Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	**59**
Land:	Eritrea
Kilde:	British Home Office
Titel:	”Eritrea Report - Country Information and Policy Unit”
Udgivet:	april 2005
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	19. maj 2005

ERITREA REPORT

APRIL 2005

Country Information and Policy Unit

IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY DIRECTORATE
HOME OFFICE, UNITED KINGDOM

CONTENTS

Descriptive table – key facts

Geography	The territory includes the Dahlak Islands (offshore from Massawa). Eritrea has a coastline on the Red Sea extending for almost 1,000 km, is bounded to the north-west by Sudan, to the south and west by Ethiopia and to the south-east by Djibouti.
Provinces	Anseba, Debub, Debubawi Keyih Bahri, Gash-Barka, Maakel, Semenawi Keyih Bahri
Area	46,774 square miles
Population	4,141,000 (UN estimate at mid year 2003)
Languages	Tigrinya, Arabic and English
Ethnic groups	Tigrinya,Tigre, Afar (Danakils), Saho, Hedareb, Bilen, Kunama, Nara and Rashaida
Form of government	Pending the election of a new National Assembly, legislative power was to be held by a Transitional National Assembly, comprising the 75 members of the former Constituent Assembly and 15 representatives of Eritreans living abroad.
Principal Government Ministers	President: Issaias Afewerki Defence: Gen. Sebhat Ephrem Justice: Fawzia Hashim Foreign Affairs: Ali Sayyid Abdullah Education: Osman Salih Muhammad Health: Dr Salih Mekki
National currency	Nakfa

1 Scope of Document

1.1 This Country Report has been produced by Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office, for use by officials involved in the asylum / human rights determination process. The Report provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum / human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. It includes information available up to 1 March 2005.

1.2 The Country Report is compiled wholly from material produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources and does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy. All information in the Report is attributed, throughout the text, to the original source material, which is made available to those working in the asylum / human rights determination process.

1.3 The Report aims to provide a brief summary of the source material identified, focusing on the main issues raised in asylum and human rights applications. It is not intended to be a detailed or comprehensive survey. For a more detailed account, the relevant source documents should be examined directly.

1.4 The structure and format of the Country Report reflects the way it is used by Home Office caseworkers and appeals presenting officers, who require quick electronic access to information on specific issues and use the contents page to go directly to the subject required. Key issues are usually covered in some depth within a dedicated section, but may also be referred to briefly in several other sections. Some repetition is therefore inherent in the structure of the Report.

1.5 The information included in this Country Report is limited to that which can be identified from source documents. While every effort is made to cover all relevant aspects of a particular topic, it is not always possible to obtain the information concerned. For this reason, it is important to note that information included in the Report should not be taken to imply anything beyond what is actually stated. For example, if it is stated that a particular law has been passed, this should not be taken to imply that it has been effectively implemented; rather that information regarding implementation has not been found.

1.6 As noted above, the Country Report is a collation of material produced by a number of reliable information sources. In compiling the Report, no attempt has been made to resolve discrepancies between information provided in different source documents. For example, different source documents often contain different versions of names and spellings of individuals, places and political parties etc. Country Reports do not aim to bring consistency of spelling, but to reflect faithfully the spellings used in the orginal source documents. Similarly, figures given in different source documents sometimes vary and these are simply quoted as per the original text.

1.7 The Country Report is based substantially upon source documents issued during the previous two years. However, some older source documents may have been included because they contain relevant information not available in more recent documents. All sources contain information considered relevant at the time this Report was issued.

1.8 This Country Report and the accompanying source material are public documents. All Country Reports are published on the IND section of the Home Office website and the great majority of the source material for the Report is readily available in the public domain. Where the source documents identified in the Report are available in electronic form, the relevant web link has been included, together with the date that the link was accessed. Copies of less accessible source documents, such as those provided by government offices or subscription services, are available from the Home Office upon request.

1.9 Country Reports are published every six months on the top 20 asylum producing countries and on those countries for which there is deemed to be a specific operational need. Inevitably, information contained in Country Reports is sometimes overtaken by events that occur between publication dates. Home Office officials are informed of any significant changes in country conditions by means of Country Information Bulletins, which are also published on the IND website. They also have constant access to an information request service for specific enquiries.

1.10 In producing this Country Report, the Home Office has sought to provide an accurate, balanced summary of the available source material. Any comments regarding this Report or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

Country Information & Policy Unit
Home Office
Apollo House
36 Wellesley Road
Croydon CR9 3RR
Email: CIPU@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Website: http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/country_information.html?

Advisory Panel on Country Information

1.11 The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information was established under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the Home Office's country information material. The Advisory Panel welcomes all feedback on the Home Office's Country Reports and other country information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at www.apci.org.uk.

1.12 It is not the function of the Advisory Panel to endorse any Home Office material or procedures. In the course of its work, the Advisory Panel directly reviews the content of selected individual Home Office Country Reports, but

neither the fact that such a review has been undertaken, nor any comments made, should be taken to imply endorsement of the material. Some of the material examined by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

Advisory Panel on Country Information
PO Box 1539
Croydon CR9 3WR
Email apci@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Website www.apci.org.uk

Return to Contents

2. Geography

2.1 Africa South of the Sahara in its 2005 report stated that:

> "The State of Eritrea, which formally acceded to independence on 24 May 1993, covers an area of 121,144 sq km (46,774 sq miles)….Eritrea, which has a coastline on the Red Sea extending for almost 1,000 km, is bounded to the north-west by Sudan, to the south and west by Ethiopia, and to the south-east by Djibouti.…At mid 2002, according to UN estimates, Eritrea's population totalled 3,991,000. The population is fairly evenly divided between Tigrinya-speaking Christians, the traditional inhabitants of the highlands, and the Muslim communities of the western lowlands, northern highlands and east coast". **[1a] (p402)**

2.2 Lonely Planet in its guide to Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti published November 2000 noted that the capital is Asmara and the main port cities are Massawa and Assab. Several languages are spoken, including Tigrinya, Tigre and Amharic. Arabic and English are also widely spoken. **[32]**

Return to Contents

3. Economy

3.1 The CIA World Factbook updated 27 January 2005, noted that:

> "Like the economies of many African nations, the economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture, with 80% of the population involved in farming and herding… Since the war ended, the government has maintained a firm grip on the economy, expanding the use of the military and party-owned businesses to complete Eritrea's development

agenda. Erratic rainfall and the delayed demobilization of agriculturalists from the military kept cereal production well below normal, holding down growth in 2002. Eritrea's economic future depends upon its ability to master social problems such as illiteracy, unemployment, and low skills, and to open its economy to private enterprise so the diaspora's money and expertise can foster economic growth ". **[28] (pps5-6)**

Petrol Rationing

3.2 BBC News reported on 22 September 2004 that: "Eritrea has imposed fuel rationing – although there has been no official announcement of the move which began about two weeks ago. Diplomats, who asked not to be named, say they are being limited in the amount of petrol and diesel they are allowed each week". **[8h]**

3.3 The BBC then reported on 15 October 2004 that: "Eritrea has banned the sale of petrol to the public because of the rising price of oil on world markets. Information Minister Ali Abu Ahmed said diesel would remain available, but petrol had to be conserved for essential use. **[8i]**

3.4 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office assess in a letter dated 26 April 2005 that petrol is still rationed. **[10]**

Drought & Famine

3.5 On 17 March 2004 IRIN News reported that:

"About two thirds of the population live below the poverty line, and in some small rural towns the figure leaps up to 80 percent due to the dislocation of the population and the return of hundreds of thousands of Eritreans from Sudan….A recent nutritional survey, carried out by the government, UN and NGOs, found that the regions of Gash Barka and Northern Red Sea had the highest prevalence of malnutrition at 15.6 percent and 16.9 percent respectively. Mothers were particularly affected, suffering 40 percent malnutrition rates….He [Simon Nhongo, the UN resident and humanitarian coordinator], added that the situation was slowly moving from emergency to development. The Eritrean government has recently approved a three-year Integrated Recovery Programme – a transitional plan aimed at providing an economic foundation for longer-term development. But the ongoing 'no-war, no-peace' situation meant a continuing shortage of human resources in both the private and public sectors". **[19f] (p1)**

3.6 In comments prepared for the Advisory Panel on Country Information meeting on 8 March 2005 UNHCR stated: "Even though the Government did approve of the 3 year Integrated Recovery Programme (IRP), there have been problems with regard to resource mobilisation and the IRP has yet to be initiated. **[18b]**

3.7 Christian Partners in Africa reported on 14 December 2004 that: "Two countries fighting poverty can ill afford to fight themselves, but that's exactly what could happen as tensions over border demarcation once again threaten to boil over into conflict….War between these two countries would have a devastating effect on the ordinary people many of whom have no knowledge or interest in the exact location of the border". **[36]**

3.8 IRIN News reported on 24 November 2004 that:

> "Relief agencies have jointly appealed for nearly US $157.2 million to fund humanitarian activities in Eritrea in 2005, saying the country had continued to endure the aftermath of war, five years after the 1998 to 2000 border conflict with Ethiopia….'With the travails of post-conflict resettlement, the period following the war has heralded a period of fragile peace, great hardship and competing urgent needs,' the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in the appeal document….They said that malnutrition continued to plague Eritreans, with 10-20 percent chronic malnutrition cases among infants and children in three of the country's six regions. Eritrea also has one of the highest malnutrition rates in the world at 53 percent. The need for food aid, clean water, increased supplementary, and therapeutic feeding and maternal healthcare remains acute, the agencies said". **[19l]**

3.9 News 24.com reported on 29 October 2004 that: "A ship transporting 61200 tonnes of wheat arrived at the Eritrean port of Massawa on the Red Sea on Friday to help about 600000 people affected by drought, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) said in a statement." **[37]**

3.10 IRIN News further reported on 6 December 2004 that: "Some 42,500 mt of donated wheat worth US $ 13.8million has arrived in Eritrea, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) reported on Monday. The wheat, it added, would help alleviate the suffering of nearly a million people affected by war, widespread drought and the combined economic impact". **[19j]**

3.11 IRIN News reported on 4 February 2005 that:

> "The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has appealed for US $4.38 million to provide food and clean water to some 55,000 Eritrean villagers affected by four consecutive years of drought. The money would be used to help affected people in 17 villages in Hagaz subdistrict for eight months, truck water to 10,000 people and build or rehabilitate water-points, boreholes and wells, the Federation said in a statement dated 28 January [2005]". **[19j]**

3.12 BBC News reported on 21 February 2005 that: "Food rations to more than one million Eritreans are being cut because of a slow response by donors to aid appeals. The World Food Programme says it has just 70,000 tonnes of food left in its warehouses and no more supplies will arrive until June". **[8e]**

Return to Contents

4. History

Refer to Africa South of the Sahara (source [1a]) for more detailed history of events prior to 1991

Foundations of Eritrea

4.1 Africa South of the Sahara in its 2005 report stated that:

> "Modern Eritrea dates from the establishment of an Italian colony in the late 19th century. From a small concession gained near Assab in 1869, the Italians extended their control to Massawa in 1885 and to most of Eritrea by 1889. In the same year the Ethiopian emperor, Menelik, and the Italian government signed the treaty of Uccialli, which effectively recognized Italian control over Eritrea…The period of Italian rule (1889-1941) and the subsequent years under British military administration (1941-52) created a society, economy and polity more advanced than in the semi-feudal Ethiopian empire. Following the Second World War, Ethiopia, which historically regarded Eritrea as an integral part of its territory, intensified its claims to sovereignty.…In 1962 Eritrea was reconstituted as a province of Ethiopia". **[1a] (p402)**

Resistance to Ethiopian Rule 1952-1991

4.2 The same report stated that,

> "The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF).…began an armed struggle in 1961. Organizational and ideological differences erupted into violence within the ELF in the mid-1960s.…A reformist group separated from the ELF and formed the Popular Liberation Forces (renamed the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, EPLF, in 1977). A major consequence of the split was the civil war of 1972-74. Some reformists remained within the ELF, although most of these eventually left in two stages, the first group breaking away in 1977-78 and the second (the Sagem group joining the EPLF) in 1985, following a second civil war. These desertions destroyed the ELF as a coherent military organization.…The EPLF leadership consolidated a highly centralized and disciplined political and military organization, in contrast to the more loosely organized and factionalized ELF". **[1a] (p402)**

4.3 The same report said that, "The 1974 revolution in Ethiopia and its violent aftermath brought thousands of new recruits into the resistance groups. Even greater number of recruits joined the EPLF after the Mengistu regime launched its 'red terror' campaign in Asmara, and following its capture of

smaller cities such as Keren and Decamhare in 1977"… The EPLF captured Massawa in 1990 and Asmara in May 1991. **[1a] (p402)**

