release opposition members*, 1/7/2015, [url](#)

¹²⁰ HRW, *Free Zone 9 Bloggers, Journalists*, 23/4/2015, [url](#)

¹²¹ AI, *The State of the World's Human Rights – Ethiopia*, 25/2/2015, [url](#)

¹²² AI, *Op-ed: The world must not forget the jailed journalists of Ethiopia*, 10/12/2015, [url](#); Freedom House: *Freedom on the Net 2015 - Ethiopia*, 2/11/2015, [url](#)

¹²³ HRW, *Ethiopia Muslim Protesters Face Unfair Trial*, 2/4/2013, [url](#)

¹²⁴ HRC, 65th Session, "Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention",

detention, Eskinder Nega was sentenced to 18 years in prison for a conspiracy to commit terrorist acts, participation in a terrorist organisation, and treason.¹²⁵ In December 2015, Eskinder Nega was still in prison.¹²⁶

3.3.4 Prison / detention conditions

AI notes that the Ethiopian Federal Prisons Commission Establishing Proclamation requires prison accommodation to have enough air and sufficient light, sufficient food and medical care and that the Council of Ministers' Regulations on the Treatment of Federal Prisoners provides for every prisoner to have, amongst other things, a bed, access to toilet facilities, and enough water.¹²⁷

According to USDOS, prison and detention centre conditions were harsh and in some cases life threatening. Detainees were tortured and medical attention was insufficient in some cases. According to USDOS, there were six federal and 120 regional prisons in Ethiopia, plus many unofficial detention centres, mostly located at military camps. Pre-trial detention often took place at police station detention facilities.¹²⁸

USDOS reports that on average, detainees received nine birr [€ 0.04]¹²⁹ per person per day for water, food and healthcare, but this differed throughout the country. This was sometimes supplemented by family members bringing food or people buying things from local vendors. There were reports that prison officials prevented some detainees from receiving food from their families. In federal prisons, medical care was unreliable. In regional prisons, it was practically absent. Sanitary conditions were bad due to both a lack of sanitary services and a shortage of water. Prisons and detention centres were severely overcrowded.¹³⁰

AI notes that some detention conditions amounted to torture, such as detaining people underground without light, shackled and in prolonged solitary confinement.¹³¹

In a 2014 report about human rights violations by security forces against actual or suspected dissenters in Oromia region, AI states that accounts of former detainees interviewed by AI demonstrate that detention conditions in regional and federal police stations, regional and federal prisons, military camps and other unofficial places of detention violate international law and national and international standards.¹³² Overcrowding was often so severe that detainees could not sleep simultaneously, due to a lack of space on the floor.¹³³ In several locations there were underground cells.¹³⁴ Food was insufficient and of poor quality, and many former detainees reported they received little drinking water. Many detainees reported that the water they did receive was dirty and unsafe. In both official and unofficial detention centres, adequate access to toilet

A/HRC/WGAD/2012/62, 28/12/2012, p. 9, [url](#)

¹²⁵ HRW, "Journalism Is Not a Crime", 21/1/2015, pp. 21-22, [url](#)

¹²⁶ AI, *Op-ed: The world must not forget the jailed journalists of Ethiopia*, 10/12/2015, [url](#)

¹²⁷ AI, 'Because I am Oromo': *Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia* [AFR 25/006/2014], 28/10/2014, p. 93, [url](#)

¹²⁸ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1.c, [url](#)

¹²⁹ XE, *Universal Currency Converter*, [url](#) [accessed 24/12/2015]

¹³⁰ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1.c, [url](#)

¹³¹ AI, *The State of the World's Human Rights – Ethiopia*, 25/2/2015, [url](#)

¹³² AI, 'Because I am Oromo': *Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 93, [url](#)

¹³³ AI, 'Because I am Oromo': *Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 94, [url](#)

¹³⁴ AI, 'Because I am Oromo': *Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 94, [url](#)

facilities was denied.¹³⁵ There were cases of death in detention reported to AI. These deaths were reported to be the result of poor detention conditions, torture and lack of medical assistance.¹³⁶

In the 2013 HRW report mentioned above about torture and ill-treatment at Maekelawi police station, HRW makes note of harsh detention conditions, due to limited sanitary facilities, restricted access to them and lack of daylight, air and food. Detainees also reported a lack of access to adequate medical care.¹³⁷

3.3.5 Impunity and witness protection

USDOS notes that impunity was a serious problem. In general, the government did not take steps to punish officials who committed abuses. According to USDOS, the mechanisms used to investigate abuses by the federal police were unknown. The government did continue to support human rights training for police and army personnel.¹³⁸ According to AI, the security services operated with near-total impunity.¹³⁹ According to HRW, the Charities and Societies Proclamation and the Anti-Terrorism Law, both implemented in 2009, have contributed to a climate of impunity.¹⁴⁰ HRW notes that accountability for abuses by security officials has been minimal to non-existent.¹⁴¹ In its report about peace talks in the Ogaden, the RVI points out that the lack of accountability on all sides is a historical characteristic of the Ogaden conflict.¹⁴²

AI reports that interviewees said it was either not possible or that there was no point in seeking answers or seeking justice in cases of enforced disappearance, torture, possible extra-judicial executions or other violations. People feared their enquiries might have negative consequences. Some were indeed arrested after providing information about the fate or whereabouts of family members.¹⁴³

USDOS reports that on February 2014, the trial of 19 Muslims identified with the July 2012 protests was made public again by the Federal High Court. The trial proceedings had been closed because of alleged national security and witness safety concerns.¹⁴⁴

No other information has been found on witness protection.

According to USDOS, the government rarely published the results of investigations into abuses committed by local security services, such as arbitrary detention and beatings of civilians.¹⁴⁵ In its report about the Oromia region, AI states that there was a lack of investigations into reported abuses, such as incidents of unnecessary force against peaceful protesters, unnecessary and

¹³⁵ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 96, [url](#)

¹³⁶ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 98, [url](#)

¹³⁷ HRW, *"They Want a Confession". Torture and Ill-Treatment in Ethiopia's Maekelawi Police Station*, 17/10/2015, pp. 35-37, [url](#)

¹³⁸ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1.d, [url](#)

¹³⁹ AI, *The State of the World's Human Rights – Ethiopia*, 25/2/2015, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ HRW, *"They Want a Confession". Torture and Ill-Treatment in Ethiopia's Maekelawi Police Station*, 17/10/2015, p. 48, [url](#)

¹⁴¹ HRW, *"They Want a Confession". Torture and Ill-Treatment in Ethiopia's Maekelawi Police Station*, 17/10/2015, p. 46, [url](#)

¹⁴² CR, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 06/2014, p. 13, [url](#)

¹⁴³ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 12, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1.e, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1.d, [url](#)

excessive use of force during arrests, deaths of suspects in custody and other fatalities at the hands of the government.¹⁴⁶ When defendants complained in court about having been subjected to torture, this was not investigated either.¹⁴⁷

AI details how in 2005, parliament established a Commission of Inquiry into the violence used by security forces during the June and November demonstrations against the election process that year. Before the Commission could present its results and its conclusion that police had used excessive force, the prime minister called the Commission and asked it to reconsider. After receiving threats, the chair and vice-chair members of the Commission felt compelled to flee the country. The conclusion of the remaining Commission members was changed into no use of excessive force having taken place.¹⁴⁸

3.3.6 Local dispute resolution mechanisms (Xeer)

Some ethnic groups use a customary law system to govern daily life, such as the *Gedda system* in the Oromia region, the *Abbo-gereb* in the Tigray region and the *Xeer* in the Somali region.

In a 2006 report about grassroots conflict assessment of the Somali region of Ethiopia, the NGO CHF International details that Somali society is traditionally guided by *Xeer*, a set of customary rules, regulations and values guarded by elders. *Xeer* is based on old customary norms and influenced by sharia law. *Xeer* can be used to settle conflicts within a clan, and can also represent a set of rules for inter-clan contact. Not all clans have *Xeer* with each other. *Xeer* is transmitted orally, passed on from generation to generation. Paying compensation in money or livestock (*diya*) if someone has been hurt in some way can be the result of the conflict resolution process. Women are excluded from the debate, negotiation and decision-making involved.¹⁴⁹ *Xeer* determines the appropriate compensation per offence, examples of which are offered in a report by the Swiss National Centre for Competence in Research (NCCR) North South.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ AI, 'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia, 28/10/2014, p. 78, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ AI, 'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia, 28/10/2014, p. 106, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ AI, 'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia, 28/10/2014, p. 107, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹ CHF International, *Grassroots Conflict Assessment of the Somali Region, Ethiopia*, 2006, p. 13, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ NCCR North South (Gebre Mariam, A.), *The Critical Issue of Land Ownership: Violent Conflict Between Abdalla Tolomogge and Awlihan in Godey Zone, Somali Region of Ethiopia*, 2005, p. 43, [url](#)

3.4 Corruption

USDOS reports that corruption is a problem in Ethiopia, ranging from low-level bureaucrats asking for bribes to judicial corruption.¹⁵¹ According to BTI, corruption by public officeholders is high. A 2012 survey showed that 48% of Ethiopians reported to have paid a bribe to a service provider in the preceding 12 months. Apart from this “petty corruption”, there is also widespread corruption at the top level of government, regional governments and parastatal bodies.¹⁵² Freedom House notes that EPRDF officials reportedly receive preferential access to credit, land leases and jobs.¹⁵³ USDOS details that there is also corruption and official complicity in crimes concerning trafficking in persons.¹⁵⁴ Ethiopia ranks 110 out of 175 on Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Index, 175 being the most corrupt country on the ranking.¹⁵⁵

According to USDOS, the law sets penalties for corruption by government officials and the Federal Ethics and Anticorruption Commission (FEACC) combats corruption. USDOS mentions high level government officials who were prosecuted for corruption in 2014.¹⁵⁶ BTI stated in 2014 that while government was engaged in some efforts to bring offenders to court, adequate prosecution was rare. The number of anti-corruption drives by the government had increased, but according to BTI, they were selective and often appeared politically motivated.¹⁵⁷ In January 2015, Freedom House pointed out that the Ethiopian government tried to demonstrate its commitment to fighting corruption in 2013, after the World Bank released a study about corruption in the country. High-profile arrests by the FEACC of a number of prominent officials and businessmen in 2013 and 2014 formed part of this effort. Despite hasty improvements in legislation, however, the actual enforcement of corruption-related laws remains weak, says Freedom House.¹⁵⁸ The UN Development Agency (UNDP) has a considerably more positive view in their 2015 report, stating that the government promotes zero tolerance on corruption in the public sector, has established the FEACC to undertake prevention, investigation and prosecution measures and has passed laws on asset declaration and on regulation of the tenders for public contracts. UNDP further points to the establishment of the institution of the Ombudsman and the existence of the Office of the Auditor General, which is charged with ensuring value for money and monitoring the expenditures of government/public entities.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, UNDP does refer to corruption as a major bottleneck in efforts by the government to transform the economy and social well-being.¹⁶⁰ The 2012 World Bank report mentioned by Freedom House concludes that it seems as though corrupt practice in the delivery of basic services is relatively limited in Ethiopia and might be much lower than in other low-income countries. There are strong differences in the levels of corruption in different sectors.¹⁶¹

¹⁵¹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 4, [url](#)

¹⁵² BTI, *Ethiopia Country Report*, 2014, p.10, [url](#)

¹⁵³ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/01/2015, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ USDOS, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 - Country Narratives – Ethiopia*, 27/1/2015, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2014*, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 4, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ BTI, *Ethiopia Country Report*, 2014, p.10, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/01/2015, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹ UNDP, *National Human Developments Report 2014 Ethiopia - Accelerating Inclusive Growth for Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia*, 2015, p. 75, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ UNDP, *National Human Developments Report 2014 Ethiopia - Accelerating Inclusive Growth for Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia*, 2015, p. 95, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ World Bank, *Diagnosing Corruption in Ethiopia: Perceptions, Realities, and the Way Forward for Key Sectors*, 06/2012, [url](#)

4 Human Rights Issues

4.1 Freedom of association and assembly

4.1.1 Legal framework

Article 30 of the Ethiopian constitution provides for freedom of assembly and article 31 provides for freedom of association.¹⁶² According to USDOS, both the constitution and the law provide for freedom of assembly.¹⁶³

Relevant national legislation includes the Peaceful Demonstration and Public Political Meeting Procedure Proclamation No. 3/199.¹⁶⁴ ICNL reports that according to the Proclamation, the organizers of peaceful demonstrations and public political meetings are required to provide advance notification to the authorities. The 48-hour advance notification has no requirement for the minimum number of participants for it to apply.¹⁶⁵ USDOS also notes that organizers of large public meetings or demonstrations have to notify the government 48 hours in advance and obtain a permit.¹⁶⁶ After receiving the request to hold a public meeting or demonstration, the government has 12 hours to notify the organizers of any reservations it might have. If the time or place are not accepted by the government, it needs to provide a written explanation. There is no appeal procedure against a rejection of an application for a public meeting or demonstration. ICNL states that the government has broad discretion to impose restrictions on time, place, manner and content. It is not for instance allowed to hold a demonstration or public political meeting in a church, mosque or other prayer house or within 500 metres of a military base or security office.¹⁶⁷

ICNL further notes that there are vague provisions in the Criminal Code for violations. Article 487 states that “whoever makes, utters, distributes or cries out seditious or threatening remarks” or “publicly incites or provokes others to disobey orders” is punishable with a maximum of six months in prison or a fine of maximum 500 Birr.¹⁶⁸ INCL states that the vagueness of the language used in “seditious or threatening nature” might lead to arbitrary enforcement.¹⁶⁹

USDOS reports that while the law provides for freedom of association and assembly, these rights were in fact limited. USDOS notes that in 2014, the government denied some requests by opposition political parties to hold demonstrations, but permitted others.¹⁷⁰ According to ICNL, however, since the 2005 elections freedom of assembly seems to be a right reserved for the ruling party. It states that no other political party has been allowed to hold peaceful demonstrations.¹⁷¹ According to the BTI, the rights of freedom of association and assembly exist on paper only. In practice, there are severe restrictions on attempts to get together and build associations. BTI notes that the government has used intimidation, harassment or threats of retaliation in attempts to prevent people from exercising their rights, “for example by arbitrarily arresting, detaining and

¹⁶² Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 21/8/1995, [url](#)

¹⁶³ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2b, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ ICNL, *NGO Law Monitor: Ethiopia*, 21/3/2015, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵ ICNL, *NGO Law Monitor: Ethiopia*, 21/3/2015, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2b, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ ICNL, *NGO Law Monitor: Ethiopia*, 21/3/2015, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ National Authorities Ethiopia, *Criminal Code*, Proclamation No. 414/2004, 9 May 2005 [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ ICNL, *NGO Law Monitor: Ethiopia*, 21/3/2015, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2b, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ ICNL, *NGO Law Monitor: Ethiopia*, 21/3/2015, [url](#)

imprisoning peaceful demonstrators or using excessive force.”¹⁷²

ICNL reports that, according to opposition leaders, the government restricts time and place of proposed demonstrations under various pretexts.¹⁷³ USDOS also notes that protest organizers claimed that the security concerns the government stated as the reason for the necessity to relocate were not credible.¹⁷⁴

Regarding the possibility to hold gatherings, USDOS notes that local government officials controlled access to municipal halls, and that there were many complaints from opposition parties that local officials denied or otherwise obstructed the scheduling of opposition parties' use of halls for political rallies. According to USDOS, there were numerous credible reports that owners of hotels and other large facilities forbade political parties to use their spaces, citing unspecified internal rules.¹⁷⁵ Reporting by ICNL corroborates this information.¹⁷⁶

In its report about the Oromia region, AI reports that numerous former detainees stated that their release from prison was on the condition that they would not participate in demonstrations or other gatherings, political meetings or student activities. Some were said not to meet with more than two or three people at the same time or to avoid contact with certain people, including spouses or family members.¹⁷⁷