Independence 1993 & Transitional Government

4.4 Europa 2005 stated that:

> "Concurrent with the liberation of Asmara in 1991 was the London Conference under the chairmanship of the US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa. Representatives of the EPLF attended in a delegation separate from the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, now in control of Ethiopia and sympathetic to Eritrean nationalist aspirations. Both the USA and the Ethiopian delegation accepted the EPLF as the provisional Government, and the latter agreed to hold a referendum on independence in 1993". **[1a] (p403)**

4.5 This report continued:

> "In advance of the referendum, the EPLF formed a Government and established ministries, most of whose key personnel were drawn from the EPLF.…In April a UN-supervised referendum took place in an atmosphere of national celebration. Of the 1,102,410 Eritreans who voted, 99.8% endorsed national independence. The anniversary of the liberation of Asmara, 24 May [1993] was proclaimed Independence Day, and on 28 May the State of Eritrea formally attained international recognition". **[1a] (p403)**

4.6 It also said:

> "Following Eritrea's accession to independence, a four-year transitional period was declared, during which preparations were to proceed for establishing a constitutional and pluralistic political system. At the apex of the transitional Government were three state institutions: the Consultative Council (the executive authority formed from the ministers, provincial governors and heads of government commissions); the National Assembly (the legislative authority formed from the Central Committee of the EPLF, together with 30 members from the Provincial Assemblies and 30 members appointed by the Central Committee); and the judiciary. One of the National Assembly's first acts was the election of a Head of State. To little surprise, Issaias Afewerki, the Secretary-General of the EPLF, was elected, by a margin of 99 votes to five". **[1a] (p403)**

The PFDJ and Constitutional Developments

4.7 Europa 2005 stated that:

> "President Afewerki, appointed a new Consultative Council in June 1993, comprising 14 ministers (all members of the EPLF politburo) and 10 regional governors. The third congress of the EPLF was convened

at Nafka, in Sahel province, in February 1994. There the EPLF formally transformed itself from a military front into a national movement (the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, PFDJ) hoping to embrace all Eritreans (except those accused of collaboration during the liberation struggle). The party congress also confirmed its support for a plural political system, which was to be included in the final draft of a new constitution, which (together with legislation to regulate the formation of political parties) was to be submitted for approval by a national referendum". **[1a] (p403)**

4.8 Furthermore that:

"In March 1994 the National Assembly adopted a series of resolutions whereby the former executive body, the Consultative Council, was formally superseded by a State Council. Other measures adopted by resolutions of the Assembly included the creation of a 50 member Constitutional Commission and the establishment of a committee charged with the reorganization of the country's administrative divisions. It was decided that the National Assembly would henceforth comprise 75 members of the PFDJ Central Committee, and 75 directly elected members. However no mechanism was announced for their election. All but eight of the 50-member Constitutional Commission were government appointees, and there was no provision for any opposition participation in the interim system". **[1a] (p403)**

4.9 Also that: "International conferences on the draft constitution were held in the capital in July 1994 and in January 1995. The symposia were presided over by Dr Bereket Habteselassie, the Chairman of the Constitutional Commission. Many foreign constitutional experts were invited to attend and discuss the draft document, and there was extensive popular consultation, with more than 1,000 meetings throughout the country, attended by some 500,000 Eritreans. However, no opposition parties or opponents of the regime were invited to contribute". **[1a] (p403)**

4.10 It continued that:

"In May [1995] Afewerki announced that the 30,000-strong civil service was to be reduced by one third. All ministries (with the exceptions of interior and defence) would be subject to the rationalization programme, and 6,500 civil servants who had not been combatant members of the EPLF were made redundant immediately. In the same month the National Assembly approved a law reducing the previous 10 administrative regions to six, each with regional, sub-regional and village administrations". **[1a] (p403)**

4.11 The same report also said:

"In early 1997 a Constituent Assembly was established to discuss and ratify the draft Constitution. The Constituent Assembly comprised 527 members, of whom 150 were from the National Assembly, and the

remainder selected from representatives of Eritreans residing abroad or elected by regional assemblies (adhering to a 30% quota for women). On 23 May the Constituent Assembly unanimously adopted the Constitution, instituting a presidential regime, with a President elected for a maximum of two five-year terms. According to the Constitution, the President, as Head of State, was empowered to appoint, with the approval of the National Assembly, the ministers, the commissioners, the Auditor-General, the President of the central bank, and judges of the Supreme Court". **[1a] (p403)**

4.12 It similarly continued:

"'Conditional' political pluralism was authorized. Following the adoption of the new Constitution, the Constituent Assembly was disbanded, having empowered a Transitional National Assembly (comprising the 75 members of the PFDJ, 60 members of the Constituent Assembly and 15 representatives of Eritreans resident abroad) to act as the legislative body until the holding of national elections. The outbreak of war in 1998 delayed the implementation of the Constitution, although government officials continued to insist that it would be implemented gradually, once peace returned…. In October 2000 it was announced that Eritrea's first post independence elections, which were scheduled to have been held in 1998, but were postponed following the outbreak of hostilities with Ethiopia would take place in December 2001 but these were postponed indefinitely by the National Assembly when it met in January 2002. In 2003 elections of local administrators and magistrates were held in villages throughout Eritrea and in 2004 elections took place for regional assemblies". **[1a] (pps 403&6)**

Border Conflict with Ethiopia 1998-2000

4.13 Europa 2005 stated that:

"Relations with Ethiopia deteriorated in late 1997 as disagreements arose following Eritrea's introduction of a new currency, the Nakfa. In late December there was a military confrontation around an Eritrean army post on the frontier in northern Dankalia, an area where Ethiopian rebels were reported to be operating. In May 1998 fighting erupted between Eritrean and Ethiopian troops in the border region after both countries accused the other of having invaded their territory". **[1a] (p404)**

4.14 The same report said that: "The war was a major issue at the OAU [Organisation of African Unity] Heads of State summit held in Algiers in July 1999 where both sides confirmed their commitment to the OAU's framework agreement. President Afewerki announced that Eritrean troops would be withdrawn from all territory captured from Ethiopia since 6 May 1998". **[1a] (p404)**

4.15 However the source noted that:

"There were reports of numerous clashes between Eritrean and Ethiopian troops throughout late 1999 and early 2000.…On 31 May [2000] the prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, announced that the war with Eritrea was over and that his troops had withdrawn from most of the territory that they had captured from Eritrea. Nevertheless, fighting continued to take place while discussions were ongoing in Algiers, with each side accusing the other of resuming hostilities….On 18 June [2000] a peace agreement was signed, which provided for an immediate cease-fire and the deployment of a UN peace-keeping force in a 25-km buffer zone until the disputed 966-km border had been demarcated". **[1a] (p404)**

4.16 The report added that, "In mid-September 2000 the UN Security Council approved the deployment of a 4,200-strong UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) peace-keeping force. UNMEE, which was placed under the charge of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, was charged with monitoring and ensuring that both Eritrea and Ethiopia comply with the agreement". **[1a] (p404)**

4.17 In the same volume it also said that:

"A definitive peace agreement, formally bringing the war to an end, was signed in Algiers on 12 December [2000]. Both sides agreed to a permanent cessation of all hostilities and the release and repatriation of all prisoners of war. The UN pledged to establish two separate independent commissions to delineate the border and assess compensation claims. The border commission was to demarcate the border in accordance with colonial maps". **[1a] (pps404-5)**

Unresolved Border Demarcation

4.18 Europa World Year Book in its report of 2004 stated that:

"In early March 2003 the Boundary Commission [BC] reported to the UN Security Council that Ethiopia's requests for changes to the border ruling, in order to 'take better account of human and physical geography', threatened to undermine the peace process as a whole. Despite Ethiopia's claims that it had been promised that demarcations could be refined, later in March the BC categorically ruled Badme to be Eritrean territory. Meles (Zenawi, the Ethiopian Prime Minister) subsequently complained that the decision was 'wrong and unjust' and vowed to continue to contest the ruling…. The demarcation of the border, which had originally been scheduled to take place in May, was postponed until July, and then delayed again until October; both the MCC [Military Co-ordination Committee] and the U.N. expressed their frustration at the resolution of the matter. In October, in a letter to the Security Council [SC], Meles called for a new body to be established to resolve the crisis and again denounced the Boundary Commission's ruling as 'uncacceptable'. However, the SC stated that Ethiopia had committed itself under the 2000 Algiers agreement to accept the BC's

decision as 'final and binding' and urged it to accept and implement the border ruling. Both Legwaila and the Chairman of the BC, Elihu Lauterpacht, were critical of Ethiopia's lack of compliance with its obligations under the terms of the peace accord, and the ongoing impasse was further compounded by the BC's announcement in late October [2003] that the demarcation of the border had been delayed indefinitely…. Eritrea continued, however, to insist that the ruling be fully implemented.

The process suffered a further reverse in mid-November 2003, when Eritrea withdrew its ambassador to the AU [African Union] and accused the organisation of neglecting its responsibilities over the dispute with Ethiopia. However, in the following month both countries agreed to establish three Sector Military Co-ordination Committees …. in order to improve the mechanism for dealing with incidents in the border areas…. in December Lloyd Axworthy, a former Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, was appointed as the U.N's special envoy to the region, tasked with resolving the stalled peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia. While Ethiopia welcomed the appointment and pledged to work closely with Axworthy, the Eritrean Government expressed its opposition to the appointment, as it feared that it would result in amendments to the BC's ruling". **[1b] (p1576)**

4.19 IRIN News in its report of 20 August 2004 said that "The Ethiopian government has allowed the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) to operate direct flights between Addis Ababa and Asmara, lifting a ban that was put in place after the border war between the two countries ended in 2000". **[19h]**

4.20 NEWS 24.com reported on 5 October 2004 that:

"The Eritrean government has prohibited Eritreans from participating in a leather products trade fair in Addis Ababa, organisers of the fair disclosed on Monday. About 30 participants from related leather industries in Eritrea had registered and confirmed their participation in the three-day fair opening on Wednesday. However, they have all been prohibited from travelling to Addis Ababa because of an unresolved border dispute". **[37b]**

4.21 IRIN News reported on 18 November 2004 that: "The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed a new deputy special representative for the UN mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)". **[19k]** She is Sissel Ekass (a Norwegian).

4.22 BBC News reported on 7 December 2004 that: "Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki has rebuffed an Ethiopian proposal to resolve a border dispute between the two countries. In his first public reaction, he said it was a move 'that would drag the peace process another step backwards'. Last month, Ethiopia's leader Meles Zenawi said for the

first time he accepted 'in principle' the ruling of the independent boundary commission". [8j]

4.23 Human Rights Watch in its 2005 report stated that:

> "The 1998-2000 war with Ethiopia ended with an armistice agreement by which Eritrea and Ethiopia agree to binding arbitration of their border. In 2003, Ethiopia announced that it rejected the decision of the independent commission, largely because it awarded the village of Badme, the flashpoint for the war, to Eritrea. The Eritrean government uses the possibility of renewed conflict as a justification for postponing elections and for prolonging national service. Eritrea has increasingly lashed out against the international community for not compelling Ethiopia to implement the border decision. Throughout 2004, it adamantly refused to meet with the special envoy appointed by the U.N. Secretary General to attempt to resolve the border impasse. UNMEE maintains just under four thousand troops along the twenty-five-kilometer-wide armistice buffer line between the two countries. In September 2004 the Security Council voted to extend UNMEE's mandate through March 2005." [29d]

Return to Contents

5. State Structures

The Constitution

5.1 The CIA World Factbook 2005 stated that: "The transitional constitution, decreed on 19 May 1993, was replaced by a new constitution adopted on 23 May 1997, but not yet implemented". [28]

5.2 Africa South of the Sahara 2005 stated that: "The outbreak of war in 1998 delayed the implementation of the Constitution, although government officials continued to insist that it would be implemented gradually, once peace returned". [1a] (p403)

Citizenship & Nationality

5.3 The Eritrean Nationality Proclamation No.21/1992 published in April 1992 details the criteria and law as regarding Eritrean Nationality. [7]

5.4 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that:

> "Current Eritrean regard to naturalisation takes the year 1933 as the starting point. This is the year in which the Italian colonial government registered the population of the colony and declared those registered as legal residents. Therefore, these persons who have a right to

Eritrean citizenship are all those who were themselves or who are the descendants of persons resident in Eritrea prior to 1933". **[3] (p46)**

5.5 The same report stated that: "The Eritrean Nationality Proclamation specifically mentions two other time periods as well. The first period is from 1934 to 1951, the year Eritrea was incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire. The second period recognised under Eritrean law is from 1952 onwards, the year the Emperor was overthrown and the Dergue took power". **[3] (p46)**

5.6 In comments prepared for the Advisory Panel on Country Information meeting on 8 March 2005, UNHCR stated: "The Dergue took power in the early 1970s when the Emperor was overthrown". **[18b]**

5.7 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that, "An applicant may apply for naturalisation through marriage to an Eritrean citizen provided s/he demonstrates three years of legal residence in Eritrea following the marriage and a renunciation of other nationality". **[3] (p46)**

5.8 On 27 January 2004, the Home Office received a letter from the Eritrean Embassy in London clarifying certain points with regards to obtaining Eritrean nationality. The letter stated that:

(a) "A person who is with an Eritrean father/mother would be eligible for Eritrean nationality as long as the person provides three witnesses.

(b) The political views of the three witnesses are not relevant to establishing the nationality.

(c) The political views of the applicant for nationality are not relevant to establishing eligibility for nationality and obtaining an Eritrean passport.

(d) The voting in the 1993 Referendum is not a necessary precondition to establishing nationality.

(e) Paying a 2% tax on nationals overseas is not a precondition for eligibility for Eritrean nationality and obtaining a passport.

(f) Claiming refugee status overseas does not preclude eligibility for Eritrean nationality or obtaining an Eritrean passport.

(g) All application forms are filled in person by the applicant at the Embassy's consular section and has (sic) to be authorised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Eritrea. No application forms out of the standard provided by the Embassy are accepted". **[14]**

5.9 A British Fact Finding Mission reported on 29 April 2003 that: "If a person's parents or grandparents were born in Eritrea you will certainly be entitled to Eritrean nationality but will have to prove this". It was also confirmed that applicants would not be asked about their views, political or otherwise. **[3] (p46-48)**

5.10 The British Embassy in a letter dated 2 July 2001 noted that: "The Political Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs…was quite clear that the 1993 referendum plays no part in whether or not someone is entitled to Eritrean nationality". **[15]**

5.11 HRW, in a report dated January 2003, stated that:

> "The legal status of Ethiopian residents in Eritrea who had not sought Eritrean nationality at the time of the war's outbreak does not appear to be in dispute. The Eritrean government as a rule considered them as aliens. It did not automatically issue the Eritrean national identity card or passport to these Ethiopians nor did it recruit them for employment reserved for nationals. Ethiopians were also not called up for military service in Eritrea. For the purposes of residency and departure procedures, the Eritrean government continued to deal with Ethiopian nationals under the normal institutions and procedures governing aliens residing in the country, i.e. they were required to acquire residency permits and obtain exit visas to leave the country". **[29b] (p31)**

Three Witnesses

5.12 A British UK Fact Finding Mission reported on 29 April 2003 that the three witnesses method is used because it would not always be possible to check a person's identity by use of birth certificate. As this can be rather hard to do the three witnesses identification method is favoured in all cases. **[3] (p48)**

5.13 The same report stated that: "An applicant can call on any 'three witnesses' to verify that the applicant is an Eritrean national. The 'three witnesses' must be Eritreans who hold an Eritrean identification card or passport". **[3] (p48)**

5.14 It also noted that, "Though every adult is supposed to have a national ID card and anyone holding an Eritrean passport would be in possession of that card, identity records are not centralised and it is often difficult to find information about an individual….while documentation can help a person to prove nationality the Eritrean government now relies on the 'three witness' rule". **[3] (p48)**

5.15 Furthermore, it noted that: "They [an applicant] can choose any three Eritreans in the world that they know personally. The person abroad will have to go to the Eritrean embassy of that country in order to answer questions. These are standard questions about how long they have known the person, relationship etc. They sign a piece of paper that is then faxed onwards". **[3] (p48)**

5.16 Additionally, it stated that: "According to the [Operations Chief – Department of Immigration and Nationality for Eritrea] the profile of the witness does not have a bearing on this [acceptability]. They are not asked for political or any other views. They must be a registered Eritrean citizen and must show that they know the person well. It is a character witness

procedure; they must agree to be responsible for the person's application to be a recognised Eritrean citizen". **[3] (p48)**

5.17 This report also stated that:

> "There are over three million people in Eritrea, as well as hundreds of thousands in the Diaspora (Eritreans abroad)….even if they came from Ethiopia or Sudan they would have known many other Eritreans. It is a matter of history that those in Ethiopia kept close contact with family in Eritrea, even those that stayed in Ethiopia after independence. Most formed 'clubs' to celebrate and remember their culture. Those in the Sudan lived in 'Eritrean communities and camps'….many tens of thousands of those returned from Ethiopia and Sudan had their stay regulated and have Eritrean passports....'not only will we [the authorities] allow witnesses from all over the globe but we will follow up claims. So for example if someone claims to be from a certain village we will send word to that community so that they can get the witnesses to come forward". **[3] (p49)**

The 1993 Referendum

5.18 A British Fact Finding Mission reported on 29 April 2003 that:

> "The issue of participation in the 1993 Referendum has no bearing on eligibility for Eritrean nationality. Participation had importance when Eritrea first achieved independence but now over a decade later this is no longer the case. The problem is that many people were not able to vote in the referendum for one reason or other and it would not be reasonable or logical to apply such criteria after a decade of independence. Some had been in inaccessible areas, some had been sick, some out of the country, some were too young". **[3] (p49)**

5.19 The report further noted that:

> "Over time such a criterion has lessened in importance to the point now where it is of little importance….the initial vote was conducted largely thanks to the machinery of the Ethiopian government. They held the central records. We [the Eritrean authorities] have most of the information now but since the border war, we can no longer check any discrepancies. Therefore we cannot always verify if a person voted in the referendum or not". **[3] (p49-50)**

5.20 In comments prepared for the Advisory Panel on Country Information meeting on 8 March 2005, UNHCR stated [regarding family reunion and the ICRC arranging visits between split families] that: "In reality, this is extremely difficult for the majority of cases and not all are able to avail themselves of the ICRC mechanism, which is the only possibility for travel between the two countries. A person must decide to move permanently to the other country if they are to repatriate with ICRC and often, Ethiopia will not accept the arrival of an Eritrean spouse and vice versa". **[18b]**

Mixed Marriage and Mixed Birth

5.21 A British Fact Finding Mission reported on 29 April 2003 that: "in most cases a mixed marriage will prove to be no problem if both partners are already in Eritrea. If they are split between Eritrea and Ethiopia then the ICRC arranges visits and temporary reunions". **[3] (p50)**

5.22 The report further noted that, "if both partners are in Eritrea….the non-Eritrean would apply for a residence permit. This is also the situation if a person is unable to prove nationality. While a person attempts to prove their credentials, a person is given a residence permit, these are renewable every six-months. With most residence permits a person is allowed to work". **[3] (p50)**

5.23 Moreover the report stated that, "in cases where a person is part of an expelled mixed marriage they will if at all possible be dealt with faster….the Eritrean Government is very sympathetic to such cases". **[3] (p50)**

5.24 This report also noted that, "in the case of a mixed birth a person would generally not have too many problems as long as they can prove that they have Eritrean roots. This would make them eligible for Eritrean nationality under the normal procedures of the nationality proclamation". **[3] (p50)**

5.25 In comments prepared for the Advisory Panel on Country Information meeting on 8 March 2005, UNHCR stated: [regarding nationality issues]

> "If a couple is in a mixed marriage, it is very difficult to acquire Eritrean nationality for the foreign spouse who wishes to do so. With regard to dual nationality, the person will only be regarded as an Eritrean citizen if s/he is in Eritrea and no consideration will be taken to the other nationality, an issue which has caused some friction between certain western diplomatic missions and the Government of Eritrea, especially with regard to detention cases". **[18b]**

Political System

5.26 In its 2002 report HRW stated that:

> "In January 2002, the Government reconvened an interim 'National Assembly' that had not met since September 2000. The assembly consisted of seventy-five PFDJ central committee members and seventy-five party members selected by the leadership in 1993. The assembly approved the Government's arrests and press closings. It accused those arrested of having committed 'grave crimes'. A resolution claimed that the closed newspapers had been 'foreign-funded' and had 'engaged in defamation and rumour-mongering'". **[29a] (p1)**

5.27 The report further noted that:

"The assembly approved an election law designed to preserve the PFDJ's monopoly on power. Under the law, no political party other than the PFDJ would be allowed to operate. The assembly resolution criticized previous attempts to permit political pluralism. The election law disenfranchised anyone who commits treason or 'crimes against the nation'. It permitted members of the armed forces to be candidates for office. Although President Isayas appointed a five-person electoral commission at the end of January 2002, no elections had been scheduled as of October [2002]". **[29a] (p2)**

5.28 The US State Department report 2004, released on 28 February 2005, noted that: "The law provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully; however, citizens were not allowed to exercise this right. The Government came to power in a 1993 popular referendum in which voters chose to have an independent country managed by a transitional government run by the PFDJ. The PFDJ has not allowed for a democratically elected government, and national elections, originally scheduled for 1997, were never held. The only authorized political party was the PFDJ, and there were no opposition parties active domestically" **[4f] (p8)**

5.29 The CIA World Factbook 2005 stated that the Eritrean government is a transitional government.

"Following a successful referendum on independence for the Autonomous Region of Eritrea on 23-25 April 1993, a National Assembly composed entirely of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice or PFDJ, was established as a transitional legislature; a Constitutional Commission was also established to draft a Constitution; Isaias Afworki was elected President by the transitional legislature; the constitution, ratified in May 1997, did not enter into effect, pending parliamentary and presidential elections; parliamentary elections had been scheduled in December 2001, but were postponed indefinitely; currently the sole legal party is the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ)." **[28]**

5.30 HRW in its 2005 report stated that:

"The government has refused to implement the 1997 constitution, drafted by a constitutional assembly and ratified by referendum, that respects civil and political rights. The constitution contains restraints on the arbitrary use of power. It provides for writs of habeas corpus, the rights of prisoners to have the validity of their detention decided by a court, and fair and public trials. The constitution protects freedom of the press, speech, and peaceful assembly. It authorizes the right to form political organizations. It allows every Eritrean to practice any religion". **[29d]** (p1)

5.31 The USSD Background Note 2005 stated that:

"In September 2001, after several months in which a number of prominent PFDJ party members had gone public with a series of grievances against the government and in which they called for implementation of the constitution and the holding of elections, the government instituted a crackdown. **[4e]**

The Judiciary

5.32 The USSD 2004 noted that:

"The judicial system suffered from a lack of trained personnel, inadequate funding, and poor infrastructure that, in practice, limited the Government's ability to grant accused persons a speedy trial. At independence the Government chose to retain many Ethiopian legal proclamations, but issued new laws via proclamation, covering, among others, commercial, criminal, banking, and civil matters". **[4f] (p4)**

5.33 This report further stated that:

"Detainees did not always have access to legal counsel. Defendants could hire a legal representative at their own expense; however, not all detainees could afford to do so. Although there was no formal public defender's office, the Government frequently assigned attorneys to represent defendants accused of serious crimes punishable by more than 10 years in prison who could not afford legal counsel. Defendants could appeal verdicts to a High Court panel, composed of the High Court president and four other judges". **[4f] (p4)**

5.34 Furthermore:

"Most citizens only had contact with the legal system through the traditional village courts. Elected village judges heard civil cases, while magistrates versed in criminal law heard criminal cases. Village courts and local elders used customary law to adjudicate local problems such as property disputes and petty crimes. The Ministry of Justice offered training in alternative dispute resolution to handle some civil and criminal cases". **[4f] (p4)**

5.35 And: "Shari'a law could be applied when both litigants in civil cases were Muslims. Traditional courts cannot impose sentences involving physical punishment". **[4f] (p5)**

5.36 The USSD Country Background Note dated January 2005 noted that: "Nominally, the judiciary operates independently of both the legislative and executive bodies, with a court system that extends from the village through to the district, provincial, and national levels. However, in practice, the independence of the judiciary is limited. In 2001, the president of the High Court was detained after criticizing the government for judicial interference". **[4e] (p4)**