4.1.1.1 *The Charities and Societies Proclamation*

In 2009, the Charities and Societies Proclamations No. 621/2009,(CSP) was passed, which concerns the registration and regulation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). AI reports that the CSP requires organizations to register in one of three categories: Ethiopian Charities or Societies, Ethiopian Resident Charities or Societies, or Foreign Charities. Only Ethiopian Charities and Societies are allowed to work on human rights issues; international organizations are prohibited from doing so. AI reports that the law includes restrictions on the ability to work on the 'advancement of human and democratic rights' and restrictions on advocating 'the efficiency of the justice and law enforcement services'.¹⁷⁸ The CSP prevents Ethiopian Charities and Societies from receiving more than ten percent of their budget from foreign funding. Furthermore, organizations are not allowed to receive anonymous donations.¹⁷⁹ The law also determines that administrative costs cannot be more than thirty percent. According to AI, this is problematic because of the vague definition of 'administrative', as all activities of human rights organizations, such as collecting testimony to abuses, might be defined as administrative. AI states that the Charities and Societies Agency that was created to enforce the law, has broad discretionary powers.¹⁸⁰ On 12 March 2012, AI published a report about the impact of the CSP on human rights work and human rights

¹⁷² BTI, *Ethiopia Country Report*, 2014, p.8, [url](#)

¹⁷³ ICNL, *NGO Law Monitor: Ethiopia*, 21/3/2015, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2b, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ ICNL, *NGO Law Monitor: Ethiopia*, 21/3/2015, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, pp. 68-69, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 101, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹ AI, *Stifling human rights work: The impact of civil society legislation in Ethiopia*, 12/3/2015, p. 9, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰ AI, *Ethiopia: The 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation as a serious obstacle to the promotion and protection of human rights in Ethiopia*, 11/6/2012, [url](#)

organizations in Ethiopia. It states that there is a climate of fear and organizations and human rights defenders practice considerable self-censorship.¹⁸¹ Violations of the law can lead to heavy fines or imprisonment of NGO staff.¹⁸² HRW reports that the CSP law was more rigorously enforced in 2014 than in previous years.¹⁸³

According to AI, the CSP has had a “devastating” impact on human rights organizations in Ethiopia.¹⁸⁴ Many were forced to shut down, others changed their mandate and no longer work on human rights issues, and many had to reduce the work they were doing.¹⁸⁵ HRW reports that the CSP has “eviscerated” independent civil society in Ethiopia.¹⁸⁶ The UN special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association stated in 2013 that the CSP has had “a devastating impact on individuals' ability to form and operate associations effectively”.¹⁸⁷ The special rapporteur recommended that the Ethiopian government revise the law.¹⁸⁸

4.1.2 Treatment of (actual and perceived) members and supporters of political opposition parties and political activists

The ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) is hostile to dissent wherever and however it manifests, reports AI. Since the 2005 elections, the environment for freedom of expression and association has steadily deteriorated. AI notes that: “members of legally-registered opposition political parties have been jailed in large numbers, and the independent media and human rights civil society have been dismantled through a combination of harassment and repressive legislation.”¹⁸⁹ Freedom House also notes that government harassment and arrest of prominent opposition took place.¹⁹⁰

4.1.2.1 Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM), Oromo People's Congress (OPC), Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) and other Oromo opposition movements

AI reports that in July 2012, the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM) and the Oromo People's Congress (OPC, formerly known as Oromo National Congress (ONC)) merged into the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC).¹⁹¹

In its report about the Oromia region, AI states that the government's intolerance of dissent is “particularly potent” in Oromia. The government has demonstrated repeatedly that it anticipates a

¹⁸¹ AI, *Stifling human rights work: The impact of civil society legislation in Ethiopia*, 12/3/2015, [url](#)

¹⁸² AI, *Ethiopia: The 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation as a serious obstacle to the promotion and protection of human rights in Ethiopia*, 11/6/2012, [url](#)

¹⁸³ HRW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/01/2015, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ AI, *Ethiopia: The 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation as a serious obstacle to the promotion and protection of human rights in Ethiopia*, 11/6/2012, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 101, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ HRW, *“Journalism Is Not a Crime”*, 21/1/2015, p. 4, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷ OHCHR, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai*, 24/4/2013, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai - Addendum - Observations on communications transmitted to Governments and replies received*, A/HRC/23/39/Add.2, 30/5/2013, p. 22, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 18, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 122, [url](#)

high level of dissent among the Oromo. This, in conjunction with the numerical size of the Oromo and the sense of Oromo identity and nationalism, is assumed to pose a potential political threat.¹⁹²

According to AI, hundreds of members of Oromo opposition political parties were arrested between 2011 and 2014. Opposition political parties that AI spoke with report that members at the grassroots level are particularly vulnerable for harassment and arrest, although higher level members are also targeted. In some cases, those arrested were questioned in detention about their activities for legal political opposition parties. In some cases, arrested political opposition members were accused of supporting the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), an armed opposition group. According to AI, this is a pretext used to silence influential opposition members.¹⁹³ USDOS also notes that the government accused many members of Oromo opposition groups of belonging to the OLF.¹⁹⁴

AI notes that there appears to be an increase in the number of opposition members and supporters arrested in the region around election periods. In 2011 and 2014, there were periods in which large numbers of Oromo opposition political party members were targeted, with hundreds being arrested within a brief time-span, such as around the previously mentioned Master Plan protests in April and May 2014.¹⁹⁵

As mentioned before, there have been new Master Plan protests since mid November 2015. On 22 January 2016, HRW reported that “countless” students and farmers have been killed and that opposition politicians and countless others have been arrested. One of the opposition politicians arrested is Bekela Gerba, the deputy chairman of the OFC. He was reportedly hospitalized shortly after his arrest, but his whereabouts are now unknown. Bekela Gerba had only been released in May 2015, after four years in prison on terrorism charges, for supposedly being a member of the banned OLF. HRW reported on 7 January 2015 that other senior OFC leaders had also been arbitrarily arrested in the preceding weeks.¹⁹⁶

AI reports that according to the OFC, between 350 and 500 of its members were arrested between May and July 2014, including party leadership. The arrests started in the context of the Master Plan protests, but continued after the protests were finished. Many OFC members were detained arbitrarily and incommunicado. There were also OFC members among the more than 200 people arrested in Oromia in September 2014, and in October 2014 there were arrests of OFC members as well. According to AI, OFC members were prosecuted and convicted in rapid trials on various charges relating to the Master Plan protests.¹⁹⁷

On 23 June 2015, AI urged the Ethiopian government to investigate the murder of opposition leaders and widespread human rights violations against opposition party members in the preceding weeks, in the period round about the 24 May 2015 elections. More than 500 members of the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (EFDUF)/Medrek, a coalition of opposition parties,

¹⁹² AI, *‘Because I am Oromo’: Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 18, [url](#)

¹⁹³ AI, *‘Because I am Oromo’: Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, pp. 39-40, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 3, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ AI, *‘Because I am Oromo’: Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, pp. 39-40, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ HRW, *Arrest of Respected Politician Escalating Crisis in Ethiopia*, 7/1/2016, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ AI, *Amnesty International Report 2014/15 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Ethiopia*, 25/2/15, [url](#)

including the OFC, were arrested at polling stations in the Oromia region.¹⁹⁸

Minority Rights Group International (MRG) reported on 28 June 2012 that in March 2011, more than 200 members of OPC and OFDM were arrested and 89 members were charged with various offences.¹⁹⁹

USDOS details that in 2010, approximately 1,200 OFC supporters were reportedly arrested and detained in association with the elections that year. Many were released after four to five months, but there were also many who remained in prison.²⁰⁰

AI notes that in Oromia, there is a general targeting of individuals based merely on their suspected political opinion and the government's anticipation of high levels of dissent in the region. There are different kinds of behaviour that are said to be interpreted as an indication of dissent, such as movement around or in and out of the region, doing work that involves influence or contact with local communities, presence in areas where there is OLF-activity, and refusal to join the EPRDF.²⁰¹ Return from abroad also raises suspicion.²⁰²

According to USDOS, there were reports that teachers and other government employees lost their jobs because of membership of opposition political parties.²⁰³

4.1.2.2 *Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ)*

According to Ethiopian opposition website Ethiomedia, the Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) is commonly known as Andinet, the Amharic word for unity.²⁰⁴ Website Sudan Tribune reports that UDJ was founded in June 2008, after the disintegration of the coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD), which had been Ethiopia's main opposition party. Many UDJ members are former CUD-members.²⁰⁵ The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which refers to the Economist Intelligence Unit, also notes that UDJ was founded by former CUD leaders in 2008. According to Landinfo, the Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre, CUD (Qinjit in Amharic) was an opposition coalition consisting of four parties. CUD won many seats in the 2005 election, but the majority of candidates boycotted the opening of parliament. In 2005-2006, most CUD leaders were charged with undermining Ethiopia's constitution. The party split after the arrest of its leaders.²⁰⁶ According to Landinfo, UDJ is a splinter group from CUD which was established in June 2008 in order to run in the parliamentary election in 2010.²⁰⁷

Ethiopian newspaper the Reporter notes that the first UDJ chairperson was Birtukan Medeksa.²⁰⁸ According to the Voice of America, she was jailed for life after the 2005 election, along with other opposition members. They were pardoned and she was released from prison in October 2010. She

¹⁹⁸ AI, *Ethiopia: Investigate suspicious murders and human rights violations*, 23/6/2015, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2012*, 28/6/2012, p.65, [url](#)

²⁰⁰ USDOS, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Ethiopia*, 8/4/2011, [url](#)

²⁰¹ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, pp. 45-46, [url](#)

²⁰² AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 50, [url](#)

²⁰³ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 3, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ Ethiomedia, *Ethiopian opposition get new Unity for Democracy and Justice Party*, 19/6/2008, via www.factiva.com (paid access)

²⁰⁵ Sudan Tribune, *Ethiopia's new opposition says "dedicated" for a peaceful struggle*, 16/9/2008, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ Landinfo, *Ethiopia: The Ginbot 7 party*, 20/8/2012, p. 6, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ Landinfo, *Ethiopia: The Ginbot 7 party*, 20/8/2012, p.10, [url](#)

²⁰⁸ The Reporter, *Main Opposition Leader Loses Party Name, Symbol*, 26/7/2008, via www.factiva.com (paid access)

was then sent back to prison for supposedly violating the conditions of the pardon. Birtukan Medeksa resigned from politics in 2011 after having been released from prison four months after the 2010 election. In December 2011, after having already served as interim leader, former Ethiopian president Negasso Gidada was elected chairperson of UDJ.²⁰⁹ On the official UDJ website, the members of the party leadership, the National Executive Committee, are listed.²¹⁰

According to Landinfo, UDJ has a pan-Ethiopian profile and gathers its support from members of all ethnic groups.²¹¹ Voice of America reports that in the 2010 elections, UDJ won one seat on the 547 member parliament. All the other seats were won by the ruling party and its allies.²¹² The Guardian notes that in the May 2015 elections, UDJ lost its seat in parliament.²¹³ According to AI, the run-up to the elections was marred by “gross, systematic and wide-spread violations of ordinary Ethiopians’ human rights”.²¹⁴

According to a diplomatic source consulted by Landinfo, it is important to note that UDJ is a legal opposition party and therefore receives much less negative attention than illegal political parties. Opposition politicians affiliated with UDJ are, however, probably being monitored by the authorities to some degree, whether they are in Ethiopia or in the diaspora.²¹⁵

There are numerous reports about arrests and detention of UDJ members in the last three years.

The Reporter details that on 20 August 2015, the Federal High Court acquitted two members of the UDJ leadership, Habtamu Ayalew and Daniel Shibeshi, who were accused of terrorist activities one year earlier. Habtamu Ayalew's release was ordered. Daniel Shibeshi was sentenced on contempt of court related charges, along with two other opposition party leaders. The four opposition party leaders were originally accused of having links with Ginbot 7, which parliament has designated a terrorist group. They were acquitted for lack of evidence.²¹⁶ The arrest and detention of these four opposition party members are also mentioned in the AI and HRW annual reports about 2014.²¹⁷

USDOS notes that on 30 April 2014, Zekarias Yemanebirhan, Addis Ababa chairman of UDJ, and Nebiyu Hailu, a journalist for UDJ's *Finote Netsanet* newspaper, were arrested and detained without warrant. They were allegedly arrested for violating zoning restrictions while mobilizing supporters for a protest. They were both released without charge on 12 May 2014.²¹⁸ HRW reports about the arrest and detention of another *Finote Netsanet* journalist in August 2014, who claims his interrogators knew many details about his family and he was warned to stop writing anti-government stories.²¹⁹

USDOS reports that in February 2014, a prominent UDJ member, Asrat Tassay, was convicted of contempt of court after writing a critical article about Ethiopian courts. He was sentenced to five

²⁰⁹ VOA, *Ethiopia's Best-Known Opposition Leader to Quit Politics*, 20/2/2011, [url](#)

²¹⁰ Andinet, [url](#), [accessed 11 January 2016]

²¹¹ Lay translation through google translate; Landinfo, *Etiopia: Reaksjoner ved retur og politisk aktivitet i eksil (sur place)*, 28/4/2015, p.8, [url](#)

²¹² VOA, *Ethiopia's Best-Known Opposition Leader to Quit Politics*, 20/2/2011, [url](#)

²¹³ The Guardian, *Ethiopia's ruling party wins by landslide in general election*, 22/6/2015, [url](#)

²¹⁴ AI, *Ethiopia: Onslaught on human rights ahead of elections*, 22/5/15, [url](#)

²¹⁵ Landinfo, *Etiopia: Reaksjoner ved retur og politisk aktivitet i eksil (sur place)*, 28/4/2015, p.8, [url](#)

²¹⁶ The Reporter, *Ethiopia: Court Acquits Opposition Party Leaders*, 22/8/2015, [url](#);

²¹⁷ AI, *Amnesty International Report 2014/15 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Ethiopia*, 25/2/15, [url](#); HRW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/01/2015, [url](#)

²¹⁸ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1d, [url](#)

²¹⁹ HRW, *“Journalism Is Not a Crime”*, 21/1/2015, p. 18, [url](#)

months' imprisonment but the sentence was suspended and he got two years' probation instead.²²⁰

USDOS notes that in March 2014, police temporarily detained UDJ members meeting in a private home in the southern town of Wolaita Sodo and accused them of holding an illegal meeting. Police reportedly destroyed the detainees' cell phones by dipping them in chemicals.²²¹

On 5 September 2013, AI expressed its concern about reports from UDJ and the Semawayi (Blue) party that many of their members had been arrested throughout the country in the previous weeks. The UDJ members were all arrested while they were distributing flyers to promote a series of demonstrations and public meetings and a petition demanding the change or cancellation of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation and the release of UDJ and other political leaders, religious leaders and journalists who were imprisoned.²²² News agency IPS reported that UDJ party leaders in Gonder said they faced extreme harassment by the regional state authorities. On July 2013, for example, local police supposedly surrounded the UDJ office and would not let the UDJ members out. According to UDJ members, an unofficial deal was made with the local commander at the end of the day, which enabled them to hold the protest after all. Ten local UDJ members were arrested for distributing leaflets in the days preceding the protest. One of them reported that his legs were beaten and he could not walk for a week. Another reported that authorities threatened to poison the chickens on his parents chicken farm as a punishment for his political activities.²²³

HRW details that Nathnael Mekonnen Gebre Kidan, a prominent UDJ member, was charged and sentenced under the Anti-Terrorism Law in 2012. On 8 October 2011, he claimed in court that he had been tortured for 23 days in Maekelawi.

There are also reports about UDJ protests being forcefully ended by police.