5.37 Europa 2005 stated that:

> "The judicial system operates on the basis of transitional laws which incorporate pre-independence laws of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, revised Ethiopian laws, customary laws and post-independence enacted laws. The independence of the judiciary in the discharge of its functions is unequivocally stated in Decree No. 37, which defines the powers and duties of the Government. It is subject only to the law and to no other authority. The court structure is composed of first instance sub-zonal courts, appellate and first instance zonal courts, appellate and first instance high courts, a panel of high court judges, presided over by the President of the High Court, and a Supreme Court presided over by the Chief Justice, as a court of last resort. The judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President of the State, subject to confirmation by the National Assembly". **[1a] (pps 418-9)**

5.38 Also:

> "The drafting of many civilians, including court administrators, defendants, judges, lawyers, and others involved in the legal system, into national service continued to have a significant negative impact on the judiciary. The High Court was reduced from 7 benches to 3, and regional, sub-regional, and village court personnel were reduced by 40 percent in 2002. Case backlogs accumulated in 2002 were reduced during the year. For example, the average waiting period before a case was heard at the High Court level was reduced from about 7 months to about 5 months". **[6e] (p4)**

Special Courts

5.39 The USSD 2004 report stated that:

> "The executive-controlled special courts issued directives to other courts regarding administrative matters, whereas their domain was supposed to be restricted to criminal cases. The special court system ostensibly was created to reduce a growing backlog in the civilian court system; however, in practice special courts, which banned defense counsel and the right of appeal, allowed the executive branch to mete out punishment without respect for due process. Judges in the special courts were senior military officers, most of whom had little or no legal experience. They based their decisions on 'conscience', without reference to the law. There was no limitation on punishment". **[4f] (p4)**

5.40 The report further noted that:

> "The special courts had jurisdiction over many criminal cases, such as capital offenses, felonies, some misdemeanors, cases of tax evasion involving large sums, and cases of embezzlement by senior officials. The office of the Attorney General decided which cases were to be tried by a special court. The Attorney General also allowed special

courts to retry civilian court cases, including those decided by the High Court, thereby subjecting defendants to double jeopardy". **[4f] (p4)**

5.41 It further added that:

"Special courts also reportedly were authorized to handle crimes involving corruption, theft, and misuse of government authority; however, the courts had not heard such cases". **[4f] (p4)**

Legal Rights/Detention

5.42 The USSD 2004 reported that:

"The law prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention; however, arbitrary arrest and detention were serious problems….The Penal Code stipulates that detainees may be held for a maximum of 30 days without being charged with a crime. In practice, authorities often detained persons suspected of crimes for much longer periods. Detainees did not always have access to legal counsel, and incommunicado detention was widespread". **[4f] (p3)**

5.43 The same report noted that, "There were reports of numerous politically motivated detentions of those who were seen as critical of the Government, and many of those detained remained in prison at year's end. Many were perceived to have ties to political dissidents or were believed to have spoken against government actions. There were unconfirmed reports that the number of such persons detained may be several hundred". **[4f] (p3)**

5.44 It further stated that, "There were reports that the Government continued to hold numerous members of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), an armed opposition group that fought against Ethiopia during the struggle for independence. ". **[4f] (p4)**

5.45 And it continued that:

"The Government held numerous pretrial detainees during the year. An unknown number of persons suspected of association with the Ethiopian Mengistu regime, with Islamic elements considered radical, or with suspected terrorist organizations, continued to remain in detention without charge, some of whom had been in detention for more than 10 years. There were reports of numerous politically motivated detentions and many of those detained remained in prison at year's end. Many were perceived to have ties to political dissidents or were believed to have spoken against government actions. There were unconfirmed reports that the number of such persons detained may be several hundred. There were no developments in the 2002 arrests of individuals associated with the detained group of 11 PFDJ/National Assembly members and diplomats who were recalled from their posts. At least four of these detainees, in addition to many

detained in previous years, remained in prison without charges at year's end". **[4f] (p3)**

Death Penalty

5.46 The Free Glossary 2004 states that Eritrea retains the death penalty as a legal form of punishment. **[33]**

Internal Security

5.47 The USSD 2004 reported that:

> "Police were officially responsible for maintaining internal security and the army was responsible for external security; however, the Government could call on the armed forces, the reserves, and demobilized soldiers in response to both domestic and external security requirements. Civilian authorities maintained effective control of the security forces. In addition to border incidents with Ethiopia, the army contended with the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM), a small, Sudan-based insurgent group that has mounted attacks in the north and west since 1993. Some members of the security forces committed serious human rights abuses". **[4f] (p1)**

5.48 The same report noted that: "Corruption was not prevalent. During 2003, the police force was reorganized and active duty military officers were placed in charge of key police divisions. The military has the power to arrest and detain persons, and internal security forces and the military detained many persons during the year [2004]". **[4f] (p3)**

Prisons and Prison Conditions

5.49 The USSD March 2004 reported that:

> "Prison conditions remained Spartan. The Government generally permitted three visits per week by family members, except for detainees arrested for national security reasons. There were no confirmed reports that any prisoners died due to lack of adequate medical care. There were substantial reports that prison conditions for persons temporarily held for evading military service were poor….At a detention facility outside Asmara, detainees reportedly were held in an underground hall with no access to light or ventilation, and in sometimes very crowded conditions". **[4d] (p2)**

5.50 The same report noted that: "The Government allowed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit and register Ethiopian civilian detainees in police stations and prisons; however, the ICRC was not permitted to visit the unknown number of Ethiopian soldiers who the Government claimed were deserters from the Ethiopian army. The ICRC was allowed to monitor prison conditions, but local groups were not". **[4d] (p3)**

5.51 It further noted that: "….the Government continued to authorize the use of deadly force against anyone resisting or attempting to flee during military searches for deserters and draft evaders, and deaths occurred during the year. For example, in November, there were credible reports of the deaths of 20 civilian and 4 security force members in an incident at a detention facility near Asmara following searches for military draft evaders in and around the capital. The individuals were killed when a cinderblock wall at the facility collapsed, and guards reportedly fired at inmates attempting to escape. No action was taken against the guards". **[4d] (pps 1-2)**

5.52 Human Rights Watch in its January 2004 report noted that:

> "Because of the volume of arrests, prisoners are often held in improvised cargo containers. At Aderser, near Sawa, prisoners are held in underground cells. At least six high school students were also reported incarcerated in solitary confinement in underground cells at Sawa. In addition to psychological abuse, escapees report the use of physical torture at some prisons. Prisoners have been suspended from trees, arms tied behind their backs, a technique known as almaz (diamond). Prisoners have also been placed face down, hands tied to feet, a torture known as the 'helicopter'". **[29c] (p2)**

5.53 BBC News reported on 8 November 2004 that: "Eritrea has denied reports that 20 people were killed in unrest at a prison holding alleged draft dodgers. Information Minister Ali Abdu told Reuters news agency the claims were false and were part of a 'smear campaign' by former enemy Ethiopia. But he later told AFP news agency the number of deaths had been exaggerated. **[8f]**

5.54 HRW 2005 reported that: "Arbitrary arrests and prolonged imprisonment without trial have not been limited to political leaders and the press. The government detains about 350 refugees who fled Eritrea but were involuntarily repatriated in 2002 (from Malta) and in 2004 (from Libya). They are held incommunicado in detention centers on the Red Sea coast and in the Dahlak islands". **[29d]**

The Military

5.55 Europa 2005 stated that: "In August 2003 Eritrea's active armed forces included an army of about 200,000, a navy of 1,400 and an air force of about 800". **[1a] (p421)**

Draft Evaders

5.56 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that: "There were particular problems with the call up of Muslim women….once a Muslim has undertaken her service her chances of being able to marry are considered to be reduced; this was given as a reason why this section of society in particular, though by no means exclusively, try to evade service". **[3] (p61)**

5.57 The report noted that:

> "In October 2002 every youngster who had completed secondary education was ordered to report [for military service]…. after final exams, students are called up and taken to the Sawa military training camp. Those that had been accepted to Asmara University return [home], the rest start their military service. However, recently even graduates from Asmara University have been called up after graduation". **[3] (p57-58)**

5.58 An Amnesty International report of May 2004 stated:

> "The legal penalty for evading conscription or assisting evasion is two years' imprisonment…. In practice, offenders are punished administratively by local commanders without any form of trial, legal recourse or opportunity for appeal or redress. The forms of punishment consist of torture and arbitrary detention for an indefinite period. Although these punishments are unlawful and abuses of human rights, they are well-known to government and military officials and the public, and no army officer has ever been punished for employing them". **[5f] (p18)**

Military Service

5.59 An Amnesty International report dated 19 May 2004 noted that:

> "In November 1991 the new EPLF government issued regulations to make national service compulsory for all citizens. The first intake of national service was in 1994 and it continued in staged phases since then. Under the revised national service regulations of 23 October 1995 (19), national service is compulsory for all citizens aged between 18 and 40 years, male and female. It consists of six months of military training (performed at Sawa military training centre near Tessenei in western Eritrea) and 12 months of 'active military service and development tasks in military forces' under Ministry of Defence authority. It extends to military reserve duties up to the age of 50. It may be continued under 'mobilisation or emergency situation directives given by the government'". **[5f] (p19)**

5.60 The USSD report 2004 noted that: "According to the Office of General Counsel for Jehovah's Witnesses Society, 20 Jehovah's Witnesses remained imprisoned without charge, including 6 allegedly detained during the year for failing to participate in national service. Although the maximum penalty for refusing to perform national service is 3 years' imprisonment, three of the individuals had been detained for more than 10 years. **[4f] (p7)**

5.61 Furthermore the report stated that: "Students who wished to travel abroad often were unable to obtain exit visas". **[4f] (p7)**

5.62 The report added that:

> "During the year [2004], police severely mistreated and beat army deserters, draft evaders, and members of particular religious groups. Security forces detained deserters and draft evaders and subjected them to various disciplinary actions that included prolonged sun exposure in temperatures of up to 113 degrees Fahrenheit or the binding of the hands, elbows and feet for extended periods". **[4f] (p2)**

5.63 It also said that: "There were reports that military officials seized residences belonging to relatives of persons identified with the political opposition and rented the property or used it as housing for senior military officers' families". **[4f] (p5)**

Demobilisation

5.64 BBC News in a report dated 2 March 2004 noted that, "The Eritrean authorities say they have begun demobilising 65,000 personnel who served during the conflict with neighbouring Ethiopia. Demobilisation commissioner Tekeste Fekadu said this was the first stage of a process to re-integrate former fighters into civilian life". **[8j]**

5.65 Europa 2005 stated that: "In May 2002 a US $60m. credit was approved by the World Bank to contribute to the demobilization of 200,000 soldiers, which was expected to cost $200m. in total. Under a pilot phase, which concluded in June 2002, more than 5,000 soldiers, including 3,600 women were demobilized". **[1a] (p405)**

Prisoners of War

5.66 Europa 2005 stated that:

> "The repatriation of prisoners of war began in December 2000. Despite a number of set-backs, all prisoners of war had been returned to their respective states by the end of November 2002. A total of 1,067 prisoners of war and 5,055 civilian internees were returned to Ethiopia, and 2,067 prisoners of war and 1,086 civilians were returned to Eritrea, under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross". **[1a] (p405)**

Medical Services

General

5.67 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that:

> "A different western embassy in Asmara explained to the delegation that limited medical facilities exist within the country and there is no form of social security services. Treatment has to be paid for. However fees are kept very low and the community is supportive towards those

individuals who are genuinely unable to pay. The source added that they did not believe that many Eritreans did not have a family member abroad (or know somebody that did) and that consequently, there was definitely scope to import medication such as drugs unavailable within the country". **[3] (p85)**

5.68 This report further noted that:

"The source explained that primary health care is available through a network of clinics located in rural areas and observed that these facilities were better than those in several other developing countries. It was added that this network of clinics had been built up since independence before which there were no such facilities and that most rural communities were now served; however the source stressed that this was not to say that every village has a clinic of its own. It was added that facilities had been developed in the countryside before the towns. It was further explained that the clinics are clean and staffed by well-trained paramedics and nurses, but there is a shortage of trained doctors. The delegation were advised that thirty-five Cuban doctors were assisting in the countryside and there are plans to increase this number". **[3] (p85)**

5.69 In comments prepared for the Advisory Panel on Country Information meeting on 8 March 2005, UNHCR stated: [with regard to the above paragraph] "Unfortunately, this does not reflect reality where the medical system suffers from an acute lack of resources which include medical personnel, medicines, facilities etc. There is no national cardiac treatment available, no burn unit and very limited trauma care facilities. Also, ongoing medical training is very limited and candidates for medical school may not travel abroad to accept scholarships". **[18b]**