BBC reports that on 25 January 2015, at least 26 protesters were injured when Ethiopian police broke up an UDJ protest rally in Addis Ababa. According to Ethiopian police, the rally was illegal.²²⁴

AI reports that in January 2014, police violently broke up peaceful protesters in Addis Ababa during a UDJ event. Police beat demonstrators with batons, sticks and iron rods on the head, face, hands and legs. More than 20 protesters were injured.²²⁵

4.1.2.3 *Other political opposition parties and political activists*

Apart from OFC and UDJ, there were other political parties that received negative attention from the government, such as Semawayi, Medrek and Arena Tigray. These are subject to change, as the political landscape in Ethiopia is highly volatile.

Semawayi, or "Blue" party, was reportedly founded in early 2012.²²⁶ AI reports that on 15 June 2015, the body of a Semayawi candidate was found. According to Blue party officials, his murder was politically motivated. A few days before he was killed, he published an article criticising local

²²⁰ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1e, [url](#)

²²¹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2b, [url](#)

²²² AI, *Ethiopia: End stifling of peaceful protests*, 5/9/2013, p.2, [url](#)

²²³ IPS, *Opinion Divided on Rebirth of Ethiopia's Opposition*, 19/7/2013, [url](#)

²²⁴ BBC, *At least 26 said injured in Ethiopian opposition protest rally*, 25/1/2015, via www.factiva.com (paid access)

²²⁵ AI, *Ethiopia: Onslaught on human rights ahead of elections*, 22/5/15, [url](#)

²²⁶ IHS Global Insight, *Opposition Party Holds Rare Anti-Government Protest in Ethiopia*, 4/6/2013, via www.factiva.com (paid access); Sudan Tribune, *Ethiopia: opposition vows to stage anti-government protests*, 5/9/2013, [url](#); Ethiomedia, *Ethiopian security forces reportedly raid opposition party HQ*, 2/9/2013, via www.factiva.com (paid access)

authorities, police and other security officials. Blue party officials reported that he had received threats in the days preceding his death and witnesses say his body showed signs of stab wounds and appeared to have been beaten.²²⁷

AI reports that on 22 April 2015, scores of demonstrators were arrested during a rally in Addis Ababa, including members of the opposition. They were charged with inciting violence. The rally had been organized to mourn the death of 26 Ethiopians who were killed by the Islamic State in Libya.²²⁸ AI reports that some of the Semawayi ("Blue") Party members who were arrested in the days and months following the 22 April rally remained behind bars at the time of writing. AI states on 1 July 2015 that on five separate occasions in the previous ten days, three different courts had ordered the police to release four Semawayi party leaders, but they remained in detention nonetheless.²²⁹

AI reports that the Semawayi party stated that the registration of more than half of their candidates for the May 2015 elections was cancelled by the National Election Board.²³⁰

AI reports that on 5 and 6 December 2014, security services in Addis Ababa arrested around 90 people during attempts by a coalition of nine opposition political parties to hold a demonstration. The Semayawi party reported that around 75 percent of its members and leadership had been arrested. Several other arrests of Semayawi members had taken place throughout 2014.²³¹

HRW reports that in July 2014, opposition political party leaders were arrested, including leaders of the Semawayi ("Blue") Party. At the time of writing of the HRW report, they had not yet been charged and remained in detention.²³²

According to HRW, attempts to hold protests by the Semawayi party were blocked in 2014. Applications to hold demonstrations were denied at least three times and organizers were arrested. Throughout 2014, authorities harassed, threatened and detained party leaders.²³³

AI reports that in the run-up to the May 2015 elections, more than 500 members of the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (EFDUF)/Medrek, a coalition of opposition parties founded in including the OFC, were arrested at polling stations in Oromia. According to AI, 46 people were beaten and injured by security officers. Six people had gunshot injuries and two were shot and killed.²³⁴ EFDUF/Medrek was founded in 2009.²³⁵

AI reports that in March 2015, armed security officers in Tigray Region severely beat a member of (EFDUD) Arena-Medrek. Before this happened, he had already received threats that he should leave the party.²³⁶

According to the USDOS human rights report about 2014, there were reports that authorities fired teachers and other government workers if they belonged to opposition political parties, but at

²²⁷ AI, *Ethiopia: Investigate suspicious murders and human rights violations*, 23/6/2015, [url](#)

²²⁸ AI, *Ethiopia: Respect court rulings and release opposition members*, 1/7/2015, [url](#)

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ AI, *Ethiopia: Onslaught on human rights ahead of elections*, 22/5/15, [url](#)

²³¹ AI, *Ethiopia: Release protestors, stop crushing political opposition*, 10/12/2014, [url](#)

²³² RW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/01/2015, [url](#)

²³³ HRW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/01/2015, [url](#)

²³⁴ AI, *Ethiopia: Investigate suspicious murders and human rights violations*, 23/6/2015, [url](#)

²³⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 29/11/2015, p.69, [url](#)

²³⁶ I, *Ethiopia: Onslaught on human rights ahead of elections*, 22/5/15, [url](#)

university level, members of Medrek were able to teach.²³⁷

USDOS reports that there were reports that in January 2014, government officials in the city of Adrigat detained two Arena Tigray party members and beat other party members as the party announced it would hold a party conference on 26 January.²³⁸

On 24 October 2015, Ethiomedia reported that delegates of the Benishangul People's Liberation Movement (BPLM), Gambella People's Liberation Movement (GPLM), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Sidama National Liberation Front (SNLF) had founded a new political alliance, the Peoples Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (PAFD).²³⁹

4.1.2.4 *Family members of political activists*

According to AI, it is common for a family member of a political detainee to be arrested as well and to be accused of having the same political conviction.²⁴⁰

In its report about repression in the Oromia region, AI details that more than a dozen people reported being suspected of OLF involvement because of a family connection to someone that was suspected of involvement with the OLF. This 'inherited suspicion' occurred in both recent cases and cases dating back to 1991-1992, the time the OLF formed part of the transitional government. Often, the inherited suspicion was reported to manifest when other things were going on too. When the government was looking for people involved in demonstrations, for example, people whose parents were known or suspected dissenters could be suspected. Sometimes, several people from the same family were arrested based on inherited suspicion.²⁴¹

According to USDOS, family members of people who were being sought for questioning were detained.²⁴² In its report about Oromia, AI also reports that in some cases, family members were harassed, arrested, tortured or detained in place of someone the authorities were looking for. This could be to incite the person to turn himself in, to push family members into providing incriminating evidence or to punish the alleged offender. Sometimes it was punishment after a relative had escaped from detention or evaded arrest. According to AI, several people reported that they were released from detention on the condition that they would turn the family member in. Sometimes, more than one family member was arrested. In some cases, family members were arrested when they went to visit or enquire about their relatives. In most cases, there were no charges, no court proceedings and no access to a lawyer. The length of the detention of people detained in place of a family member was normally between several days and a couple of months, but AI also reports about a family member who was detained for a year.²⁴³

In its report about the situation of journalists, HRW has included a paragraph about the targeting of people who talk to the media. HRW reports that family members of exiled Ethiopians were reportedly targeted after the exiled family member had appeared on Voice of America or Ethiopian

²³⁷ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 3, [url](#)

²³⁸ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2b, [url](#)

²³⁹ Ethiomedia, *Political groups found Peoples' Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (PAFD)*, 4/10/20, [url](#)

²⁴⁰ Unofficial translation via Google Translate; AI, *Zur Menschenrechtssituation in Äthiopien*, 11/2014, [url](#)

²⁴¹ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, pp.51-53, [url](#)

²⁴² USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1f, [url](#)

²⁴³ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, pp. 53-55, [url](#)

Satellite Television.²⁴⁴ In its report about the Ogaden, RVI also reports about repercussions on family members of people living abroad. According to RVI, there are informants in Ogaadeeni diaspora communities that keep track of ONLF supporters, which makes politically involved Ogaadeeni who live abroad fear for the safety of their relatives in Ethiopia.²⁴⁵

4.1.3 Treatment of (perceived) members, supporters and individuals associated with (armed) opposition groups

In 2011, the Ethiopian government designated the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and Ginbot 7 as terrorist organizations.²⁴⁶

HRW notes that since the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation in 2009, Ethiopia has used its overly broad provisions to target individuals and organizations that express dissenting opinions. The government often claims that these individuals and organizations are members or supporters of banned organizations. According to HRW, this raises concerns about the lawfulness of the monitoring and investigative methods used, and about the fact that quite a broad spectrum of individuals is targeted, often based only on ethnicity, participation in lawful activities, or family connections.²⁴⁷

According to HRW, former intelligence officials told HRW that prominent people suspected of being connected to opposition political parties or armed groups, especially OLF and Ginbot 7, are often under telecom surveillance.²⁴⁸ Several people told HRW that recordings of their intercepted telephone conversations were played for them by security officials during interrogations. Often, information was twisted to link them to banned groups, usually OLF and Ginbot 7.²⁴⁹ Freedom House reports that the government restricted access to websites of the ONLF, OLF and Ginbot 7.²⁵⁰ HRW reports that websites of banned organizations were blocked.²⁵¹

4.1.3.1 Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)

According to its website, the OLF is a nationalist organization established in 1973 to “lead the national liberation struggle of the Oromo people against the Abyssinian colonial rule.” AI reports that in 1991-1992, after Mengistu was overthrown, the OLF was part of the transitional government. Because of tensions with the Tigreyan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), it left the ruling coalition in 1992. Thousands of OLF fighters, supporters and suspected supporters were subsequently arrested.²⁵² AI reports that “former President of Ethiopia, Negasso Gidada, stated that, when he left power in 2001, there were 25,000 Oromo prisoners in regional and federal prisons on the

²⁴⁴ HRW, “*Journalism Is Not a Crime*”, 21/1/2015, p. 28, [url](#)

²⁴⁵ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p.25, [url](#)

²⁴⁶ HRW, “*Journalism Is Not a Crime*”, 1/2015, p.19, [url](#); USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#)

²⁴⁷ HRW, “*They Know Everything We Do*”; *Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/3/2014, p.17, [url](#)

²⁴⁸ HRW, “*They Know Everything We Do*”; *Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/3/2014, p.15, [url](#)

²⁴⁹ HRW, “*They Know Everything We Do*”; *Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/3/2014, p.42, [url](#)

²⁵⁰ Freedom House, *Freedom on the Net 2015 - Ethiopia*, 2/11/2015

²⁵¹ HRW, “*They Know Everything We Do*”; *Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/3/2014, p.55, [url](#)

²⁵² AI, ‘*Because I am Oromo*’: *Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 19, [url](#)

accusation of supporting the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).²⁵³ While the OLF considers itself a political organization, the Ethiopian government sees the OLF as a terrorist organization.²⁵⁴

According to HRW, ethnic Oromos make up approximately 45 percent of Ethiopia's population and are often arbitrarily arrested and accused of belonging to the OLF.²⁵⁵ AI reports that between 2011 and 2014, "at least 5,000 Oromos were arrested as a result of their actual or suspected peaceful opposition to the government, based on their manifestation of dissenting opinions, exercise of freedom of expression or their imputed political opinion".²⁵⁶

AI notes that the accusation of OLF support has often been used as a pretext to silence individuals who openly exercise dissenting behaviour such as membership of an opposition political party or participation in a peaceful protest.²⁵⁷

According to AI, the constant allegations of OLF support in Oromia suggest that the government anticipates that there is a level of sympathy for the OLF among the general population in Oromia. In many cases of people who are arrested on the suspicion of OLF support, no charges are brought forward and no evidence is presented. In many cases, OLF suspects were detained arbitrarily and, often, without contact with legal representation, family members and the outside world. According to AI, many of these detentions amounted to enforced disappearance.²⁵⁸

AI reports that little is needed to arouse suspicion of OLF involvement. Refusing to join the ruling party, movement in and around the region, having family members suspected of OLF involvement and expressing dissent within the Oromo party in the ruling party coalition, the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), can all give rise to suspicion of OLF involvement.²⁵⁹

In correspondence to the IRB Research Directorate in April 2015, a HRW researcher paints a similar picture of the treatment of politically active Oromos who the government perceives to be part of the OLF:

In the vast majority of interrogations involving Oromos, there are accusations that they are either members of OLF, or are involved in the Oromo opposition, which many take to mean OLF. There is very rarely any evidence that there is a connection to the OLF, rather anyone who expresses dissent, mobilizes for mainstream politics, or is involved in Oromo cultural associations are at risk of being associated with the OLF. If you have a family connection from the past to OLF, you are at particular risk. Torture and mistreatment in detention is common among the Oromo, particularly those who have been accused of having connections to the OLF.²⁶⁰

²⁵³ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 18, [url](#)

²⁵⁴ Website Oromo Liberation Front, [url](#) [consulted on 5/1/2016]; AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, pp. 9, [url](#)

²⁵⁵ HRW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/01/2015, [url](#)

²⁵⁶ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 8, [url](#)

²⁵⁷ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 9, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p. 10, [url](#)

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ IRB, *Ethiopia: The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), including origin, mandate, leadership, structure, legal status, and membership; treatment of members and supporters by authorities (2014-2015)* [ETH105146.E], 7/5/2015, [url](#)

USDOS states that according to government officials, many members of legitimate Oromo opposition parties were secretly OLF members.²⁶¹

HRW reports that former intelligence officials stated that prominent individuals suspected of being connected with opposition political parties and armed movements, especially Ginbot 7 and the OLF, are “frequently the focus of targeted telecom surveillance”.²⁶²

In correspondence with the Research Directorate of the IRB, the chairman of one of the OLF factions, Nuro Dedefo, stated that members of the OLF face “persecution” by Ethiopian authorities, including “arrest, interrogation, torture and extra-judicial killing”, and that supporters of the OLF face similar treatment.²⁶³

In 2010, the CAT reported it was “deeply concerned” about “numerous, ongoing, and consistent allegations” about “the routine use of torture” by police, prison officers, and other members of the security forces against, amongst others, alleged supporters of the OLF.²⁶⁴

On 21 August 2014, RSF reported about the trial of three journalists and six bloggers who are all members of the Zone 9 collective. On 17 July 2014, they were accused of “organizing themselves into covert sub-groups to overthrow the government by contacting and receiving finance and training from two designated terrorist groups”. These groups are Ginbot 7 and the OLF. RSF reported that the nine journalists and bloggers could be sentenced to 15 years in prison under the anti-terrorism law.²⁶⁵ On 23 April 2015, HRW called for the release of the Zone 9 bloggers and journalists, who it says were being prosecuted on politically motivated charges. Till that date, the trial had been adjourned 27 times.²⁶⁶ Various sources report the Zone 9 bloggers have been released in July and October 2015.²⁶⁷

4.1.3.2 Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)

On its website, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) defines itself as: “a grassroots social and political movement founded in 1984 by the Somali people of Ogaden who could no longer bear the atrocities committed against them by successive Ethiopian regimes. Today, the ONLF is both an advocate for and defender of the people and is dedicated to bringing Somalis in Ogaden self-determination, peace, development and democracy.”²⁶⁸

USDOS describes the ONLF as “an ethnically based, violent, and fragmented separatist group operating in the Somali Region”.²⁶⁹ The Ogaden is part of the Somali region.²⁷⁰ The CPJ notes that the ONLF has been labelled a terrorist organisation by the Ethiopian government.²⁷¹