5.70 According to an article in the Afrocentric Experience dated 2 July 2004, infant mortality in areas where Cuban medical professionals provide assistance has plunged: from 48 to 10.6 per 1,000 live births in Eritrea. **[13]**

5.71 A British Fact Finding Mission of April 2003 stated that:

"By 1999 official figures stated that about 70% of citizens lived within ten kilometres of a health care facility compared to 10% at the time of independence. There have also been notable increases in the number of hospitals (23 as of 2000); health centres (52) and health stations (170) as well as the number of health care workers. However, as of 2000 the ratio of people to a doctor was 1:13,000 and for a nurse it was 1:2,800". **[3] (p84)**

5.72 The same report stated that: "As reported by the MLHW [Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare] no cases of polio or diphtheria have been reported in Eritrea since 1997. In addition, all other diseases for which immunisations are available are reported to have declined. On-going

programmes include objectives to eliminate neonatal tetanus by 2004 and eradicate poliomyelitis by 2005". **[3] (p83-84)**

5.73 IRIN News in an article dated 20 July 2004 noted "UNICEF said a recent report by the Eritrean health ministry showed that under-five mortality had risen to 15 children out of 100,000 per day in some parts of the country. In Debub Region, where six out of eight dams had dried up in the past year creating acute water shortages for a large number of people, deaths from diarrhoea had increased". **[19g]**

5.74 Europa 2005 reported that the under-five mortality is 93 per 1,000 live births; HIV/AIDS % of persons aged 15 to 49 – 2.70; Access to water % of persons – 46%". **[1a] (p414)**

Specialist Facilities

5.75 A British Fact Finding Mission in April 2003 reported that, "Asmara has a number of specialist facilities including a dedicated paediatric hospital and an eye clinic". **[3] (p85)**

5.76 The report further noted that:

> "….some facilities are lacking within the country; for example laser treatment is not available for treating kidney stones. However, it was explained in many cases it is not a lack of knowledge or inability to undertake procedures but a risk of postoperative infection that is a particular problem. It was explained that people with standing in Eritrean society or with adequate funds might well get referrals to Saudi Arabia for treatment. One western embassy in Asmara also commented that although there is a lack of some forms of specialist treatment, some such treatment is available; for example, cardiac care and treatment". **[3] (p85-86)**

5.77 It also stated that:

> "There is a single hospital for psychiatric care - the 'St Mary's Neuropsychiatric Hospital' located in Asmara with a capacity of 240 beds. According to the MLHW [Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare] staff here include one trained psychiatrist and seven psychiatric nurses. There is no specialist child psychiatrist in the country or dedicated facilities for children with psychiatric problems, where hospital admission is necessary children are placed in a ward alongside adult patients. The paediatric unit of the Mekane Hiwot Hospital, also located in Asmara, may also….[treat] a small number of children with psychiatric conditions. However, as a result of poor community awareness children or adolescents with psychological problems are often believed to be either 'bad kids' or have their condition associated with 'demons or other traditional beliefs'". **[3] (p89)**

HIV/AIDS

5.78 IRIN News reported on 21 October 2004 that:

> "The HIV prevalence in Eritrea has shown a slight decline over the past few years and appears to have stabilised, with survey results showing that the unweighted national prevalence rate has fallen from 2.8 percent in 2001 to 2.4 last year, a government official told IRIN on Tuesday….According to the findings of an HIV surveillance report conducted by the Ministry of Health in all six zones of Eritrea between April and July 2003, prevalence rates were highest in the Southern Red Sea (7.2 percent) and Maekel (3.6 percent) zones. It said women aged 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 years had higher-than–average rates of infection, and prevalence was higher among pregnant women in urban areas than those in rural areas". **[19l]**

5.79 Europa 2005, however, stated that:

> "Although the rate of HIV/AIDS infection is relatively low – prevalence among women aged 15-24 was 4.3% and among men of a similar age only 2.8% in 2001 – it is thought to have increased in recent years and is now judged to be the second leading cause of death in patients over 5 years old. The rate of infection among the adult population was recorded at 2.7% in 2003. In the early 2000s particular concern was being raised over the rates of infection in the military and the implications of the return of these men and women to their home communities after demobilization". **[1a] (p414)**

The Disabled

5.80 The USSD 2004, reported that:

> "There was no discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, or in the provision of other state services. The war for independence and the conflict with Ethiopia left thousands of men and women with physical disabilities from injuries they received as guerrillas, soldiers, and civilian victims. The Government dedicated a substantial share of its resources to support and train these former fighters, who were regarded as heroes. There are no laws mandating access for persons with disabilities to public thoroughfares or public or private buildings; however, many newly constructed buildings provided access for persons with disabilities". **[4f] (p10)**

5.81 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that:

> "Information provided by the MLHW [Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare] provides details of specialist facilities available to disabled persons within Eritrea. These include four orthopaedic workshops in three different locations where patients can be fitted with prosthesis. There are reportedly plans to open further workshops in other parts of

the country. There is also a specialist clinic run by an NGO that specifically treats children under the age of 15 who are affected with a range of physical disabilities; 75% of patients are polio cases and 20% of patients have clubfeet. However others have conditions including muscular disorders, cerebral palsy and congenital deformities. Treatment is also provided for burn victims and physical trauma cases. The clinic is based in Asmara but has a network of dormitories for out-of-town patients. The clinic sees approximately 3,000 cases in a year. The Hansenians Eritrean Welfare Organisation provides care for lepers". **[3] (p89)**

5.82 In comments prepared for the Advisory Panel on Country Information meeting on 8 March 2005, UNHCR stated: "The facilities for disabled as referred to in the paragraph [immediately above] are not functioning and there is very limited assistance to disabled, despite the high numbers". **[18b]**

Educational System

5.83 The USSD 2004 report noted that:

> "Education through grade seven is compulsory, and the Government provides tuition free education….The Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare operated an Integrated Early Childhood Development Project to keep children in school by providing some of the most vulnerable with necessary books, uniforms and other supplies….There was a shortage of schools and teachers at all levels, remedied in part by holding morning and afternoon shifts at schools. According to Ministry of Education estimates, the net enrollment rate of school age children in the 2001-02 school year was approximately 38 percent. Approximately 75 percent of the population was illiterate. In rural areas, young girls usually left school early to work at home". **[4f] (p9)**

5.84 The same report noted that:

> "in 2003, the Government added an additional grade to secondary school during the year and required that all students attend their final year at a location adjacent to the Sawa military training facility. Students who do not attend this final year of secondary school do not graduate and cannot sit for examinations to be eligible for advanced education. The remote location of this boarding school, concerns about security, and societal attitudes restricting the free movement of girls resulted in few female students enrolling for their final year of high school; however, women may earn an alternative secondary school certificate by attending night school after completing national service". **[4f] (p9)**

5.85 BBC News in a report dated 11 January 2004 stated that:

> "The United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, says the north-east African country of Eritrea is breaking human rights regulations by

making children complete the final year of their secondary education at the site of a military training camp.…Sawa - in the far west of the country near the Sudan border -….Now to matriculate you must leave home and complete Grade 12 in Sawa - a move the government say was taken because they do not have the money to expand secondary schools around the country…. Those who attend grade 12 in Sawa and matriculate will have the chance to pursue further educational opportunities. For those who choose not to go - their national service begins when they turn 18 and that usually starts with training in Sawa's military camp". **[8c]**

5.86 Europa 2005 stated that:

> "Education is provided free of charge in government schools and at the University of Asmara….Education is officially compulsory for children aged between seven and 13 years of age. Primary education begins at the age of seven and lasts for five years. Secondary education beginning at 12 years of age, lasts for as much as six years, comprising a first cycle of two years and a second of four years". **[1a] (p421)**

5.87 It further stated that, "By 1996-97 Eritrea had about 600 schools, almost three times as many as in 1997. In 1997 there were 3,096 students enrolled at the University of Asmara or at equivalent-level institutions". **[1a] (p405)**

5.88 BBC News on 20 September 2001 noted that the University of Asmara is the only University in the country. **[8k]**

5.89 Moreover, the USSD 2003 report noted that:

> "The University of Asmara refused to give diplomas to graduates unless they had completed their national service obligations, and the Ministry of Education did not release transcripts or exam results for those who were not released from national service. The Government placed tight controls on students who wanted to study abroad. Many were unable to obtain exit visas or were prevented from departing at the airport despite having necessary approvals. In addition, new graduates were frequently pressured to work for government entities". **[4d] (p7)**

5.90 The same report noted that, "High school students also were required to participate in a paid summer work program". **[4d] (p13)**

Return to Contents

6. Human Rights

6A. Human Rights: Issues

General

6.1 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that:

> "One western embassy in Asmara described the general human rights situation within Eritrea as 'quite bad' from the point of view that dissidents were taken into detention without trial and the general lack of democracy. It was noted that all existing parliamentarians were linked to the ruling party and suggested that in effect the Government was effectively a dictatorship. Whilst viewing this situation as 'worrying', the source added that the Government did not compare with the military dictatorships that control some other countries. However, the source also noted that the Government appeared to respect and work according to the draft constitution although it was pointed out that this is neither complete nor ratified". **[3] (p17)**

6.2 The US State Department report 2004 noted that: "The Government's human rights record remained poor, and it continued to commit serious abuses". **[4f] (p1)**

6.3 The draft Constitution prohibits torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. **[2]**

6.4 The USSD 2004 report noted that:

> "Security forces were responsible for unlawful killings, however, there were no new reports of disappearances. There were numerous reports that police resorted to torture and physical beatings of prisoners, particularly during interrogations, and police severely mistreated army deserters and draft evaders. The Government generally did not permit prison visits by local or international groups, except the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Arbitrary arrests and detentions continued to be problems; an unknown number of persons were detained without charge because of political opinion. The use of a special court system limited due process. The Government at times infringed on the right to privacy. The Government severely restricted freedom of speech and press, and restricted freedom of assembly, association, freedom of religion for religious groups not approved by the Government, and freedom of movement". **[4f] (p1)**

6.5 The AI report of 19 May 2004 stated that:

> "Human rights violations continue in Eritrea on a massive scale. Thousands of government critics and political opponents – many of them prisoners of conscience who have not used or advocated

violence – are detained in secret. Some have been held for several years. None has been taken to court, charged or tried. In some cases, panels of military and police officers have reportedly handed down prison sentences in secret proceedings that flout basic standards of fair trial. Detainees are not informed of the accusations made against them, have no right to defend themselves or be legally represented, and have no recourse to an independent judiciary to challenge abuses of their fundamental rights". **[5f] (p2)**

6.6 Zete Delina stated in a report dated 7 November 2005 that:

"The Eritrean government denied on Sunday reports that many people had been killed early Sunday at a prison where people who have avoided military service are detained….Earlier on Sunday, a high-ranking diplomat, who asked not to be named, told AFP: 'I spoke to a direct witness, who told me 25 people were killed by guards during a prison riot' at Adi Abieto jail near Asmara….Several young Eritreans, who asked not to be named, told AFP on Thursday: 'These roundups started in 1998. They were severe during the war. Since 2002, they had been declining, but right now they're increasing. Soldiers go into offices, houses, stop cars, taxis, buses, and ask for identity cards.' Eritrean authorities are rounding up people who have avoided military service". **[38]**

6.7 Human Rights Watch noted in their January 2004 report that:

"The government has refused to implement the 1997 constitution, drafted by a constitutional assembly and ratified by referendum. The constitution contains restraints on the arbitrary use of power. It provides for writs of habeas corpus, the rights of prisoners to have the validity of their detention decided by a court, and fair and public trials. The constitution protects freedom of the press, speech, and peaceful assembly. It authorizes the right to form political organizations. It allows every Eritrean to practice any religion". **[29c] (p1)**

6.8 SPLMToday.com stated in an article dated 21 December 2004 that: "The Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission has found Eritrea liable for persistent, widespread, and serious violations of international law for its mistreatment of Ethiopians in eritrea during the war, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told ENA (Ethiopian News Agency) on Monday. It rejected most of the claims made by Eritrea". **[39]**

Return to Contents

Freedom of Speech & of the Media

The Media

6.9 The draft Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the Press. **[2]** However, Afrol News in an article dated 21 October 2003 commented on

the previous day's publishing by Reporters sans Frontieres (RSF) of the "world press freedom ranking". It reported that "The states with "the most catastrophic situation" according to RSF, are to be found in Asia, with eight countries in the bottom ten. These include North Korea, Burma, China and Iran, but also Cuba and Eritrea – the worst country in Africa, according to RSF". **[16a]**

6.10 The AI report of September 2002 documented that:

The [following] 10 journalists detained in September 2001

Said Abdulkadir	Chief editor and founder of the newspaper, Admas; also employee of the Ministry of Information's Arabic-language newspaper, Haddas Eritrea; aged 34.
Yosuf Mohamed Ali	Chief editor of the newspaper, Tsigenay; business studies graduate; aged 45.
Amanuel Asrat	Chief editor of the newspaper, Zemen ("Time"); EPLF member since the 1970s.
Temesgen Gebreyesus	Sports reporter on the newspaper, Keste Debena ("Rainbow"); amateur actor; aged 36.
Mattewos Habteab	Editor of the newspaper, Meqaleh ("Echo"); mathematics graduate, University of Asmara; aged 30.
Dawit Habtemichael	Assistant chief editor and co-founder of the newspaper, Meqaleh; physics graduate, University of Asmara; full-time science teacher employed by the Ministry of Education; aged 30.
Medhanie Haile	Assistant chief editor and co-founder of the newspaper, Keste Debena; law graduate, University of Asmara; full-time employee of the Ministry of Justice; aged 33.
Dawit Isaac	Editor and co-owner of the newspaper, Setit; dual Eritrean and Swedish citizen as a result of being granted asylum in Sweden in the 1980s; education graduate; writer and theatre producer; aged 38.
Seyoum Tsehaye	Freelance photographer; French language graduate and former French teacher; EPLF veteran since the 1970s; former director of Eritrean state television in the early 1990s; aged 49.
Fessaye Yohannes ("Joshua")	Reporter and co-founder of the newspaper, Setit; EPLF veteran since 1977; poet and director of an amateur cultural dance group; studied in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2000; aged 46.