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- ²⁶¹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 3, [url](#)
- ²⁶² HRW, “They Know Everything We Do”; Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia, 25/03/2014, p. 15, [url](#)
- ²⁶³ IRB, *Ethiopia: The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), including origin, mandate, leadership, structure, legal status, and membership; treatment of members and supporters by authorities (2014-2015)* [ETH105146.E], 7/5/2015, [url](#)
- ²⁶⁴ CAT, *Concluding observations*, C/ETH/CO/1, 20/1/2011, p. 3, [url](#)
- ²⁶⁵ RSF, *Nine journalists and bloggers still held arbitrarily*, 21/8/2014, [url](#)
- ²⁶⁶ HRW, *Free Zone 9 Bloggers, Journalists*, 23/4/2015, [url](#)
- ²⁶⁷ AI, *Op-ed: The world must not forget the jailed journalists of Ethiopia*, 10/12/2015, [url](#); Freedom House: *Freedom on the Net 2015 - Ethiopia*, 2/11/2015, [url](#)
- ²⁶⁸ Website ONLF, <http://www.onlf.org/som/news.php> [accessed 7/1/2016]
- ²⁶⁹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, 2d, [url](#)
- ²⁷⁰ Unofficial translation, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thematisch Ambtsbericht Ogaden*, p.5, [url](#)
- ²⁷¹ CPJ, *Attacks on the Press, 2015 Edition - Ethiopia - Conflating terrorism and journalism in Ethiopia*,

In a report on peace talks in the Ogaden since 2012, RVI describes the ONLF in great detail.²⁷² RVI states that although the ONLF claims to fight for and represent all Somalis in eastern Ethiopia, “it is essentially supported by Ogaadeeni clan lineages.” The Ogadeni ethnic group makes up between 40 and 50 percent of the population in the Ogaden.²⁷³ From 1992-1994, the ONLF was a political party that ruled the then newly established Somali Regional State. Since 1994, it is an armed opposition group.²⁷⁴

On 13 October 2014, the UN Security Council reported that in 2013, the ONLF decided to move its bases to Mogadishu and now operates from Somalia. It receives logistical and financial support from Eritrea.²⁷⁵

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that independent investigation into human rights abuses in the Ogaden region has not been possible. Since the armed struggle escalated in 2007, the access of independent media and human rights organizations has been completely constrained. According to the Ethiopian government this is because of security risks, but human rights organizations claim that the Ethiopian government limits access to prevent monitoring of military operations and to prevent criticism.²⁷⁶ In its annual report about 2014, USDOS mentions that the government relaxed but did not completely remove restrictions on the movement of people into and within the Somali region. According to the Ethiopian government, the ONLF and al-Shabaab terrorists from neighbouring Somalia pose a security threat.²⁷⁷

As mentioned before, in 2010, the CAT reported it was “deeply concerned” about “numerous, ongoing, and consistent allegations” about “the routine use of torture” by police, prison officers, and other members of the security forces against, amongst others, alleged supporters of the ONLF.²⁷⁸

According to USDOS, factions of the ONLF are responsible for abuses.²⁷⁹ HRW has documented abuses by the ONLF as well.²⁸⁰

HRW reports that the ONLF and Ethiopian security forces are engaged in a long-standing low-level conflict in the Somali region. According to HRW, the ONLF increased armed attacks against government targets and oil exploration sites in 2007, which triggered a harsh crackdown by the authorities.²⁸¹ RVI details that an ONLF attack on the Abole oil field in Degehabur in April 2007, in which at least 65 Ethiopian soldiers and oil workers and nine Chinese employees of a Chinese oil and gas company were killed, marks a turning point in the Ogaden conflict. The years 2007-2010 saw numerous human rights violations, including intimidation and arrest, forced displacement, disappearance, torture, and extrajudicial killing.²⁸² RVI reports that the Ethiopian government took a “total war” strategy, which authorized soldiers to perpetrate a long list of abuses, including killing

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²⁷² RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, pp. 37-47, [url](#)

²⁷³ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p. 40, [url](#)

²⁷⁴ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p. 38, [url](#)

²⁷⁵ UN Security Council, *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to the Security Council resolution 2111 (2013) [S/2014/727]*, 13/10/2014, [url](#)

²⁷⁶ Unofficial translation, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thematisch Ambtsbericht Ogaden*, p. 18, [url](#)

²⁷⁷ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 3, [url](#)

²⁷⁸ CAT, *Concluding observations*, C/ETH/CO/1, 20/1/2011, p. 3, [url](#)

²⁷⁹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#)

²⁸⁰ HRW, “*Journalism Is Not a Crime*”, 1/2015, p. 38, [url](#)

²⁸¹ HRW, “*They Know Everything We Do*”; *Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/3/2014, p.16, [url](#)

²⁸² RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p. 21, [url](#)

civilians in retaliation for ONLF attacks or to discourage ONLF support, arresting, interrogating and torturing thousands of Ogaadeeni civilians suspected of aiding the ONLF, raping girls and women, killing ONLF fighters and publicly displaying their bodies, and cutting off towns and villages from food supplies.²⁸³ In June 2008, HRW published an extensive report about war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Ogaden.²⁸⁴

In May 2012, HRW reported that the Liyu Police summarily executed ten men in the Ogaden in March of that year. On 16 March, a member of the Liyu Police killed a resident of Raqda village, who was trying to protect another villager. In retaliation, men from Raqda subsequently killed seven Liyu Police members. After this, on 16 and 17 March, dozens of Liyu Police members conducted an operation in four villages. The Liyu Police summarily executed at least ten men who were in their custody, killed at least ten residents in gun fights, abducted at least 24 men, and looted shops and houses.²⁸⁵

HRW stated in 2015: “Ethiopian security forces have regularly committed serious abuses against people in the Somali region, such as arbitrary detention, torture and extrajudicial killings based on ethnicity or perceived support for the ONLF.”²⁸⁶ According to the Ogaden Women Relief Association, cited by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, rape is used as a weapon of war in the Ogaden.²⁸⁷

In its annual report about 2014, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reports that in the Somali Regional State, the armed conflict between the Liyu Police and the ONLF continued.²⁸⁸

In January 2015, Freedom House noted that “sporadic violence resumed” in the Ogaden, after peace talks between the government and the ONLF failed in 2013.²⁸⁹ In June 2014, RVI reported that in early 2014, the parties were preparing for another round of talks.²⁹⁰ In January 2014, two ONLF delegates were forcibly relocated from Nairobi to Ethiopia, which RVI states raises doubts about the Ethiopian governments commitments to the negotiations with the ONLF.²⁹¹ Freedom House refers to the events as kidnappings and states this effectively ended the peace talks.²⁹²

4.1.3.3 *Ginbot 7*

According to its website, “the primary mission of GINBOT 7 Movement is the realization of a national political system in which government power and political authority is assumed through peaceful and democratic process based on the free will and choice of citizens of the country.”²⁹³ HRW notes that Ginbot 7 was founded by former CUD members who fled Ethiopia after being detained and convicted of, among other charges, “outrages against the constitution” after the 2005 elections. According to HRW, Ginbot 7 is based outside Ethiopia and is not a legally registered

²⁸³ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, pp. 21-22, [url](#)

²⁸⁴ HRW, *Collective Punishment. War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity in the Ogaden area of Ethiopia's Somali Region*, 12/6/2008, [url](#)

²⁸⁵ HRW, *Ethiopia: 'Special Police' Execute 10*, 28/5/2012, [url](#)

²⁸⁶ HRW, “*Journalism Is Not a Crime*”, 1/2015, p. 38, [url](#)

²⁸⁷ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thematisch Ambtsbericht Ogaden*, 29/10/2015, p. 31, [url](#); UNPO, *Ogaden: Widespread Use Of Sexual Violence As A Weapon Of War*, 17/6/2014, [url](#)

²⁸⁸ ICRC, *Annual Report 2014 – Ethiopia*, 9/5/2015, p.145, [url](#)

²⁸⁹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

²⁹⁰ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p. 8, [url](#)

²⁹¹ RVI, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden*, 6/2014, p. 11, [url](#)

²⁹² Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

²⁹³ Website Ginbot 7, [url](#) [accessed 19/1/2016]

political party. Some of its leaders have been convicted under various laws.²⁹⁴ According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the organization structure of Ginbot 7 is unknown. It is also unknown whether and, if so, in what way Ginbot 7 is involved in the armed resistance against the Ethiopian government.²⁹⁵ On 25 July 2015, Voice of America (VOA) reported that Ginbot 7 had decided to start using armed resistance against the Ethiopian government. Ginbot 7's leader, Berhanu Nega, reportedly moved from the US to Eritrea for this purpose.²⁹⁶

In February 2015, AI reported about the case of Andargachew Tsige, a UK national and secretary general of Ginbot 7. He was deported to Ethiopia by Yemen on 23 June 2014. On 8 July 2014, he was shown on national television, looking skinny and exhausted. By the end of 2014, he was still held incommunicado at an undisclosed location, without access to lawyers or family.²⁹⁷ HRW further mentions that Tsige had twice been sentenced to death in absentia for his involvement with Ginbot 7.²⁹⁸ According to the website freeandargachew.com, he remains in incommunicado detention at the time of writing.²⁹⁹

HRW details that research found evidence of an internet surveillance campaign by Ethio Telecom against people using pictures of Ginbot 7. The pictures were used as bait to find potential Ginbot 7 supporters.³⁰⁰

HRW documents two cases of exiled members of Ginbot 7 who have been under internet surveillance by the Ethiopian government while they are abroad and whose computers were infected with spyware, or an attempt to infect their computers was made. In one case, a skype conversation this individual had had with other Ginbot 7 leaders was published. There was also an attempt to infect the computer of a Ginbot 7 member living in Norway by sending him an email with an attachment that contained spyware.³⁰¹

USDOS notes that government officials accused members of many opposition parties of having ties to Ginbot 7.³⁰² HRW reports that authorities attempt to connect journalistic publications to Ginbot 7.³⁰³ AI states that Ethiopia has used alleged contact with Ginbot 7 as a reason to imprison dissenting voices on allegations of terrorism.³⁰⁴

Freedom House reports that in July 2014, the previously mentioned Zone 9 bloggers were charged under the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation with, among other things, conspiring with the banned Ginbot 7 group.³⁰⁵ CPJ also reports about their case.³⁰⁶ In July 2014, Abraha Desta and Zelalem Workagegnehu, both bloggers and academics, were arrested. They were detained without charges until October 2014, when they were charged with their alleged support of Ginbot 7 and using social

²⁹⁴ HRW, "Journalism Is Not a Crime", 1/2015, p. 17, [url](#);

²⁹⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.15, [url](#)

²⁹⁶ VOA, *Ethiopian Opposition Group Threatens Armed Resistance*, 25/7/2015, [url](#)

²⁹⁷ AI, *The State of the World's Human Rights - Ethiopia*, 25/2/2015, [url](#)

²⁹⁸ HRW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/1/2015, [url](#)

²⁹⁹ www.freeandargachew.com, [accessed 25/1/2016]

³⁰⁰ HRW, "They Know Everything We Do"; *Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/3/2014, pp.71-75, [url](#)

³⁰¹ HRW, "They Know Everything We Do"; *Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/3/2014, pp.71-75, [url](#)

³⁰² USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 3, [url](#)

³⁰³ HRW, "Journalism Is Not a Crime", 1/2015, p. 14, [url](#);

³⁰⁴ AI, *Ethiopia: End the onslaught on dissent as arrests continue*, 10/7/2014, [url](#)

³⁰⁵ Freedom House, *Freedom on the Net 2015 - Ethiopia*, 2/11/2015, [url](#)

³⁰⁶ CPJ, *Attacks on the Press, 2015 Edition - Ethiopia - Conflating terrorism and journalism in Ethiopia*, 5/2015, [url](#)

media to contact its members. Abraha Desta was reported to have been brutally beaten before he was taken to an unknown prison.³⁰⁷ Various sources report the Zone 9 bloggers have been released in July and October 2015.³⁰⁸

CPJ reports about the case of Woubshet Taye, a journalist who was arrested in 2011, charged under the anti-terrorism law and accused of associating with Ginbot 7. In 2012, he was sentenced to 14 years in prison.³⁰⁹

On 16 September 2011, AI reported about the arrest on 14 September 2011 of another prominent journalist and four senior opposition politicians on terrorism charges. They were all accused of involvement with Ginbot 7. All five had been expressing criticism of the government and calling for reform.³¹⁰

4.1.3.4 Other armed groups

In 2011, parliament identified five groups as terrorist organizations. In addition to the three groups mentioned above (Ginbot 7, the ONLF, the OLF), these concern al-Qaida and al-Shabaab.³¹¹ The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that persons suspected of membership or support of groups designated as terrorist organisations can be prosecuted for terrorist activities.³¹²

USDOS notes that following al-Shabaab's failed October 2013 bombing attempt in Addis Ababa, Ethiopian security intensified counter-terrorism efforts in 2014. In 2014, the security forces successfully blocked al-Shabaab attacks on Addis Ababa and other major towns in Ethiopia.³¹³

Freedom House reports that in February 2014, Somali journalist Mohamed Aweys Mudey was sentenced to 27 years in prison for allegedly possessing information about the operations of al-Shabaab in Ethiopia.³¹⁴

In January 2012, members of the separatist Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union Front (ARDUF) claimed responsibility for an attack on a group of foreign tourists in the Afar Region.³¹⁵

The UN Monitoring Group mentions the Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM) as an armed group in Ethiopia. TPDM receives support from Eritrea.³¹⁶

No recent information has been found about other active armed groups in Ethiopia.

4.1.4 Treatment of other perceived political opponents

USDOS states that authorities arrested, detained, charged, and prosecuted journalists "and other persons whom they perceived as critical of the government". Cases of torture of individuals critical

³⁰⁷ Freedom House, *Freedom on the Net 2015 - Ethiopia*, 2/11/2015, [url](#)

³⁰⁸ AI, *Op-ed: The world must not forget the jailed journalists of Ethiopia*, 10/12/2015, [url](#); Freedom House: *Freedom on the Net 2015 - Ethiopia*, 2/11/2015, [url](#)

³⁰⁹ CPJ, *Attacks on the Press, 2015 Edition - Ethiopia - Conflating terrorism and journalism in Ethiopia*, 5/2015, [url](#)

³¹⁰ AI, *Ethiopia must end crackdown on government critics*, 16/9/2011, [url](#)

³¹¹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, Section 2, [url](#)

³¹² Lay translation; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.13, [url](#)

³¹³ USDOS, *Country Report on Terrorism 2014 - Chapter 2 - Ethiopia*, June 2015, [url](#)

³¹⁴ Freedom House, *Freedom of the Press 2015*, 28/4/2015, [url](#)

³¹⁵ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2012 - Ethiopia*, 19/4/2013, section 1a, [url](#)

³¹⁶ UNSC, *Letter dated 10 October 2014 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the president of the Security Council*, S/2014/727, 14/10/2014, p. 28, [url](#)

of the government were reported.³¹⁷

As mentioned before, the CSP law, enacted in 2009, has severely curtailed the ability of independent non-governmental organizations to work on human rights.³¹⁸ In their annual report about 2013, HRW states that human rights groups have either dramatically scaled down their operations or removed human rights from their mandates. Several of the country's most prominent human rights activists have fled the country due to threats.³¹⁹ In June 2015, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) stated that it deeply regrets the cases of harassment, arrest and prosecution of human rights activists in Ethiopia.³²⁰ In October 2014, AI reported surveillance of, amongst many others, human rights activists.³²¹ In May 2014, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay expressed concern about increasing restrictions on freedom of expression: "The fight against terrorism cannot serve as an excuse to intimidate and silence journalists, bloggers, human rights activists and members of civil society organizations. And working with foreign human rights organisations cannot be considered a crime. Over the past few years, the space for dissenting voices has been shrinking dramatically in Ethiopia," the High Commissioner said.³²²

On 21 September 2015, HRW reported that a former World Bank translator and two other local activists have been charged under the anti-terrorism law after trying to attend a workshop on food security in Nairobi. They were charged on 7 September 2015 and had already been in detention for nearly six months at that time. The workshop, which was organized by an indigenous rights group and two international organizations, was considered a "terrorist group meeting". The authorities accused one of the attendees, pastor Omot Agwa, of being the co-founder and leader of the Gambella People's Liberation Movement (GPLM) and communicating with its leaders abroad. The director of Anywaa Survival Organisation (ASO), a London-based registered charity that seeks to support the rights of indigenous peoples in southwest Ethiopia, is described in the charges as GPLM's London-based "senior group terrorist leader". HRW notes that the GPLM is not among the five organizations that the Ethiopian parliament has designated as terrorist groups.³²³

USDOS mentions that the International Labor Organization (ILO) Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations noted "the CSO law gives the government power to interfere in the right of workers to organize, including through the registration, internal administration, and dissolution of organizations, and that the Antiterrorism Proclamation could become a means of punishing the peaceful exercise of freedom of expression and the right to organize". While the government permits unions, the major trade unions were established and controlled by the government. Despite the fact that the law prohibits anti-union discrimination, unions reported that employers fired union activists.³²⁴

On 22 January 2016, HRW reported about the previously mentioned large-scale Master Plan protests in Oromia since mid-November 2015. Countless students and farmers were killed, and

³¹⁷ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, Section 2, [url](#)

³¹⁸ HRW, *World Report 2015 – Ethiopia*, 29/1/2015, [url](#)

³¹⁹ HRW, *World Report 2014 – Ethiopia*, 29/1/2015, [url](#)

³²⁰ CRC, *Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Ethiopia* [CRC/C/ETH/CO/4-5], 3/6/2015, pp.4-5, [url](#)

³²¹ AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia* [AFR 25/006/2014], 28/10/2014, p.120, [url](#)

³²² OHCHR, *Navi Pillay Condemns Crackdown On Journalists, Increasing Restrictions On Freedom Of Expression*, 2/5/2014, [url](#)

³²³ HRW, *World Bank Translator, Activists Face Trial*, 21/9/2015, [url](#)

³²⁴ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 7a, [url](#)

countless opposition politicians and others were arrested. HRW stresses that it is almost impossible to get information about what is happening, as journalists are fiercely repressed and people are terrified to speak out.³²⁵ As described before, there were protests against the Master Plan in 2014 as well.³²⁶ In a 6 January 2015 Urgent Action, AI describes the background of the 2015/2016 protests. On 12 November 2015, peaceful protests erupted in Ginchi, 81 kilometres southwest of Addis Ababa, in the Oromia region. The trigger was the transfer of ownership of a school playground and a stadium to private investors and clearing the Chilimo natural forest for investors as well. The protesters were mainly Oromo University and high school students, who were later joined by residents and farmers. They are concerned that the Master Plan will result in forced evictions of Oromo farmers in the areas surrounding Addis Ababa.³²⁷ According to HRW, the government cancelled the Master Plan on 12 January 2016.³²⁸

³²⁵ HRW, *Ethiopia's Invisible Crisis*, 22/1/2016, [url](#)

³²⁶ MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2015*, 2/7/2015, p. 76, [url](#)

³²⁷ AI, *Ethiopia: Anti-terror rhetoric will escalate brutal crackdown against Oromo protesters*, 16/12/2015, [url](#)

³²⁸ HRW, *Ethiopia's Invisible Crisis*, 22/1/2016, [url](#)

4.2 Freedom of expression and information

4.2.1 Legal framework

Article 29 of the Ethiopian constitution provides for the right of thought, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press. According to article 29(6), these rights can be limited by law in order to protect the well-being of youth, and the honour and reputation of individuals.³²⁹ According to USDOS, both the constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and the press.³³⁰ However, various sources report about violations of these rights, including harassment, arrests and prosecution of journalists.³³¹

HRW reports that ever since the EPRDF won 99.6 percent of parliamentary seats in the 2010 elections, the government of Ethiopia has escalated its repression of the independent media, limiting the rights to freedom of expression and access to information.³³²

Freedom House notes that “the presence of the EPRDF at all levels of society—directly and, increasingly, electronically—inhibits free private discussion. Many people are wary of speaking against the government. The EPRDF maintains a network of paid informants, and opposition politicians have accused the government of tapping their phones”.³³³

According to HRW, the Ethiopian government has developed a robust and sophisticated internet and mobile framework to monitor journalists and opposition groups, block access to unwanted websites or critical television and radio programs, and collect evidence.³³⁴ Freedom House reports that dozens of critical news and opposition websites and blogs were blocked as the country prepared for the general elections in May 2015. Over 100 websites remained blocked overall.³³⁵

Media practice self-censorship in order to avoid problems.³³⁶ In the 2015 World Press Freedom Index of Reporters without Borders, Ethiopia is ranked 142 out of 180 countries.³³⁷

4.2.1.1 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP)

In July 2009, parliament passed the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP) 652/2009.³³⁸ According to HRW and AI, the ATP allows unrestrained force against suspected terrorists, including pre-trial detention of up to four months.³³⁹ The anti-terrorism legislation prescribes prison sentences of up to 20 years for the publication of statements that can be understood as a direct or indirect encouragement of terrorism, which is vaguely defined.³⁴⁰ Under the ATP, the death penalty can

³²⁹ Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 21/8/1995, [url](#) [accessed 22/1/2016]

³³⁰ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2, [url](#)

³³¹ Ibid.; HRW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/01/2015, [url](#); Reporters without Borders (RSF), 2015 World Press Freedom Index, [url](#)

³³² HRW, “*Journalism Is Not a Crime*”, 21/1/2015, p. 1, [url](#)

³³³ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

³³⁴ HRW, “*They Know Everything We Do*”; *Telecom and Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*, 25/03/2014, p. 29, [url](#)

³³⁵ Freedom House, *Freedom on the Net*, 2/11/2015, [url](#)

³³⁶ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2, [url](#);

HRW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/01/2015, [url](#)

³³⁷ Reporters without Borders (RSF), 2015 World Press Freedom Index, [url](#)

³³⁸ National Legislative Bodies / National Authorities, *Ethiopia: Proclamation No. 652/2009 of 2009, Anti-Terrorism Proclamation*, 7/7/2009, [url](#)

³³⁹ AI, *Ethiopia: Anti-terror rhetoric will escalate brutal crackdown against Oromo protesters*, 16/12/2015, [url](#); HRW, *World Bank Translator, Activists Face Trial*, 21/9/2015, [url](#)

³⁴⁰ Freedom House, *Freedom on the Net 2015 - Ethiopia*, 2/11/2015, [url](#); HRW, *Analysis of Ethiopia's*

also be imposed.³⁴¹

According to HRW, since 2011, Ethiopia's counterterrorism law has been used to prosecute journalists, bloggers, opposition politicians, and peaceful protesters. In many cases, there was no compelling evidence of association with banned opposition groups.³⁴² USDOS also states the government used the ATP and other measures to restrict organized opposition and anti-government protests and to suppress criticism.³⁴³ In October 2014, AI reported that the ATP is being used against alleged dissenters with increasing frequency.³⁴⁴ Various sources state that torture is common during the pre-trial detention period.³⁴⁵

4.2.2 Independence of national and local media

In its January 2015 report on violations of media freedom, HRW states that "Ethiopia's media landscape is heavily state-controlled, and dominated by Amharic language publications and broadcasts focused on events and issues in Addis Ababa". "The Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority has regulatory authority over all media licensing and content for print publications and television and radio stations. It is accountable to the information ministry, which in 2008 was renamed the Government Communications Affairs Office."³⁴⁶ According to USDOS, government-controlled media closely reflected the views of the government and the ruling EPRDF.³⁴⁷ Freedom House reports that "Ethiopia's media are dominated by state-owned broadcasters and government-oriented newspapers. [...] A 2008 media law criminalizes defamation and allows prosecutors to seize material before publication in the name of national security."³⁴⁸ HRW notes that the government has shut down dozens of publications and controls most television and most radio outlets, leaving few options for Ethiopians to acquire independent information and analysis on domestic political issues.³⁴⁹

Print publications are almost exclusively in Amharic and focus on Addis Ababa. They are usually only available in major cities. According to HRW, print publications have traditionally offered critical analysis and political opinion. There is only one large, state-run printer that can consistently print newspapers.³⁵⁰ Freedom House states that privately owned papers tend to steer clear of political issues and have low circulation.³⁵¹ In 2009 one of the largest independent Amharic weekly newspapers, Addis Neger, was forced to close after a campaign of threats and harassment which forced most of its senior staff to quit.³⁵² According to HRW, the few private radio stations that are licensed also tend to stay away from politics and sensitive issues and mostly report on sports and

Draft Anti-Terrorism Law, 30/6/2009, [url](#)

341 Article 19, *Comment on Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, 2009, of Ethiopia*, 3/2010, [url](#); Oakland Institute, *Ethiopia's Anti-Terrorism Law. A Tool to Stifle Dissent*, 2015, [url](#)

342 HRW, *World Bank Translator, Activists Face Trial*, 21/9/2015, [url](#)

343 USDOS, *2014 Report on International Religious Freedom - Ethiopia*, 14 October 2015, [url](#); USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, [url](#)

344 AI, *'Because I am Oromo': Sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, pp. 71-72, [url](#)

345 AI, *Urgent Action: 001/16 [AFR 25/3148/2016]*, 6/1/2016, [url](#); Oakland Institute, *Ethiopia's Anti-Terrorism Law. A Tool to Stifle Dissent*, 2015, p.14, [url](#)

346 HRW, *"Journalism Is Not a Crime"*, 21/1/2015, p. 11, [url](#)

347 USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2a, [url](#)

348 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

349 HRW, *"Journalism Is Not a Crime"*, 21/1/2015, p. 1, [url](#)

350 HRW, *"Journalism Is Not a Crime"*, 21/1/2015, p. 11-12, [url](#)

351 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

352 HRW, *"Journalism Is Not a Crime"*, 21/1/2015, p. 10, [url](#)

entertainment.³⁵³

HRW reports that while satellite television is increasingly common in Addis Ababa, the 81% of Ethiopians who live in rural areas are largely dependent on state-controlled radio and television.³⁵⁴ According to USDOS, the government-run television station was the primary source of news for much of the population.³⁵⁵ In mainly Addis Ababa, the BBC and Al-Jazeera have a lot of viewers. The two diaspora-run television networks, Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) and Oromia Media Network (OMN), are also increasingly popular.³⁵⁶ There is a history of blocking both national and international news outlets.³⁵⁷

Since only 1.9% of the population has access to the internet, social media use is limited. In Addis Ababa and other cities, however, the internet is becoming an increasingly important source of otherwise unavailable information, especially for the young and educated.³⁵⁸ Freedom House reports that authorities use high-tech jamming equipment to filter and block news websites seen as pro-opposition.³⁵⁹

4.2.3 Treatment of journalists and other media professionals

HRW notes in January 2015 that since 2010, at least 60 journalists have fled their country while at least another 19 are in prison.³⁶⁰ According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Ethiopia holds at least 17 journalists behind bars.³⁶¹ Freedom House reported in early 2015 that since 2011, at least 14 journalists have been convicted under the ATP. None of the convicted journalists have been released.³⁶² Various sources report that torture is used against journalists in detention.³⁶³

HRW notes that apart from the arrests, the government has used other techniques to stifle and silence the media, such as threatening and harassing journalists who write about sensitive political issues. The threats often go beyond the journalists themselves, and includes their families. Journalists who do not censor their coverage after having been warned are often arbitrarily detained.³⁶⁴ Many journalists practice self-censorship.³⁶⁵

Many Ethiopian journalists work in exile due to the risks of operating inside the country.³⁶⁶ CPJ says Ethiopia drove 30 journalists into exile in 2014, a sharp increase over both 2012 and 2013.³⁶⁷

According to Freedom House, restrictions are especially tight on journalists that are perceived as

³⁵³ HRW, *“Journalism Is Not a Crime”*, 21/1/2015, p. 11, [url](#)

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2a, [url](#)

³⁵⁶ HRW, *“Journalism Is Not a Crime”*, 21/1/2015, p. 11, [url](#)

³⁵⁷ Al Jazeera, *Ethiopia 'blocks' Al Jazeera websites*, 18/3/2013, [url](#); ESAT News, *Ethiopia blocked more than 150 websites*, 16/9/2015, [url](#); HRW, *“Journalism Is Not a Crime”*, 21/1/2015, pp. 46-48, [url](#)

³⁵⁸ HRW, *“Journalism Is Not a Crime”*, 21/1/2015, p. 12, [url](#)

³⁵⁹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

³⁶⁰ HRW, *“Journalism Is Not a Crime”*, 21/1/2015, p. 1, [url](#)

³⁶¹ CPJ, *Attacks on the Press, 2015 Edition - Ethiopia - Conflating terrorism and journalism in Ethiopia*, 5/2015, [url](#)

³⁶² Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

³⁶³ AI, *Amnesty International Report 2014/15 - The State of the World's Human Rights – Ethiopia*, 25/2/2015, [url](#); CPJ, *Attacks on the Press, 2015 Edition - Ethiopia - Conflating terrorism and journalism in Ethiopia*, 5/2015, [url](#)

³⁶⁴ HRW, *“Journalism Is Not a Crime”*, 21/1/2015, p. 2, [url](#)

³⁶⁵ HRW, *“Journalism Is Not a Crime”*, 21/1/2015, pp. 42-45, [url](#)

³⁶⁶ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

³⁶⁷ CPJ, *Attacks on the Press, 2015 Edition - Ethiopia - Conflating terrorism and journalism in Ethiopia*, 5/2015, [url](#)

sympathetic to protests by the Muslim community. They are routinely detained or arrested.

Journalists that report on opposition activities face harassment and the threat of being prosecuted under the ATP.³⁶⁸

In April 2014, police arrested the abovementioned six bloggers of the Zone 9 blogging collective and three journalists. They were charged under the ATP. Their trial was postponed 13 times. Their lawyer claims they were forced to sign confessions in prison.³⁶⁹ For nearly three months, they were held in the underground section of Maikelawi, denied access to family members and other visitors, and with severely restricted access to lawyers. Three complained in remand hearings that they had been tortured, but the court did not investigate.³⁷⁰ Various sources report the Zone 9 bloggers were released in July and October 2015.³⁷¹

In June 2014, the government fired 18 people from a state-run, Oromia-based broadcaster, silencing the outlet's reporting on Oromo protests.³⁷²

In August 2014, the Ministry of Justice accused the independent publications Enqu Fact, Addis Guday, Lomi, Jano, and Afro Times of "repeated acts of incitement" intended "to cause a violent overthrow of the constitutional order." According to USDOS, in most cases articles cited as examples of incitement were mainly critical of government action. In October, the managers of Addis Guday, Lomi, and Fact magazines were tried and sentenced in absentia. Their sentences ranged from three years and three months to three years and eleven months in prison.³⁷³ Former editor of the weekly Feteḥ, Temesgen Desalegn, was also convicted in October 2014. She was charged with defamation and incitement under Ethiopia's criminal code and sentenced to three years in prison.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁸ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

³⁶⁹ Ibid.; AI, *The State of the World's Human Rights – Ethiopia*, 25/2/2015, [url](#)

³⁷⁰ AI, *Amnesty International Report 2014/15 - The State of the World's Human Rights – Ethiopia*, 25/2/2015, [url](#)

³⁷¹ AI, *Op-ed: The world must not forget the jailed journalists of Ethiopia*, 10/12/2015, [url](#); Freedom House: *Freedom on the Net 2015 - Ethiopia*, 2/11/2015, [url](#)

³⁷² Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

³⁷³ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2a, [url](#); also see Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 - Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

4.3 Freedom of religion

4.3.1 Legal framework

According to USDOS, the Ethiopian constitution establishes freedom of religious choice and practice and provides that the government may not interfere in the practice of any religion. Religious discrimination is prohibited. The constitution also requires separation of state and religion.³⁷⁵ Article 27(5) of the constitution states that religious freedom may be subject to limitations as prescribed by law in order to “protect public safety, peace, health, education, public morality or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, and to ensure the independence of the state from religion”.³⁷⁶ Religious “defamation” and incitement of one religious group against another are criminalized by law. The formation of political parties based on religion is prohibited by law.³⁷⁷

USDOS further notes that the government does not require the EOC, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC), the Catholic Church, or Jewish communities to register as religious groups. All other groups must register with the Ministry of Justice to gain legal standing. Religious groups must renew their registration at least every five years and are required to provide annual activity and financial reports.