[5b] (p10-11)

6.11 The USSD 2004 report stated that: "The Government permitted one reporters for a foreign news organization to operate in the country. In September, the Government ordered another reporter who had previously reported for the British Broadcasting Corporation and Reuters to leave the country". **[4f] (p5)**

6.12 It further said that:

> "The arrests of journalists continued during the year [2004]. In September authorities reportedly arrested Goitom Biahon, a journalist who submitted reports to Deutsche Welle, for filing a story that the Ministry of Information (MOI) found unfavourable. At year's end, he reportedly was being held without charges. In late December, the Government released Aklilu Solomon, a journalist arrested in 2003 who had submitted articles to the Voice of America. At least 15 other journalists who were arrested in 2001 remained in government custody at year's end". **[4f] (p6)**

6.13 Freedom in the World 2004 stated that: "The government of President Isaias Afwerki continued its repressive policy of allowing no opposition or independent organizations in the political or civil sphere. **[40]**

6.14 Reporters Without Borders in their 2003 Annual Report said that:

> "The press freedom situation in Eritrea is the most serious in all of sub-Saharan Africa. The privately-owned press has been shut down and those of its journalists who failed to flee are in prison or in hiding. Eritrea was the world's biggest prison for journalists at the end of 2002. This is the first time in many years that an African country achieved this grim distinction. Most of the imprisoned journalists had been held since September 2001 in an undisclosed location without any official reason. The authorities referred to this situation on several occasions during 2002 while remaining evasive about the charges against the detainees. No date had yet been set for any trial. Eritrea is still the only country in Africa, and one of the very few in the world, to have no privately-owned news media. Aside from the international radio stations that can be received in certain regions, the state is the only source of news. It controls the television and radio and the few newspapers. Journalists working for the state-owned news media have no room for manoeuvre. They just relay the government's propaganda. No criticism of the government is tolerated". **[17]**

Non Media Criticism

6.15 The USSD Background Note of January 2005 reported that:

> "In September 2001, after several months in which a number of prominent PFDJ party members had gone public with a series of

grievances against the government and in which they called for implementation of the constitution and the holding of elections, the government implemented a crackdown. Eleven prominent dissidents, members of what had come to be known as the Group of 15, were arrested and held without charge at an unknown location. At the same time, the government shut down the independent press and arrested its reporters and editors, holding them incommunicado and without charge. In subsequent weeks, the government arrested other individuals, including two Eritrean employees of the U.S. Embassy. All of these individuals remain held without charge and none are allowed visitors". **[4e]**

Return to Contents

Freedom of Religion

6.16 The USSD report on Religious Freedom, 2003, noted that: "The Constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, its provisions have not yet been implemented and in practice the Government restricted this right in the case of several Protestant denominations, Jehovah's Witnesses, and for other religious groups that do not have a long history in the country". **[4a] (p1)**

6.17 The USSD 2004 noted that: "The Government prohibited political activity by religious groups and faith-based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The Government's Office of Religious Affairs monitored religious compliance with this proscription against political activity". **[4f] (p8)**

6.18 AI further said in a report dated 1 June 2004 that:

"Church leaders Haile Naizgi and Dr Kiflu Gebremeskel were arrested at their homes in the capital, Asmara, on 23 May [2004]. They are reportedly held incommunicado in the 1s^{t} and 6th police stations respectively in Asmara. Amnesty International considers them prisoners of conscience, arrested solely because of their religious beliefs. They are at risk of torture to abandon their faith. They have not been taken to court within 48 hours, as required by law, or charged with any offence. Tesfatsion Hagos, pastor of the Rema evangelical church in Asmara, was arrested on 27 May [2004] while on a visit to Massawa port. His whereabouts are not yet known, but he too is believed to have been arrested solely on account of his religious beliefs. Haile Naizgi is the chairperson of one of Eritrea's largest pentecostal churches, the Eritrean Full Gospel Church (also known as Mullu Wongel church). Dr Kiflu Gebremeskel, a former chairperson, is now a pastor. Their arrests are part of an intensifying wave of government persecution of minority Christian evangelical and pentecostal churches in Eritrea. Both men are in their 40s. Haile Naizgi, formerly an acoountant for World Vision, is married with four children. Dr Kiflu Gebremeskel, a former mathematics lecturer at the Univesity of Asmara, with a PhD from a US university, is also chair of the Eritrean Evangelical Alliance, a grouping of different churches

including the Rema church. Hundreds of members of Eritrea's evangelical and pentecostal churches, both adult and children, and several pastors, have been arrested since early 2003, following a government directive of May 2002 closing down the minority churches and ordering them to register with the new Department of Religious Affairs. Many people have been tortured to try to force them to abandon their faith". **[5g]**

6.19 BBC News reported on 17 September 2004 that:

> "If you are a Catholic, Muslim, or a member of the Orthodox and Evangelical churches in Eritrea then it seems you can breathe easy. However, those who believe and practise minority faiths are routinely persecuted, according to human rights groups. Two years ago the Eritrean government introduced a registration system for religions which forced groups to submit information about themselves in order to be allowed to worship. Apart from the four mentioned, other faiths have not been recognised. And human rights groups have regularly complained that people practising minority religions have faced harassment". **[8g]**

Religious Groups

6.20 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that: "The Sawa military training establishment is not only secular, but also that the practice in operation there is to mix religions and races of the military trainees. This is so that squad members have to rely on people who are of differing religions and races but who above all are Eritreans". **[3] (p33)**

6.21 The USSD report on Religious Freedom 2003 noted that:

> "Although reliable statistics are not available, approximately 50 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim, and approximately 40 percent is Orthodox Christian. The population also includes a small number of Eastern Rite and Roman Catholics (5 percent), Protestants (2 percent), smaller numbers of Seventh-day Adventists, and fewer than 1,500 Jehovah's Witnesses. Approximately 2 percent practices traditional indigenous religions. Also present in very small numbers are practicing Buddhists, Hindus, and Baha'is. The population in the eastern and western lowlands predominantly is Muslim and in the highlands predominantly is Christian. There are very few atheists. Religious participation is high among all ethnic groups". **[4a] (p1)**

6.22 This report continued that:

> "Within the country's geographic and ethnic groups, the majority of the Tigrinya is Orthodox Christian, with the exception of the Djiberti Tigrinya, who are Muslim. The majority of the Tigre, Saho, Nara, Afar, Rashaida, Beja, and Blen is Muslim. Approximately 40 percent of the Blen is Christian, the majority of whom is Catholic. The majority of the

Kunama is Roman Catholic, with a large minority of Muslims and some who practice traditional indigenous religions. The central and southern highland areas, which generally are more economically developed than the lowlands, predominantly are populated by Christian Tigrinyas and some Muslim Djiberti and Saho. The Afar and Rashaida, as well as some of the Saho and Tigre, live in the eastern lowlands. The Blen live on the border between the western lowlands and the central highlands and are concentrated in the Keren area, which also includes a significant minority of Tigre and Tigrinya speakers. The Beja, Kunama, Nara, and the majority of Tigre live in the western lowlands". **[4a] (p1)**

6.23 It further said that, "Leaders of the four principal religions meet routinely and engage in efforts to foster cooperation and understanding among those religions. Of these religions only the Catholic Church has publicly defended the right of freedom of conscience. Leaders of the four principal religious organizations enjoy excellent interfaith relations". **[4a] (p4)**

6.24 The USSD Report also noted that:

"Citizens generally are tolerant of one another in the practice of their religion, particularly among the four government-sanctioned religious groups. Mosques and the principal Christian churches coexist throughout the country, although Islam tends to predominate in the lowlands and Christianity in the highlands. In Asmara, Christian and Muslim holidays are respected by all religions. Some holidays are celebrated jointly. Societal attitudes towards Jehovah's Witnesses are an exception to this general tolerance…. There was some societal prejudice against members of the non-sanctioned religious groups including individual cooperation with government authorities to report on and harass those members. There also were reports that some Orthodox Christian priests encouraged harassment of these non-sanctioned religious groups and reported their activities to the Government". **[4a] (p4)**

6.25 The report continued that: "The military has no chaplains. Military personnel are free to worship at nearby houses of worship for the four sanctioned religions". **[4a] (p3)**

6.26 Africa South of the Sahara 2005 noted that: "Eritrea is almost equally divided between Muslims and Christians. Most Christians are adherents of the Orthodox Church, although there are Protestants and Roman Catholic communities. A small number of the population follow traditional beliefs". **[1a] (p419)**

Non-Sanctioned Religious Groups

6.27 On 18 September 2003 AI stated that:

"Fifty-seven young male and female members of minority Christian churchs are being held in metal shipping containers at Sawa military

camp in Western Eritrea. They were arrested in mid-August [2003] and are being held incommunicado in harsh conditions, which amount to torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The 57 prisoners of conscience are school students from all over Eritrea who were sent to Sawa Military Camp in western Eritrea for a compulsory 3-month summer course under new pre-National Service education regulations. They were arrested in the camp for possessing bibles in the Tigrinya language (although this is not illegal) and are imprisoned in metal shipping containers. Conditions in the containers, which have no light or ventilation, are said to be extremely hot and suffocating, and they are allegedly being given little food, refused medical care and have to perform bodily functions inside the container. They are being pressurized to sign statements to abandon their religion and re-join the majority Eritrean Orthodox Church. Five others arrested with them were allowed to go free when they signed the statements". **[5b] (p1)**

6.28 It was reported by Amnesty International on 18 February 2004 that members of the following minority churches (Debre Bethel, Kale Hiwot, Hallelujah and Rema) were arrested or detained in separate incidents on 7 September 2003, 23 November 2003, 12 February 2004 and 17/18 March 2004. **[5e] (p2)**

6.29 The USSD report on Religious Freedom 2003 noted that:

"There were several reports that on occasion police tortured those detained for their religious beliefs, including using bondage, heat exposure, and beatings. There also were credible reports that some of the detainees were required to sign statements repudiating their faith or agreeing not to practice it as a condition for release. In some cases where detainees refused to sign, relatives were asked to do so on their behalf. Some of these statements reportedly threatened execution for those who continued to attend unsanctioned religious services or meetings". **[4a] (p3)**

Jehovah's Witnesses

6.30 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that:

"According to this source [the delegation met a prominent member of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Eritrea], the procedures for becoming a recognised Jehovah's Witness are strict and difficult. Before they are baptised, a person has to prove their knowledge and devotion to the faith. Much study is needed, so much so that the source stated "If a person claiming to be a witness did not know all of the main points of the faith then that is a lie". They added, "A person can be termed a Witness, attendee or liar". An attendee is nothing, anyone can attend a witness event but that does not make the person a Witness. Only those baptised and possessing the correct knowledge should be considered as Witnesses". **[3] (p35)**

6.31 The same report stated that, "Over a number of months the Witness applicant will often without warning be asked to visit a group of noted Witnesses. Often these are Elders and generally three people will be present. Here they will be extensively tested on their knowledge and thus their acceptability to the faith. Many describe this process as being the hardest but most rewarding experience of their lives". **[3] (p35)**