As a consequence of the previously mentioned CSP, faith-based organizations that receive more than ten% of their funding from foreign sources are prohibited from engaging in “activities that promote human and democratic rights or equality of nations, nationalities, peoples, genders, and religions; protect the rights of children or persons with disabilities; advance conflict resolution or reconciliation; or enhance the efficiency of the justice system or law enforcement services”.

4.3.2 Treatment of members of religious groups by state actors

Various sources report about arrests, prosecution and the use of force against protesting Muslims.

Freedom House reports that members of the Muslim community accuse the government of trying to impose the principles of the obscure Al-Ahbash Islamic sect on the Muslim community. Since 2012, they have held various protests against this perceived government interference with their religious affairs, which resulted in multiple deaths and the arrest of more than 1,000 protesters.³⁷⁸

According to HRW, the Muslim protests continued in 2013 and 2014 and were also met by excessive force and arbitrary arrests from security forces.³⁷⁹ USDOS reports that the government used the ATP and other measures to restrict anti-government protests and organized opposition, including through the detention and prosecution of Muslim demonstrators.³⁸⁰

The BBC states that under the ATP, 18 Muslims (clerics and a journalist included) were sentenced to up to 22 years in prison in August 2015. They had been arrested in the 2012 protests.³⁸¹ USDOS mentions several other cases in which Muslims who were involved in protests against what they characterized as government interference in religious matters were convicted under the

³⁷⁵ USDOS, *2014 Report on International Religious Freedom: Ethiopia*, 14/10/2015, [url](#)

³⁷⁶ Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 21/8/1995, [url](#)

³⁷⁷ USDOS, *2014 Report on International Religious Freedom: Ethiopia*, 14/10/2015, [url](#)

³⁷⁸ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

³⁷⁹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2015 – Ethiopia*, 29/1/2015, [url](#)

³⁸⁰ USDOS, *2014 Report on International Religious Freedom: Ethiopia*, 14/10/2015, [url](#)

³⁸¹ BBC, *Ethiopia jails Muslims convicted of terror plot*, 3/8/2015, [url](#)

controversial anti-terrorism law.³⁸²

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that security forces killed four Muslims and arrested and tried five Muslims with alleged links to Al-Qaeda in April 2012.³⁸³ In July 2012, AI expressed its concern about the fate of scores of arrested Muslims protesters. According to AI they risk torture or other ill-treatment during their detention.³⁸⁴ In November 2012, AI condemned the way in which the government deals with peacefully protesting. The police allegedly used excessive force during various incidents and arrested several leaders of the demonstrations under terrorism charges. Also, large-scale arrests and detention of peaceful demonstrators persisted.³⁸⁵

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes in its 2013 country report that there are no known cases of persecution on religious grounds and forced conversion in Ethiopia. This also applies to Jehovah's Witnesses, who can freely express their convictions.³⁸⁶

According to USDOS, there were reports of discrimination against religious groups in registration and land allocation.³⁸⁷

4.3.3 Treatment of members of religious groups by members of society

USDOS reports that Christians and Muslims generally respected each other's religion and tolerated conversion and intermarriage. Although tensions between Christians and Muslims continued to exist, there are no recent reports of discrimination or violence based on religion. According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, people with different religions generally co-exist peacefully in Ethiopia.³⁸⁸

The Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) holds some Salafist groups responsible for aggravating tensions between Muslims and Christians and within the Muslim community. General tensions between some Orthodox Christians and Protestants were increased through mutual recriminations. They continued to accuse each other of heresy and actively working to convert followers from one faith to the other.³⁸⁹

BBC reports about a grenade attack on the largest mosque in Addis Ababa on 11 December 2015, in which at least ten people were wounded. Authorities are unsure who is behind the attack.³⁹⁰

USDOS states that in March 2011 hundreds of Wahhabist or Salafist Muslims reportedly burned down dozens of homes and churches of Protestants in Asendabo in the Oromia region. More than 500 persons were arrested and charged with involvements in the violence. Prison sentences varying from three months up to 18 years have been given to the leaders of the attacks.³⁹¹

³⁸² USDOS, *2014 Report on International Religious Freedom: Ethiopia*, 14/10/2015, [url](#)

³⁸³ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.31, [url](#)

³⁸⁴ AI, *Ethiopia: widespread violations feared in clampdown on muslim protests*, 25/7/2012, [url](#)

³⁸⁵ AI, *Ethiopia: Government continues to target peaceful Muslim protest movement*, 2/11/2012, [url](#)

³⁸⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.31, [url](#)

³⁸⁷ USDOS, *2014 Report on International Religious Freedom: Ethiopia*, 14/10/2015, [url](#)

³⁸⁸ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.31, [url](#)

³⁸⁹ USDOS, *2014 Report on International Religious Freedom: Ethiopia*, 14/10/2015, [url](#)

³⁹⁰ BBC, *Ethiopia's Grand Anwar Mosque hit by 'grenade attack'*, 11/12/2015, [url](#)

³⁹¹ USDOS, *2011 Report on International Religious Freedom: Ethiopia*, 30/07/2012, [url](#)

4.4 Protection of national/ethnic groups

The Oromo is the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, making up approximately 35% of the population.³⁹² Other ethnic groups include the Amhara, Somali, Tigray, Sidama, Gurage, Welaita, Hadiya, Afar, Gamo, Gedeo, Silte and Kefficho.³⁹³

4.4.1 Legal framework

Article 25 of the Ethiopian constitution determines that all people are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law, without discrimination.³⁹⁴ Ethiopia's constitution, which entered into force in 1995, transformed the previously centralized state into a federal structure.³⁹⁵ In practice, this means that the majority ethnic group is politically dominant in that regional state.³⁹⁶

There are nine ethnically based regional states: Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), Gambella and Harar.³⁹⁷ The 1995 constitution gives states the right to draft regional constitutions, to promulgate laws, and to establish and administer government functions. It also grants the right to secede.³⁹⁸ In 2013, however, the government obtained powers to intervene in the state's affairs on matters of public security.³⁹⁹

Anthropologist Jon Abbink argued in 2011 that "after 20 years of TPF/EPRDF rule, the dominant rhetorical figure in Ethiopian politics is that of ethnicity, which has permeated daily life and overtaken democratic decision-making and shared issue-politics. The federal state [...] is stronger than any previous Ethiopian state and has developed structures of central control and top-down rule that preclude local initiative and autonomy."⁴⁰⁰

In its annual report about 2014, Freedom House states that legislation to protect against hate crimes and hate speech has been used to prosecute members of ethnic communities. It notes that there also are concerns that the anti-terrorism law is being used to silence minority and indigenous groups who raise human rights concerns.⁴⁰¹

The nationality rights of people of Eritrean descent are determined in the 2003 Proclamation on Ethiopian Nationality (378/2003) and the 2004 Directive Issued to Determine the Residence Status of Eritrean Nationals Residing in Ethiopia.⁴⁰² In Ethiopia, having dual nationality is not permitted.⁴⁰³

4.4.2 Treatment of members of national/ethnic groups (including people of Eritrean

³⁹² USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

³⁹³ CIA, The World Factbook, Ethiopia, [url](#) [accessed 21/1/2016]

³⁹⁴ The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, 21/8/1995, [url](#)

³⁹⁵ ICG, *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and its discontents*, 4/9/2009, p.4, [url](#)

³⁹⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.50, [url](#)

³⁹⁷ ICG, *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and its discontents*, 4/9/2009, pp.4-5, [url](#)

³⁹⁸ HRC, *UN Human Rights Council: Addendum to the Report of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues*, Gay McDougall, *Mission to Ethiopia* (28 November-12 December 2006), 28/2/2007, A/HRC/4/9/Add.3, [url](#)

³⁹⁹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, section b, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁰ Abbink, J., *Ethnic-based federalism and ethnicity in Ethiopia: reassessing the experiment after 20 years*, 2011, [url](#)

⁴⁰¹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, section f, [url](#)

⁴⁰² *Proclamation on Ethiopian Nationality*, No. 378 of 2003, 23/12/2003, [url](#); *Directive Issued to Determine the Residence Status of Eritrean Nationals Residing in Ethiopia*, 1/2004, [url](#)

⁴⁰³ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.49, [url](#); Ethiopian Nationality Law of 1930, 22/7/1930, [url](#)

descent) by State actors

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes that while many ethnic groups are politically and culturally represented in Ethiopia, the Amhara and Tigray of the northern highlands have a dominant role.⁴⁰⁴ According to Freedom House, the government tends to favour Tigrayan ethnic interests in economic and political matters.⁴⁰⁵ Minority Rights Group reports that many of Ethiopia's minorities and indigenous peoples continue to be marginalized.⁴⁰⁶

In February 2014, UNESCO indicated that there were marginalized communities that were unable to exercise their right to take part in cultural life. That situation was particularly predominant in the SNNR and among the Waito community in the Amhara region.⁴⁰⁷ The NGO Advocacy for Human Rights Ethiopia (AHRE) expressed its concern about discrimination of the Amhara ethnic group, particularly in the Machakil district in the Amhara region.⁴⁰⁸

MRG reports that the creation of large-scale agricultural plantations in the Gambella region continued in 2014. Indigenous groups living in the area have been in conflict with the government over the plan to convert thousands of hectares into large-scale agricultural plantations. MRG notes that "Anuak communities took action through the World Bank's Inspection Panel to protect their rights to land and culture in the face of large-scale land dispossession".⁴⁰⁹

MRG mentions controversies over the Gibe III dam in the Lower Omo Valley. According to MRG, "the dam threatens to damage the local environment and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of indigenous people who have lived in the Lower Omo region for centuries. Despite significant concerns about the social and environmental impact of the dam, particularly on pastoralist communities, the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation reported at the end of the year that the project was 89 percent complete."⁴¹⁰ In 2011, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) raised concerns about the construction of the dam.⁴¹¹

According to MRG, reports indicate that Majengir hunter-gatherers have also been the victims of land loss and increasing violence in relation to plans for large-scale coffee production, including the detention of Majengir leaders in 2014.⁴¹²

According to Freedom House, repression of the Oromo and ethnic Somalis has fuelled nationalism in the Oromia and Ogaden regions.⁴¹³ In a January 2014 submission to the UN Human Rights Council, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) also reports to the OCHCR

⁴⁰⁴ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.50, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁵ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, section b, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁶ MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2015*, 2/7/2015, p.74, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁷ HRC, *Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21; Ethiopia [A/HRC/WG.6/19/ETH/2]*, 12/2/2014, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁸ OCHCR, *Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21; Ethiopia**, 27/1/2014, p.3, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁹ MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2015*, 2/7/2015, p.75, [url](#)

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ HRC, *Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21; Ethiopia [A/HRC/WG.6/19/ETH/2]*, 12/2/2014, p. 12, [url](#)

⁴¹² MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2015*, 2/7/2015, p.76, [url](#)

⁴¹³ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, section f, [url](#)

about apparent racial discrimination and mistreatment of the Oromo and Ogaden populations.⁴¹⁴ Freedom House states that it is difficult to verify the persisting claims that government troops in the Ogaden have committed war crimes, because independent media are barred from the region.⁴¹⁵

The NGO Advocates for Human Rights (AHR) reports that discrimination against the Oromos includes restrictions on speaking Oromiffa, the Oromo language.⁴¹⁶

On 7 January 2016, HRW reported that in the previous eight weeks, mass protests had taken place over the expansion of the municipal boundary of Addis Ababa. These generally peaceful protests were sparked by fears that the expansion would cause ethnic Oromo farmers to have to leave their land. Activists say that security forces killed at least 140 protesters and many more were injured.⁴¹⁷ Throughout 2014, there were also protests against the planned expansion, which is often referred to as the “Master Plan”. Minority Rights Group (MRG) states: “as with past protests by other Ethiopian minority groups, the government reportedly used excessive force, including beatings of protesters, arbitrary arrests and detentions which led to the deaths of dozens of students”.⁴¹⁸ According to Freedom House, the Master Plan exacerbates tensions over historical marginalization of Oromia. Activists claim that the expansion will displace two million Oromo farmers.⁴¹⁹

On 28 October 2014, AI published an extensive report about repression in the Oromia region. It states that “Between 2011 and 2014, at least 5,000 Oromos have been arrested as a result of their actual or suspected peaceful opposition to the government, based on their manifestation of dissenting opinions, exercise of freedom of expression or their imputed political opinion.” The people arrested include thousands of peaceful protesters and hundreds of opposition members, but hundreds of others have been arrested too.⁴²⁰ HRW notes that ethnic Oromos are often arbitrarily arrested and accused of belonging to the OLF.⁴²¹

No recent information has been found about the treatment of persons of Eritrean descent by state actors. According to the Dutch Foreign Ministry 2013 country report, there are reports that people of Eritrean descent try to hide their origin. The Dutch Foreign Ministry reports that there were no reports that there was violence against people of Eritrean descent.⁴²²

4.4.3 Treatment of members of national/ethnic groups (including people of Eritrean descent) by members of society

ICG reports that, as a result of the ethnic federalist system, there are numerous conflicts between ethnic groups about the determination of borders and the associated allotment of rights to use

⁴¹⁴ OCHCR, *Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21; Ethiopia**, 27/1/2014, p.3, [url](#)

⁴¹⁵ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, section f, [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ OCHCR, *Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21; Ethiopia [A/HRC/WG.6/19/ETH/3]*, 27/1/2014, p.3, [url](#)

⁴¹⁷ HRW, *Arrest of Respected Politician Escalating Crisis in Ethiopia*, 7/1/2016, [url](#)

⁴¹⁸ MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2015*, 2/7/2015, p. 76, [url](#);

⁴¹⁹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, section f, [url](#)

⁴²⁰ AI, *'Because I am Oromo' Sweeping Repression in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia*, 28/10/2014, p.8, [url](#)

⁴²¹ HRW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/1/2015, p.[url](#)

⁴²² Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.50, [url](#)

natural resources, like land and water.⁴²³ In its year report about 2014, USDOS states that clashes between ethnic groups resulted in injury and death.⁴²⁴ MRG notes that development projects in the Lower Omo Valley have significantly reduced grazing lands for the multiple pastoralist communities who live there. This had led to increased conflict in the region.⁴²⁵

USDOS reports that in 2014, conflict in the SNNPR's South Omo Valley displaced 300 households. In March 2014, violence between Guji and Borena communities in Oromia left approximately 120 people killed and displaced 30,700 others. In April 2014, conflict between Afar and Somali populations around Siti reportedly led to the displacement of 900 households and the destruction of homes and other local infrastructure. In mid-September 2014, at least 600 households were displaced in Majang Zone of Gambella because of intercommunal violence between ethnic Majang and highlanders.⁴²⁶

No recent information has been found on the treatment of people of Eritrean descent by members of society.