6.32 It continued that:

> "There are no Kingdom Halls [places of worship for the Jehovah's Witnesses] in Eritrea, nor have there been any since independence. The Government owns all land and as they do not recognise the faith it can not get permission to set up Kingdom Halls. Worship 'underground' is illegal also. Meetings that are not sanctioned are not allowed to involve more than 5 persons. There exists an Eritrean Council of Elders but the branch office is in Nairobi (Kenya) and has been for many years. All witnesses in Eritrea know this. It is basic knowledge even to attendees". **[3] (p35)**

6.33 The USSD report on Religious Freedom 2003 noted that: "Most Jehovah's Witnesses have refused on religious grounds to participate in national service or to vote, which has led to widespread criticism that Jehovah's Witnesses collectively were shirking their civic duty". **[4a] (p3)**

6.34 The same report noted that: "In 1994 in accordance with a presidential decree, the Government revoked the trading licenses of some Jehovah's Witnesses and dismissed most of those of the faith that worked in the civil service. This governmental action resulted in economic, employment, and travel difficulties for many Jehovah's Witnesses, especially former civil servants and businessmen". **[4a] (p2)**

6.35 It further noted that:

> "Although members of other religious groups, including Muslims, reportedly have been punished in past years for failure to participate in national service, the Government has singled out Jehovah's Witnesses who were conscientious objectors for harsher treatment than that received by followers of other faiths for similar actions. Only Jehovah's Witnesses who did not participate in national service have been subject to dismissal from the civil service, revocation of their trading licenses, eviction from government-owned housing, and denial of passports, identity cards, and exit visas". **[4a] (p3)**

6.36 AI in a report dated 18 February 2004 stated that:

> "On 24 January 2004 Eritrean police arrested 38 members of the Jehovah's Witnesses religion who were holding a religious service in a private home in the capital, Asmara. Ten were released without charge in the next few days but 28 remain in custody, including children, and a 90-year-old man. AI considers them prisoners of conscience, detained

solely because of their religious beliefs. The Eritrean authorities have not publicly acknowledged the arrests or given any reason for them. The whereabouts of the 28 are not known, but they are believed to be held in one of Eritrea's many secret detention centres". **[5e] (p1)**

6.37 Afrol News in an article dated 20 February 2004 stated that: "The Eritrean Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of religion. However, Jehovah's Witnesses in Eritrea – who number about 1,600 have frequently been arrested on account of their faith's principle of refusing military service, according to a US government report". **[16b]**

6.38 The USSD report on Human Rights for Ethiopia, 2002 noted that: "The Government continued its policy of not deporting members of Jehovah's Witnesses of Eritrean origin, who might face religious repression in Eritrea " **[4b] (p16)**

6.39 AI reported on 19 May 2004 that: "Three Jehovah's Witnesses who refused military service are among the longest-held prisoners of conscience held since 1994. Paulo Iyassu (who had willingly completed 18 months development service but refused military service), Isaac Moges and Negede Teklemariam, have been held incommunicado in Sawa military base since 24 September 1994. Two others, Aron Abraha and Mussie Fessahaye, were forcibly conscripted in May 2001 and in 2003 respectively, and are detained in army custody. **[5f] (p11)**

Muslims

6.40 It was noted by the USSD report on Religious Freedom 2003 that although Muslims have been punished in past years for failure to participate in national service, the Government has singled out Jehovah's Witnesses who were conscientious objectors for comparatively harsher treatment. **[4a] (p3)**

6.41 The same report noted that, "Some Muslims also have objected to universal national service because of the requirement that women perform military duty". **[4a] (p3)**

6.42 It further noted that: "The Government also restricts what it deems to be fundamentalist forms of Islam. Most foreign preachers of Islam are not allowed to proselytize, and funding of Islamic missionary or religious activities is controlled". **[4a] (p3)**

6.43 AI in its Press Release of 19 May 2004 noted that: "Muslims have been targeted too, some held in secret incommunicado detention for years on suspicion of links with an Islamist armed opposition group operating from Sudan". **[5h]**

Freedom of Assembly & Association

6.44 The USSD 2004 reported that:

"The Law provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully; however, citizens were not allowed to exercise this right….The PFDJ has not allowed for a democratically elected government, and national elections, originally scheduled for 1997, were never held. The only authorized political party was the PFDJ, and there were no opposition parties active domestically". **[4f] (p8)**

6.45 The report continued:

"During the year, elections for community judges were held throughout the country, and elections took place for regional assembly positions in Asmara and other large cities….No campaigning was allowed beyond posting photographs of candidates and providing information such as name, age, and work experience". **[4f] (p8)**

6.46 The Constitution states that every citizen has the right to form organisations for political ends. **[2]**

6.47 BBC News reported on 15 August 2004 that:

"The opposition to Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki has been meeting, leading to the most significant shake-up in Eritrean politics for many years. Opposition groups, which have been notoriously disunited, have come up with a common set of objectives, which could – for the first time in years – begin to pose a greater challenge to the president's hold on power. Since achieving independence from Ethiopia in 1993, Eritrea has been a one party state, with the ruling *People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) the only party* allowed to function. But there was a critical moment in September 2001 when some of President Isaias' closest associates sent him an open letter calling for the implementation of the Eritrean constitution, which guaranteed a wide range of human rights. The president's reaction was to detain his critics without trial, some of whom had fought alongside him during the 30-year long war of independence. All independent newspapers were closed and journalists arrested. Many members of the PFDJ living abroad formed the Democratic Party, but have since then been attempting to come up with a strategy for resisting the president's rule. Now the Democratic Party has agreed on a common set of objectives with two older parties, the ELF and the ELF-RC. At a meeting in Frankfurt, Germany, the parties agreed to work together to try to bring about what they called a 'national dialogue'. An influential student grouping – the Movement for Democratic Change – led by the exiled former President of the University of Asmara student's union, Semere Kessete, has decided to formally merge with the Democratic Party. This has left the Eritrean opposition in two clear camps. One camp – the Eritrean National Alliance – is based in Ethiopia and wishes to overthrow President Isaias by force. It has refused to take a stand on the contentious issue of where the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea lies – something the two countries went to war on in 1998. The other camp includes the

Democratic Party, the ELF and ELF-RC. They resist Ethiopian intervention in Eritrean affairs. They also support the adjudication of an international tribunal, which ruled in Eritrea's favour over key aspects of the border with Ethiopia. This grouping also appears willing to meet President Isaias – if that would lead to a democratic renewal in Eritrea. For the first time in many years, President Isaias now faces a more united and more determined opposition". **[8d]**

Return to Contents

Political Activists

Political Opposition

6.48 AI on 18 September 2002 stated that: "Eritrea's new Constitution (1997) allowed for the formation of multiple political parties, but the democratisation process was postponed during the 1998-2000 war". **[5b]**

6.49 The USSD 2004 noted that: "There were no reports of political prisoners; however, there were numerous reports of persons detained for political reasons". **[4f] (p4)**

6.50 Europa Regional Surveys of the World: Africa South of the Sahara 2005 stated that:

> "Relations between Eritrea and Sudan deteriorated in late 1994, when the Eritrean authorities accused Sudan of training 400 terrorists. Sudan accused Eritrea of training some 3,000 Sudanese rebels in camps within Eritrea…. In January 1997 the National Democratic Alliance launched an attack from Eritrea on Sudanese forces in the border region, resulting in numerous casualties. Sudan, however, blamed the incident on Eritrea's armed forces. Meanwhile, Eritrea claimed that the EIJ was training more than 4,000 Eritrean Muslims in Sudan to launch attacks against the Eritrean authorities from Sudanese bases in Eritrea". **[1a] (p407-8)**

6.51 Furthermore the report noted that:

> "In March 1999 the Alliance of Eritrean National Forces (AENF) was launched in Khartoum by 10 Eritrean opposition organizations. It was led by Abdallah Idriss, the Chairman of an ELF faction, who had consistently opposed the Afewerki Government from exile. The AENF declared that it would establish a Government-in-exile and commence negotiations over the border dispute with Ethiopia. However, the AENF, composed of conflicting religious and ethnic factions, was accused of largely being a creation of Sudan and Ethiopia. By mid-1999 Sudan indicated its willingness to improve its relations with Eritrea too. In May 1999 President Afewerki and his Sudanese counterpart signed a reconciliation agreement in Qatar, which, inter alia, restored diplomatic relations". **[1a] (p408)**

6.52 In comments prepared for the Advisory Panel on Country Information meeting on 8 March 2005, UNHCR stated: "Relations with Sudan still remain strained….Violent incidents, e.g. bomb blasts, planting of mines, ambushes, which took place in Eritrea during 2003 and 2004 have been blamed on the EIJ, operating and supported in Sudan. **[18b]**

Democratic Elections

6.53 The Economist Intelligence Unit report of August 2004 stated that:

> "Eritrea's ruling party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) and its president, Isaias Afewerki, are expected to remain in power during the forecast period given that there is little hope of national elections-postponed from December 2001-being held within the next five years. Although the chairman of the National Elections Commission, Ramadan Mohamed Nur, has suggested that May's nationwide elections for the third regional assembly-essentially a PFDJ rubber-stamping exercise-augur well for national elections, the Economist Intelligence Unit does not expect the commission to set a date for these in the near future. Additionally, the National Assembly has yet to pass a law on multiparty democracy. **[20]**

6.54 The same report noted that: "The elections were held in 178 administrative localities in Gash-Barka over a 37-day period, but few other details are available. Since the government still holds many of its main political opponents in detention, voters are likely to have been limited to choosing from among supporters of the administration". **[20]**

6.55 Europa 2005 noted that: "In 2003 elections of local administrators and magistrates were held in villages throughout Eritrea and in 2004 elections took place in regional assemblies." **[1a] (p406)**

The G15 Group

6.56 AI on 18 September 2002 advised that: "In response to increasing criticisms and opposition to the President and to the latest G15 letter detailing 'obstacles to reform', the security authorities detained 11 members of the group in Asmara on 18 September 2001. Four members escaped arrest: three were out of the country and one withdrew his support for the group". **[5b] (p7)**

6.57 The report goes on to note that:

> "The 11 were all members of the Central Committee of the PFDJ and had been senior EPLF military or political leaders during the liberation struggle. They included three former Foreign Ministers - Haile Woldetensae, Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo (who was later Vice-President) and Petros Solomon, Aster Fissehatsion, a prominent woman EPLF leader, and three army generals. As Central Committee members, they automatically became members of the first National

Assembly under the 1997 Constitution and should therefore have enjoyed parliamentary immunity from arrest. The National Assembly, however, declared on 4 February 2002 that 'by committing such a crime, defeatism, they have removed themselves from the National Assembly'. Some had been co-founders and leading members of the EPLF since the 1970s, subsequently being appointed government ministers following independence, although all had been dismissed from their posts by the time of their arrests". **[5b] (p7)**

6.58 The report further noted that:

"None of the eleven has been brought to court or formally charged with an offence, although the Constitution and the Penal Code require that detainees should be charged before a court or released within 48 hours of arrest. The maximum period for holding a suspect for investigation is 28 days. No lawyer, however, has dared to bring a habeas corpus action to challenge the detentions and to demand that the authorities produce the detainees in court". **[5b] (p7)**

6.59 Furthermore, it noted that:

"The Government said the eleven 'had committed crimes against the sovereignty, security and peace of the nation'. In February 2002 the National Assembly 'strongly condemned them for the crimes they committed against the people and their country'. It was claimed that the G15 had committed treason during the war with Ethiopia. Although no death penalty has been carried out in Eritrea since independence, treason is a capital offence". **[5b] (p7)**

6.60 AI in its September 2002 report stated that:

The 11 "G15" detainees	
Ogbe Abraha	Army General; formerly Chief of Staff of the Defence Force, Minister of Trade and Industry, and Minister of Labour and Social Welfare; he has chronic asthma.
Aster Fissehatsion	Director in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; executive member of the official National Union of Eritrean Women; EPLF official since 1977; former wife of Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo, also detained in September 2001; she has stomach ulcers.
Berhane Gebregziabeher	Army Major-General; head of the National Reserve Force; EPLF political bureau member since 1977.
Beraki Gebreselassie	Former Ambassador to Germany (to May 2001); previously Minister of Education and Minister of Information and Culture.
Hamad Hamid Hamad	Head of the Arabic (Middle East) Department in the

	Ministry of Foreign Affairs; former Ambassador to Sudan.
Saleh Kekiya	Former Minister of Transport and Communication, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Head of the Office of the President.
Germano Nati	Regional Administrator.
Estifanos Seyoum	Army Brigadier General; former Head of the Inland Revenue Service (to August 2001).
Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo	Former Vice-President (dismissed in February 2001), Minister of Local Government, and Minister of Foreign Affairs; EPLF co-founder.
Petros Solomon	Former Minister of Maritime Resources; previously Minister of Foreign Affairs, EPLF military commander and intelligence chief, EPLF political bureau member since 1977.
Haile Woldetensae (or Weldensae, also known as "Durue")	Former Minister of Trade and Industry (until July 2001); previously Minister of Foreign Affairs during the war and the peace talks, and also Minister of Finance; former EPLF head of political affairs and political bureau member since 1977; he is diabetic.