⁴²³ ICG, *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and its discontents*, 4/9/2009, pp.4-5, [url](#)

⁴²⁴ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1a, [url](#)

⁴²⁵ MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2015*, 2/7/2015, p. 75, [url](#);

⁴²⁶ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1a, [url](#)

4.5 Protection of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ethiopia does not have a national IDP policy. There is no separate government body that is responsible for the coordination of protection and support of IDPs. The Federal Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS) is the main government body responsible for assistance to IDPs.⁴²⁷ USDOS states that the government, through the DRMFSS, plays an active role in delivering humanitarian assistance to IDPs.⁴²⁸ The African Commission on Human and People's Rights notes that Ethiopia has signed but not yet ratified the Kampala Convention, the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.⁴²⁹

In June 2015, the UNHCR put the number of IDPs at 397,200.⁴³⁰ According to IOM, an estimated 71% of IDPs were considered “protracted” IDPs, for whom no durable solution could be found at that time. USDOS reports that conflicts and natural disasters contributed to a rise in the number of IDPs in 2014.⁴³¹ According to USDOS, 72% of IDPs resided in the Somali region, 10% in Oromia, 10% in Gambella, and 6% in the Afar region.⁴³² The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reports that both natural and man-made disasters displace thousands in Ethiopia every year.⁴³³

According to USDOS, the government played an active role in delivering humanitarian assistance to IDPs.⁴³⁴ According to IDMC, humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable was inadequate, in many cases leaving their immediate needs unmet.⁴³⁵ In a January 2014 joint submission to the OCHCR, several Ethiopian organizations state that support to IDPs was often late, inadequate and intermittent. The Ethiopian NGO Human Rights Council (HRCO) reports the same.⁴³⁶

4.5.1 “Villagization”/forced relocation programme

In 2010, the government started a “villagization” programme which it claimed would provide communities located in underpopulated areas with better access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. It involves the planned relocation of rural residents from the Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, SNNPR and Somali regions to officially designated areas.⁴³⁷ According to HRW, 1.5 million

⁴²⁷ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.57, [url](#); IDMC, *Ethiopia: Internal displacement in brief*, 31/12/2013, [url](#)

⁴²⁸ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 2d, [url](#)

⁴²⁹ ACHPR, *Press Release on the Ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) by the Republic of Congo*, 21/1/2015, [url](#)

⁴³⁰ UNHCR; World Bank Group: *Eastern Africa; HOA Displacement Study: Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa*, 25/6/2015, [url](#); In July 2015, IDMC estimated there were over 413,000 IDPs in Ethiopia, In June 2014, the IOM puts this number at 426,736.

⁴³¹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1d, [url](#)

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ IDMC, *Ethiopia: Internal displacement in brief*, 31/12/2013, [url](#)

⁴³⁴ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1d, [url](#)

⁴³⁵ IDMC, *Ethiopia: Internal displacement in brief*, 31/12/2013, [url](#)

⁴³⁶ OCHCR, *Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21; Ethiopia**, 27/1/2014, p.10, [url](#)

⁴³⁷ MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2015*, 2/7/2015, [url](#); USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1f, [url](#); HRW, “Waiting Here for Death” *Forced Displacement and “Villagization” in Ethiopia’s Gambella Region*, 16/1/2012, pp.2-5, [url](#)

rural people were planned to be relocated.⁴³⁸

USDOS notes that the stated purpose of villagization is “to improve the provision of government services, protect vulnerable communities from natural disasters and attacks, and change environmentally destructive patterns of shifting cultivation.”⁴³⁹

The villagization programme has been widely criticized by human rights groups. According to USDOS, some observers alleged its purpose was to enable the large-scale leasing of land for commercial agriculture.⁴⁴⁰ HRW is one of the organizations claiming that land investment might be the underlying reason for the relocation.⁴⁴¹ According to the government, the relocation is strictly voluntary.⁴⁴² In January 2012, HRW published a report about forced displacement and villagization in the Gambella region. It stated that people were forced to move into the government's new villages and that the relocation came with serious abuses, such as intimidation, assaults, rape, and arbitrary arrests by security officials. It also contributed to loss of livelihoods for people forced to move.⁴⁴³ In January 2015, the Federal Office for Migration reported that all in all, 60% of the Gambella population has been relocated.⁴⁴⁴

In its annual report about 2014, HRW states that Ethiopia is continuing to develop sugar plantations in the Lower Omo Valley, “clearing 245,000 hectares of land that is home to 200,000 indigenous people”. According to HRW, they continue to be displaced without consultation or compensation. Grazing land is cleared to make space for state-run sugar plantations. Access to the Omo River, which is used for growing food, is restricted. People who have questioned these developments face arrest and harassment. Both local and foreign journalists have been restricted from accessing the area.⁴⁴⁵

In its annual report about the human rights situation in 2014, USDOS states that assessments from international donors after more than 18 visits to villagization sites since 2011 did not corroborate the alleged systematic human rights violations. They did find problems like delays in the establishment of promised infrastructure. USDOS reports that communities and individual families appear to have agreed to move because of the assurance of food aid, health and education services, and land, provided by authorities.⁴⁴⁶

In February 2015, HRW reported about a leaked internal World Bank report which determined that “there is an operational link” between World Bank projects in Ethiopia and the villagization program. In the report, the conclusion is drawn that the World Bank had violated its policy intended to protect indigenous people's rights and that it had not carried out a full risk analysis. HRW argues that these findings should “prompt the World Bank and other donors to take all necessary measures to prevent and address links between its programs and abusive government initiatives”. HRW states

⁴³⁸ HRW, *World Report 2015 – Ethiopia*, 29/1/2015, [url](#)

⁴³⁹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1f, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ HRW, “*Waiting Here for Death*” *Forced Displacement and “Villagization” in Ethiopia’s Gambella Region*, 16/1/2012, p.3, [url](#)

⁴⁴² USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1f, [url](#)

⁴⁴³ HRW, “*Waiting Here for Death*” *Forced Displacement and “Villagization” in Ethiopia’s Gambella Region*, 16/1/2012, pp.2-5, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁴ Federal Office for Migration, *Briefing Notes*, 26/1/2015, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁵ HRW, *World Report 2015 – Ethiopia*, 29/1/2015, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁶ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 1f, [url](#)

while the Gambella villagization has finished, the government is now forcibly evicting communities in other regions. According to HRW, donors to the Ethiopia Promoting Basic Services Program, including the World Bank and the UK, deny links between their programs and the villagization program of the Ethiopian government.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁷ HRW, *World Bank: Address Ethiopia Findings - Response to Inquiry Dismissive of Abuses*, 12/2/2015,

4.6 Protection of individuals of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities

4.6.1 Legal framework

According to USDOS, consensual same-sex sexual activity is illegal and punishable with three to fifteen years imprisonment.⁴⁴⁸ ILGA also notes that both male-male and female-female sexual activity is illegal, quoting articles 629, 630, and 106 of the Ethiopian Criminal Code.⁴⁴⁹ The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes that homosexuals are only arrested when they are caught "in the act".⁴⁵⁰

HRW reports that in March 2014, Ethiopia's lawmakers proposed legislation that would make same-sex conduct a non-pardonable offence, which would ensure that LGBT people convicted under the law could not be granted early leave from prison. In April 2014, however, the proposed legislation was dropped.⁴⁵¹

HRW notes that Ethiopia came up for UN Universal Periodic Review in May 2014, and rejected all recommendations that were made to decriminalize same-sex conduct and to take measures to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation.⁴⁵²

According to USDOS, there is no law that prohibits discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals.⁴⁵³

4.6.2 Treatment by State actors

In March 2015, Landinfo reported that there were no reports of prosecution or convictions of gays in Ethiopia. Anonymous experts and diplomats consulted by Landinfo were not aware of cases of people being arrested, prosecuted and convicted due to their sexual orientation or homosexual activity. Several sources consulted by Landinfo claimed they would have known if such cases had been brought to court and the media would have reported about it. According to an anonymous source, the law creates fear even though prosecutions do not actually take place.⁴⁵⁴

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that, according to unspecified sources, prosecution of homosexual men and women rarely takes place. There are only a few cases each year. According to a few unspecified sources, homosexual orientation does not give cause for a more severe punishment for other crimes.⁴⁵⁵

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that because of the lack of protective legislation and formal and informal acceptance, it is not likely that homosexuals will receive state protection when they are discriminated against by fellow citizens, the police, or other state bodies.⁴⁵⁶

No recent information has been found on the treatment of bisexuals and transgenders by state actors.

⁴⁴⁸ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)
⁴⁴⁹ ILGA, *State Sponsored Homophobia 2015: A world survey of laws: criminalisation, protection and recognition of same-sex love*, 5/2015, pp.53-54, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁰ay translation. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, pp.47- 48, [url](#)

⁴⁵¹ HRW, *World Report 2015 - Ethiopia*, 29/1/2015, [url](#)

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁴ Unofficial translation via Google Translate . Landinfo, *Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre: Etiopia: Forhold for homofile*, 20/3/2015, p. 2, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, pp.47-48, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p. 48, [url](#)

4.6.3 Treatment by members of society

USDOS notes that people did not identify themselves as LGBT due to the severe societal stigma and the illegality of homosexual sex.⁴⁵⁷ NOAS quotes Ethiopian sociologist Getnet Tadele who published an article on men who have sex with men and HIV/AIDS in Addis Ababa. According to Getnet Tadele: “In many non-Western societies most people do not recognize themselves as heterosexual, gay, bisexual, lesbian or transgender as these subjective sexual identities are peculiar to the Western world.”⁴⁵⁸

USDOS notes that the AIDS Resource Center in Addis Ababa reported that the majority of self-identified gay and lesbian callers, most of whom were male, requested assistance in changing their behaviour to avoid discrimination. Many gay men reported anxiety, confusion, identity crises, depression, self-ostracism, religious conflict, and suicide attempts.⁴⁵⁹

A source consulted by Landinfo claims that the biggest fear among gays is not necessarily to be imprisoned, but to be outed in their own environment. Landinfo states that because few people are open about their sexual orientation and because relationships with a same-sex partner take place in secret, they found limited information on how family members, employers or neighbours react to homosexuality. Informants who participated in surveys about homosexuality in Ethiopia were afraid of being revealed and subsequently ostracized by their family.⁴⁶⁰

USDOS reports that there were some reports of violence against LGBT people. Reporting was limited due to fear of retribution, discrimination, or stigmatization.⁴⁶¹ An unspecified source consulted by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs also states that intimidation, extortion and verbal and physical violence against homosexuals occur. According to this source, there is no orchestrated violence against homosexuals.⁴⁶²

USDOS notes that activists in the LGBT community stated they were followed and at times feared for their safety.⁴⁶³

In its previous report on human rights practices in Ethiopia, USDOS reports that “there were periodic detentions of some in the LGBT community, combined with interrogation and alleged physical abuse”.⁴⁶⁴

No recent information has been found on the treatment of bisexuals and transgenders by members of society.

⁴⁵⁷ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁸ Getnet Tadele (2010a) in Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre: *Etiopia: Forhold for homofile*, 20/3/2015, p. 2, [url](#).

⁴⁵⁹ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁰ Landinfo, Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre: *Etiopia: Forhold for homofile*, 20/3/2015, p.2, [url](#). Unofficial translation via Google Translate.

⁴⁶¹ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁶² Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, pp.47-48, [url](#)

⁴⁶³ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁴ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2013 - Ethiopia, 27/2/2014, section 6, [url](#)

4.7 Protection of women and children

4.7.1 Legal framework

The Ethiopian Constitution determines that men and women have equal rights.⁴⁶⁵

The German Society of International Development Cooperation (GIZ) notes that while women's rights are enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution, the country is still far from realizing these rights in practice. The situation of women is often characterized by hard physical labour, traditional roles, and experiences of violence.⁴⁶⁶ Freedom House also reports that legislation protects women's rights, but that these rights are routinely violated in practice.⁴⁶⁷

Article 620 of the Ethiopian Criminal Code prescribes that rape is punishable with five to fifteen years of imprisonment. The law does not explicitly address spousal rape.⁴⁶⁸ According to USDOS, the government did not fully enforce the law, partially because of widespread underreporting due to cultural acceptance, fear, shame, or ignorance of protection under the law.⁴⁶⁹

According to USDOS, domestic violence is illegal, but government enforcement of laws against rape and domestic violence was inconsistent. Depending on the severity of the harm that is done, legal penalties range from small fines to imprisonment for up to 10-15 years.⁴⁷⁰ Freedom House states that enforcement of the law against rape and domestic abuse is “patchy”, and there are often delays in court.⁴⁷¹ USDOS notes that offenders were prosecuted on a limited scale and that domestic violence and rape cases were often given low priority.⁴⁷²

USDOS notes that there are discriminatory clauses in the law, such as the recognition of the husband as the legal head of the family and the sole guardian of children over five years old.⁴⁷³ SFH⁴⁷⁴ corroborates this information and adds that in case of a divorce, the woman is entitled to only three months of financial support.⁴⁷⁵ USDOS mentions that in general, courts did not consider domestic violence by itself a reason for granting a divorce.⁴⁷⁶ According to USDOS, societal norms and limited infrastructure prevented many women from seeking protection, particularly in rural areas.⁴⁷⁷

Freedom House reports that female genital mutilation and forced child marriage are illegal, but that there has been little effort to prosecute perpetrators. In December 2012, the government passed a National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor and updated its list of problematic occupations for children.⁴⁷⁸

USDOS notes that the minimum age for consensual sex is 18 years old, but authorities did not enforce this law. The law provides for 3-15 years in prison for sexual intercourse with a minor.

⁴⁶⁵ Ethiopian constitution, 21/8/1995, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁶ GIZ, Äthiopien, 11/2015, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁷ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁸ Criminal Code, Proclamation No. 414/2004, 9/5/2005, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

⁴⁷² USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁷³ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁴ Lay translation through google translate.

⁴⁷⁵ SFH, *Aktuelle Entwicklungen bis Juni 2014*, 17 June 2014, p. 18, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁶ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2015 – Ethiopia*, 28/1/2015, [url](#)

Profiting from the prostitution of minors and inducing minors to engage in prostitution is also prohibited.⁴⁷⁹

4.7.2 Rape and sexual violence

USDOS notes that in 2014, sexual harassment was widespread.⁴⁸⁰ SFH notes that although rape is considered a crime, many cases are not reported because women are ashamed or lack confidence in the overburdened justice system. Perpetrators are often not prosecuted or receive only small fines.⁴⁸¹ According to the Ogaden Women Relief Association, cited by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, rape is used as a weapon of war in the Ogaden.⁴⁸² In its 2008 report about war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Ogaden, HRW reports about frequent rape or sexual assault of women taken into military custody. HRW also reports about rape by soldiers of women in urban areas or rural areas that the ENDF considered “closed”. In August 2012 HRW reports about, amongst other abuses, rape by the Ethiopian military of female relatives of suspects of an April 2012 attack by unidentified armed men on a large commercial farm.⁴⁸³

According to USDOS, commercial sexual exploitation of children continued in 2014, particularly in urban areas: “girls as young as age 11 reportedly were recruited to work in brothels. Customers often sought these girls because they believed them to be free of sexually transmitted diseases.” Some young girls were forced into prostitution by their family.⁴⁸⁴ In June 2015, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed its concern about the high levels of child sexual abuse in Ethiopia.⁴⁸⁵

4.7.3 Domestic violence

USDOS reports that domestic violence, including spousal abuse, is a pervasive social problem.⁴⁸⁶ GIZ also notes that domestic violence is a widespread problem in Ethiopia. Since 2005, it is a separate offense in the Ethiopian Criminal Code. Most victims, however, never report it.⁴⁸⁷

In December 2015, CORI consulted several experts on the prevalence of domestic violence, including marital rape. They concur that domestic violence is highly prevalent. Public awareness has, however, increased in the previous years. Marital rape is believed to be “very common” by one of the experts. The other two experts consulted by CORI do not comment on the prevalence of marital rape specifically. It is noted that violence in the context of marriage is especially accepted in the rural areas. The experts have differing opinions on the adequacy of the state protection available.⁴⁸⁸

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that in the reporting period, from 2010 to 2013, the Ethiopian authorities made more of an effort to battle domestic violence. Police officials were

⁴⁷⁹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Lay translation through google translate. SFH, *Aktuelle Entwicklungen bis Juni 2014*, 17/6/2014, p. 18, [url](#)

⁴⁸² Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Thematisch Ambtsbericht Ogaden*, 29/10/2015, p. 31, [url](#); UNPO, *Ogaden: Widespread Use Of Sexual Violence As A Weapon Of War*, 17/6/2014, [url](#)

⁴⁸³ HRW, *Ethiopia: Army Commits Torture, Rape*, 28/8/2012, pp. 58-62, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁴ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁵ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Ethiopia*, 3/6/2015, p.9, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁶ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁷ GIZ, *Äthiopien*, 11/2015, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁸ CORI, *Ethiopia: Domestic Violence and Honour Killings in Ethiopia*, 11/12/2015, pp.4-5, [url](#)

obliged to attend training regarding domestic violence. In practice, however, women can still not get sufficient protection when domestic violence occurs. The police remain insufficiently trained to deal with cases of domestic violence and complaints are not taken seriously. When charges are pressed, prosecution seldom follows. At first instance, it is up to the complaining party to substantiate the case with the police. Victims of domestic violence have very few possibilities of escaping the violence. Moving elsewhere or to a large city often is no viable alternative, as it is hard for single women to start a life. Accommodation and work are often difficult to come by. If work is found, it is often as a domestic worker or in prostitution. In these positions, women are at risk of falling victim to (sexual) violence again.⁴⁸⁹

4.7.4 Harmful cultural practices

USDOS notes that “the most prevalent harmful traditional practices other than FGM/C included uvula cutting, tonsil scraping, milk tooth extraction, early marriage, and marriage by abduction”.⁴⁹⁰

In June 2015, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed its concern that the relevant legal provisions prohibiting and criminalizing harmful traditional practices are not adequately enforced. “As shown by the very high number of children, particularly girls, subjected to FGM/C in all its forms (cliteridectomy, excision, infibulation, cauterization, scraping), as well as forced, early and promissory marriages and marriages by abduction, and the lack of criminal proceedings against those performing those practices”.⁴⁹¹

4.7.4.1 Forced and underage marriage

USDOS notes that while marriage by abduction is illegal, it continued in some regions despite the government’s efforts to combat the practice. USDOS states that most marriages by abduction include forced sexual relationships. Women also often experience physical abuse during the abduction. Abductions also led to conflicts among families, communities, and ethnic groups. If the victim agreed to marry her abductor, the perpetrator did not face punishment.⁴⁹²

According to USDOS, the legal age for marriage is 18 for both girls and boys, but this law is not uniformly enforced and rural families are sometimes unaware of it. In several regions, it is customary that older men marry young girls, although this practice is increasingly criticised. USDOS notes that the government strategy to address this issue is more focused on education and mediation than on prosecuting perpetrators. In the Amhara and Tigray regions, girls as young as seven were married. Child marriage was most prevalent in the Amhara region, where the average age of a first marriage is 15.1 years old.⁴⁹³

In November 2015, GIZ stated that the very early marriage of girls, often through abduction, is a persistent problem. To avoid paying a high bride price, young men kidnap the girl of their choice, rape her, and then negotiate with the parents afterward. Parents usually agree to the marriage because the girl is no longer a virgin, which would make it much more difficult for her to get married. According to a 2003 study consulted by GIZ, in some regions in Ethiopia 80-90% of all marriages

⁴⁸⁹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Ethiopië*, 24/5/2013, p.42, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁰ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁹¹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Ethiopia*, 3/6/2015, pp.10-11, [url](#)

⁴⁹² USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

start by abduction. The consequences of child marriage can include serious health problems.⁴⁹⁴ USDOS mentions very different numbers while referring to a 2009 Population Council study of seven regions. The study found that 2.6% of married female youth reported their marriages occurred through abduction. Of that number, the study found the rate to be 12.9% in the SNNPR, 4.4% in Oromia, 3% in Afar, and less than 1% in Beneshangul Gumuz. The study did not include the Gambella or Somali regions.⁴⁹⁵ Another survey, conducted in 2003, found that the prevalence of marriage by abduction is 80% in the Oromia region, and as high as 92% in SNNPR. According to this study, the national average was 69%.⁴⁹⁶

On 11 December 2015, Thomson Reuters Foundation reported that child marriage is on the rise in Ethiopia due to what government and development agencies say is the worst drought in decades. More than one in ten Ethiopians are short of food. During droughts girls are married off earlier because of the dowry involved and the chance that the girl will be fed by a wealthier husband. Reuters states that according to the campaign group Girls Not Brides, 41% of girls are married before their 18th birthday. Reuters states that early marriage deprives girls of education and opportunities and increases the risk of death or serious childbirth injuries if they have babies before their bodies are ready. Child brides are also at greater risk of domestic and sexual violence.⁴⁹⁷

In June 2015, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed its concern about the large proportion of girls who experience forced sexual initiation, particularly within the context of early marriage and sexual harassment.⁴⁹⁸

4.7.4.2 FGM

USDOS reports that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal, but the government has not actively enforced this prohibition nor punished those who practised it. No one has ever been charged for it. The government has focused more on community education than prosecution.⁴⁹⁹ GIZ notes that while FGM is prohibited, the practice continues in many regions.⁵⁰⁰ SFH⁵⁰¹ states that FGM is still practised in Ethiopia and that, perpetrators are not prosecuted because the vast majority of the population does not consider FGM as a criminal offence.⁵⁰²

According to USDOS, the majority of girls in Ethiopia have undergone some form of FGM. The results of the 2009 Population Council suggest that prevalence had declined.⁵⁰³ Of female respondents aged 21 to 24, 66% reported they had been subjected to FGM, compared with 56% of those aged 15 to 17. Of the seven regions surveyed, the study found the rates to be highest in Afar (90.3%), Oromia (77.4%), and the SNNPR (74.6%). FGM was much less common in urban areas.⁵⁰⁴ According to GIZ, in 2007, about 45% of all girls between 15 and 49 years old were

⁴⁹⁴ Lay translation through google translate; GIZ, *Äthiopien*, 11/2015, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁵ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁶ UNICEF, *Progress in abandoning female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage in self-declared woredas*, 11/2012, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁷ Reuters, *More child marriage in drought-hit Ethiopia with risk of "full-blown disaster"*, 11/12/2015, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁸ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Ethiopia*, 3/6/2015, p.9, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁰ GIZ, *Äthiopien*, 11/2015, [url](#)

⁵⁰¹ Unofficial translation via Google Translate.

⁵⁰² SFH, *Aktuelle Entwicklungen bis Juni 2014*, 17/6/2014, p. 16, [url](#)

⁵⁰³ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

circumcised.⁵⁰⁵ According to a 2013 UNICEF report, as much as 74% of women aged 15 to 49 in Ethiopia have undergone some form of FGM.⁵⁰⁶

USDOS details that girls typically experienced clitoridectomies seven days after birth (consisting of an excision of the clitoris, often with partial labial excision) and infibulation (the most extreme and dangerous form of FGM) at the onset of puberty.⁵⁰⁷ UNICEF reports that the age at which girls undergo FGM varies from place to place. In some places, cutting takes place in the first ten days. In others six to nine years. In others still, it takes place at the age of 15-17, just before marriage.⁵⁰⁸

4.7.5 Child labour

USDOS reports that the minimum age for wage or salary employment is 14 years old. These provisions, however, only apply to contractual work and do not apply to self-employed children or children who perform unpaid work. For children between the ages of 14 and 18, there are special provision for, among other things, the prohibition of hazardous work.⁵⁰⁹ The law does not permit children between the ages of 14 and 18 to work more than seven hours per day, between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., on public holidays or rest days, or on overtime.⁵¹⁰

According to USDOS, these laws were not effectively enforced due to the lack of labour inspectors and controls, and extremely limited resources. The lack of inspectors resulted in lax enforcement of safety and health measures and an increase in the number of children working in prohibited work sectors, particularly construction. At the end of 2012, the National Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor was signed.⁵¹¹

USDOS notes that primary education is tuition-free, but not compulsory. Net school enrolment was low, particularly in rural areas.⁵¹²

The UN Development Programme reports that the 2010/2011 Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey found that 27% of children aged 5-14 were engaged in child labour, “defined as being so much work that the hours involved interfere with their education and right to have some play time”.⁵¹³ USDOS also notes that child labour remained a serious problem. In both rural and urban areas, children often began working at young ages. It was particularly common in agricultural, traditional weaving, fishing, and domestic work. A growing number of children worked in construction. In rural areas children, especially boys, engaged in activities like cattle herding, petty trading, ploughing, harvesting, and weeding, while other children, mostly girls, collected firewood and fetched water. There were also children who worked in the production of gold. Children in urban areas often worked long hours in domestic service and in manufacturing, shining shoes, making clothes, as porters, directing customers to taxis, parking, public transport, petty trading, and herding animals. According to USDOS: “some children worked long hours in dangerous environments for little or no wages and without occupational safety protection. Child labourers

⁵⁰⁵ GIZ, *Äthiopien*, 11/2015, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁶ UNICEF, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change, 22/7/2013, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁷ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 6, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁸ Unicef, *Investing in Boys and Girls in Ethiopia: past, present and future 2012*, p.25, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 7c, [url](#)

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 7c, [url](#)

⁵¹³ UNDP, *National Human Development Report 2014 Ethiopia - Accelerating Inclusive Growth for Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia*, 2015, p.63, [url](#)

often faced physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at the hands of their employers”.⁵¹⁴

In June 2016, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed its concern about the high prevalence of child labour in Ethiopia.⁵¹⁵

On 11 December 2015, Thomson Reuters Foundation reported that child labour is likely to rise as the drought in Ethiopia intensifies.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁴ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Ethiopia*, 25/6/2015, section 7c, [url](#)

⁵¹⁵ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Ethiopia*, 3/6/2015, p.16, [url](#)

⁵¹⁶ Reuters, *More child marriage in drought-hit Ethiopia with risk of “full-blown disaster”*, 11/12/2015, [url](#)

4.8 Protection of victims or people at risk of trafficking

IOM notes that Ethiopia is a source country of human trafficking. Especially young women are trafficked to the Middle East to work as domestic workers.⁵¹⁷ According to USDOS, Ethiopia is both a source and a destination country of human trafficking, albeit the latter to a lesser extent. Internal trafficking also occurs in Ethiopia. Girls from the rural areas are exploited in “domestic servitude and prostitution within the country, while boys are subjected to forced labour in traditional weaving, herding, guarding, and street vending”.⁵¹⁸

4.8.1 Legal framework

Articles 596 (enslavement), 597 (trafficking in women and children), 635 (traffic in women and minors), and 636 (aggravation to the crime) of the Ethiopian Criminal Code concern trafficking.

Article 365, regarding sex trafficking, prescribes sentences not exceeding five years' imprisonment. Articles 596 and 597 prohibit slavery and labour trafficking and prescribe 5-20 years' imprisonment.⁵¹⁹ According to USDOS, articles 597 and 635 lack a clear definition of human trafficking and do not criminalize trafficking against adult male victims.⁵²⁰

USDOS notes that the government does not provide detailed case information on the articles used to prosecute suspected traffickers, but a local NGO reported the conviction of nine individuals under Article 597 within the reporting period of the USDOS report (April 2014-March 2015).⁵²¹

In general, USDOS reports that Articles 598 (Unlawful Sending of Ethiopians to Work Abroad) and 571 (Endangering the Life of Another) are regularly used to prosecute cases of transnational labour trafficking, but the absence of a clear legal definition of human trafficking interfered with the ability to investigate and prosecute cases effectively.⁵²²

On 30 June 2015, Reuters reported that a bill was presented in parliament to enable imposing life imprisonment or the death penalty on human traffickers.⁵²³

BBC reported on 24 October 2013 that Ethiopia temporarily banned its citizens from travelling abroad to look for work. According to the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry, this was to safeguard the well-being of its citizens, as “countless Ethiopians had lost their lives or undergone untold physical and psychological trauma because of illegal human trafficking”.⁵²⁴ USDOS reports in July 2015 that “this temporary ban on overseas labour recruitment remains in effect”. Following the ban, illegal labour migration to the Gulf states has reportedly increased.⁵²⁵

4.8.2 Prevalence of trafficking

In 2011, the International Labor Organization (ILO) stated that several reports document that cross-border human trafficking is highly prevalent in Ethiopia. According to a 2004 IOM study, which the ILO refers to, 7.5% of all Ethiopian migrants who had left their country for employment and other purposes were between 13-17 years old at the time of their migration. 87.1% of the migrants had

⁵¹⁷ IOM, *facts and figures*, [url](#) [accessed 10/1/2016]

⁵¹⁸ USDOS, *Trafficking in persons Report 2015*, 27/7/2015, [url](#)

⁵¹⁹ Ethiopia: *Criminal Code*, Proclamation No. 414/2004, 9/5/2005, [url](#)

⁵²⁰ USDOS, *Trafficking in persons Report 2015*, 27/7/2015, [url](#)

⁵²¹ USDOS, *Trafficking in persons Report 2015*, 27/7/2015, [url](#)

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Reuters, *Ethiopia mulls tough trafficking law, including death penalty*, 30/6/2015, [url](#)

⁵²⁴ BBC, *Ethiopia bans citizens from travelling abroad for work*, 24/10/2013, [url](#)

⁵²⁵ USDOS, *Trafficking in persons Report 2015*, 27/7/2015, [url](#)

been trafficked.⁵²⁶

On 12 August 2015, the newspaper Ethiopian Herald reported that the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs estimates that around 1.5 million Ethiopians left the country illegally between 2008 and 2014. According to the Ethiopian Herald, this shows there is a “very networked trafficking web” between traffickers inside Ethiopia and those in the neighbouring countries.⁵²⁷

In October 2014, the UNHCR reports that Eritrean refugees had been arriving in Ethiopia at an average of 2,000 people per month, including approximately 150-200 unaccompanied minors every month.⁵²⁸

4.8.3 Treatment by State actors

USDOS reports that the government did not provide adequate assistance to trafficking victims, “relying almost exclusively on international organizations and NGOs to provide services to victims without providing funding to these organizations”. However, USDOS also reports that the government “continued to facilitate the reintegration of thousands of Ethiopians deported from Saudi Arabia and coordinated with NGOs and international organizations to provide employment”.⁵²⁹

According to USDOS, regional law enforcement entities were trained to identify trafficking victims but lacked capacity to properly investigate and document cases, as well as to collect and organize relevant data. Government officials worked with international organizations to train police and other officials on the topic of trafficking.⁵³⁰

USDOS notes that in its reporting period (April 2014 to March 2015), the government maintained its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts, but continued to focus entirely on transnational labour trafficking, with little evidence of investigation or prosecution of sex trafficking or internal labour trafficking cases. In 2011, ILO reported that, according to information collected from respondents, the enforcement of these anti-trafficking provisions is very minimal and officials at different levels face a number of challenges, such as a lack of a clear understanding of the definition of trafficking and the fact that there is no clear demarcation between trafficking in people and smuggling of migrants.⁵³¹

According to USDOS, corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes was a significant concern, and there was no sign that those responsible were held accountable.⁵³²

4.8.4 Treatment by members of society

In its 2011 report, IOL notes that migration is encouraged by the society at large and that, due to a lack of possibilities for legal migration, irregular migration is tolerated and even encouraged. Therefore, incidents of trafficking in persons are rarely reported and the community is not willing to testify and provide information to the authorities.⁵³³

⁵²⁶ ILO, *Trafficking in Persons Overseas for Labour Purposes*, 2011, [url](#)

⁵²⁷ Ethiopian Herald, *Ethiopia: Say No to Human Trafficking!*, 12/8/2015, [url](#)

⁵²⁸ UNHCR, *Smuggling and Trafficking from the East and Horn of Africa*, 10/2014, p.5, [url](#)

⁵²⁹ USDOS, *Trafficking in persons Report 2015*, 27/7/2015, [url](#)

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ ILO, *Trafficking in Persons Overseas for Labour Purposes*, 2011, [url](#)

⁵³² USDOS, *Trafficking in persons Report 2015*, 27/7/2015, [url](#)

⁵³³ ILO, *Trafficking in Persons Overseas for Labour Purposes*, 2011, [url](#)

No recent information has been found about the treatment of victims or people at risk of trafficking by members of society.

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