[5b] (p8)

6.61 AI further noted that: "In the months following and through 2002 to the time of writing, there have been reports that dozens of other people have been detained by the security police for supporting views expressed in the G15 open letter and in some cases for criticising the G15 detentions. Some elders were reported to have been detained after trying to mediate between the Government and its critics. Arrests also have in many cases been difficult to confirm because of the secrecy and pervasive intimidation". **[5b] (p10)**

6.62 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that:

> "People have read about them [G15] when there was an independent press although nobody really seems sure what they stood for or whether like the ELF and AENF the only policy they were perceived to have was a wish to replace President Issayas. They are however connected to the wish for greater democracy, and that has stirred interest in itself. The source emphasised there is no evidence of a reform movement based on the beliefs and policies of the G-15". **[3] (p12)**

6.63 AI reported on 19 May 2004 that there have been many arrests since late 2001 when dissent increased rapidly. Senior civil servants, diplomats, military commanders, health professionals, businesspeople and more journalists have been arrested. The report stated:

> "Nearly all had a long EPLF background as senior fighters and supporters. They had not expressed criticisms of the government as forcefully and publicly as the G15 journalists, and they had been less prominent in the democratic reform movement or even marginal to it. Several are reportedly held secretly in the 2nd or 6th police stations in Asmara. Only four of those arrested in the months after the 2001 crackdown have been released…. AI considers these and other detainees as prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their non-violent opinions. Their whereabouts in detention are not known. None of them has been taken to a court, allowed access to legal counsel, charged or tried. Dozens of other people arrested in late 2001 and early 2002 are still held, although information is difficult to obtain due to the secrecy of arrests and intimidation of families and associates. **[5f] (p7)**

Supporters of the Ethiopian Derg Regime

6.64 The USSD 2004 report noted that: "An unknown number of persons suspected of association with the Ethiopian Mengistu regime, with Islamic elements considered radical, or with suspected terrorist organizations continued to remain in detention without charge, some of whom have been detained for more than 10 years". **[4f] (p3)**

Supporters of the ELF and ELF-RC

6.65 AI in its report dated 18 September 2002 stated that:

> "In 1987 the EPLF, uniting with an Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) faction, agreed a policy objective of creating a multi-party democratic system in a future independent state. At independence in 1991 when the victorious EPLF formed the Provisional Government of Eritrea, there was no reconciliation between the ruling EPLF and the ELF rivals. However, ELF members were allowed to return to Eritrea as individuals on condition that they renounced opposition. Some ELF members complied, such as the ELF-Unified Organisation, whose leaders were given government and military posts. Others, such as the ELF-Revolutionary Council [ELF-RC], remained in opposition – some launching a new armed struggle from bases in Sudan, others engaging solely in political opposition in exile". **[5b] (p3)**

6.66 The British Embassy's letter dated 3 March 2000 said that: "The organisation is still active in exile (predominantly Sudan and Ethiopia) and remains openly critical of the present Eritrean Government. It is likely that the Government's reaction to the return of the individual would depend on the position he had held in the organisation and on the type of activity he was thought to have carried out". **[10]**

6.67 On 10 August 2003 Gedab News reported that ELF-RC withdrew from the Eritrean National Alliance (ENA) an opposition umbrella group, formerly the AENF, in October 2002: "to protest the ENA's alleged willingness to allow

foreign forces to exert pressure on its operations including on matters dealing with the election of its leadership". [34]

Supporters of the ERIJM

6.68 The USSD 2004 report stated that: "In addition to border incidents with Ethiopia, the army contended with the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (ERIJM), a small Sudan based insurgent group that continued to attack in the north and west since 1993. Some members of the security forces committed serious human rights abuses. [4f] (p1)

Employment Rights

6.69 The USSD 2004 report noted that:

> "Proclamation 118 of 2001, which has the effect of law, provides workers with the legal right to form unions to protect their interests; however, some government policies restricted free association or prevented the formation of unions, including within the civil service, the military, the police, and other essential services. The Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare must grant special approval for groups of 20 or more persons seeking to form a union. There were no reports that the Government opposed the formation of labor associations during the year [2004]". [4f] (p10)

Return to Contents

Forced or Compulsory Labor

6.70 The USSD 2004 report noted that: "The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including by children; however, there were unconfirmed reports that it occurred during the year [2004]". [4f] (p10)

Freedom of Movement

6.71 The draft Constitution provides for the rights of free movement and emigration. [2]

6.72 The USSD 2004 report noted that, "Camp facilities [for IDPs] were rudimentary, but conditions generally were adequate. There also was a large but unknown number of IDPs residing outside camps during the year [2004]". [4f] (p7)

6.73 It also said that:

> "Citizens and foreign nationals were required to obtain an exit visa to depart the country….Citizens of national service age (men 18 to 45 years of age, and women 18 to 27 years of age) [since updated by the AI report of May 2004 to men and women aged 18 to 40 years (see 5.59)], Jehovah's Witnesses, and others who were out of favor with or seen as critical of the Government were routinely denied exit visas.

> Students who wished to study abroad often were unable to obtain exit visas. In addition, the Government frequently refused to issue exit visas to adolescents and children as young as 5 years of age, either on the grounds that they were approaching the age of eligibility for national service or because their diasporal parents had not paid the 2 percent income tax required of all citizens residing abroad. Some citizens were given exit visas only after posting bonds of approximately $7,400 (100,000 Nakfa)". **[4f] (p7)**

6.74 Moreover the report noted that, "In general, citizens had the right to return; however, citizens had to show proof that they paid the 2 percent tax on their income to the Government while living abroad to be eligible for some government services on their return to the country. Applications to return from citizens living abroad who had broken the law, contracted a serious contagious disease, or had been declared ineligible for political asylum by other governments, were considered on a case-by-case basis". **[4f] (p7)**

6.75 The USSD 2004 report noted that:

> "The law provided for these [freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration and repatriation] rights, however the Government restricted some of them in practice. While citizens could generally travel freely within the country and change their place of residence, authorities sometimes restricted freedom of movement and emigration. For security reasons, the Government restricted travel to some areas of the country". **[4f] (p7)**

6.76 The Global IDP Project in an article dated 6 August 2004 stated that: "At the height of the 1998-2000 border war with Ethiopia there were 1.1 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Eritrea. This number has fallen sharply but there are still some 59,000 people who cannot return home because of the tensions that persist around the border demarcation process. The physical marking out of the frontier, originally scheduled to start in May 2003, has been delayed indefinitely….The resulting stalemate is perpetuating the plight of the IDPs, as well as that of people expelled from Ethiopia and refugees returning from Sudan. Furthermore, delays in de-mining and rehabilitation activities are hampering the return of IDPs". **[22]**

Return to Contents

6B. Human Rights: Specific Groups

Returning Eritreans

6.77 AI reported on 19 May 2004 that: "Eritreans returning from abroad, like Aster Yohannes, risk arbitrary detention if they return to Eritrea and are suspected of opposing the government – even if they have a foreign passport. In May 2003 two Eritrean nationals, Saleh Ali Sheikh, and his wife, Saret

Ramadhan, were reportedly detained on arrival from Saudi Arabia at Asmara airport and 'disappeared'". **[5f] (p22)**

6.78 Furthermore, the same report stated that:

> "The majority of the refugees rejected the option of voluntary repatriation. Most long-term refugees, some of whom had been in Sudan for a generation, wished to remain in Sudan, either permanently (although Sudan had not officially agreed to accept them as citizens or provide them with permanent residence permits), or through retaining their refugee status. By early 2004 only a few thousand had voluntarily returned to Eritrea". **[5f] (p24)**

6.79 The United States Committee for Refugees (2004 report) stated that, "The World Food Program (WFP) provided returnees with a two month food supply. UNHCR provided blankets, water containers, agricultural tools, materials to construct traditional homes, and mosquito nets to each returnee family. UNHCR also issued cash grants to returnees". **[26c]**

6.80 The USCFR report for 2003 also noted that:

> "Returnees also benefited from UNHCR-implemented community-based reintegration programs that included education, health, and water projects. The government's Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission allocated five-acre (2 hectares) plots of land, enabling returnee families to construct their homes and cultivate new crops. Many returnees expressed concern that the government-issued land was not favorable for cultivation and that development projects in returnee areas were virtually non-existent". **[26a]**

Eritreans returning from Sudan

6.81 IRIN News on 22 February 2002 reported that:

> "Eritreans in Sudan represent one of the oldest groups of refugees on the continent. 'UNHCR has been caring for Eritreans in Sudan longer than any other large group of exiles, with the first camp having opened by the agency in eastern Sudan in 1967' it [UNHCR] said. They began fleeing hostilities at home after the Eritrean liberation movement rose up against Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie's annexation of the territory in 1962. Subsequent periods of drought drove thousands more Eritreans into Sudan, so that at their peak they numbered about 500,000. The 1998-2000 war also saw the arrival of thousands more refugees, although many of these have since gone back". **[19d]**

6.82 The USSD 2004 report noted that:

> "UNHCR reported that it repatriated 9,351 refugees from Sudan during the year. At year's end, UNHCR ended organized repatriation of citizens living in Sudan. The Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission

(ERREC), a government agency, was the principal organization responsible for returnees and IDPs. The Office of Refugee Affairs was responsible for refugees of non citizen origin, including management of the Elit and Emkulu camps". **[4f] (p8)**

6.83 Reliefweb confirmed on 5 March 2004 that: "The voluntary repatriation of Eritrean refugees from Sudan resumed on 25 February 2004 after a two-month suspension, as agreements between Eritrea and Sudan were finalised. A total of 180 initial returnees cross the border by bus where they received meals and rest at the Tesseney Reception Centre. Many have been away for 10-20 years and the return home is an emotional one". **[27]**

6.84 The report further noted that: "The second movement on 29 February 2004 saw a further 545 returnees with many more scheduled to come. A total of 23 convoys are planned before the start of the rainy season in June this year [2004]. At present, over 30,000 refugees have registered to be assisted to return through the Government of Eritrea /UNHCR repatriation programme". **[27]**

6.85 AI in their report of 19 May 2004 stated that:

"Prior to independence there were hundreds of thousands of Eritrean refugees in many countries of the world, but most in Sudan who had fled from Ethiopian government attacks and repression of the liberation movement and its actual or suspected supporters. It was well-known that Eritrean refugees would face torture, arbitrary detention and extrajudicial execution if returned to Ethiopia, whichever opposition group they belonged to. Eritreans were usually granted asylum and in western countries many proceeded to naturalization after some years, though retaining their Eritrean identity in the large and increasing Eritrean diaspora….After the war with Ethiopia and the increase of political opposition, there were new flows of refugees, particularly army deserters and youths fleeing conscription, as well as supporters of the new reform movement, including defectors from the government, civil service or armed forces. In March 2001 the UNHCR declared a partial cessation (ending) of refugee status for Eritrean refugees who had fled before independence and those who had fled the fighting during the Ethiopia war. This was aimed at reducing the long-standing refugee camp population in Sudan, who were required to register for voluntary return or re-apply for asylum. However, the fact that the declaration was partial and did not cover all Eritrean refugees – numbering over 300,000 – was not clearly communicated by UNHCR, even though UNHCR recognized that there were new flows of Eritrean refugees to Sudan and elsewhere. The cessation created considerable insecurity among Eritrean refugees in Sudan, who feared the long-standing collaboration between elements of the Eritrean and Sudanese security, despite hostilities between Sudan and Eritrea which led to fighting in western Sudan near the Eritrean border for some months in mid-2002…." **[5f] (pps 23-24)**

6.86 The same report stated that: "The majority of the refugees rejected the option of voluntary repatriation. Most long-term refugees, some of whom had been in Sudan for a generation, wished to remain in Sudan, either permanently (although Sudan had not officially agreed to accept them as citizens or provide them with permanent residence permits), or through retaining their refugee status. By early 2004 only a few thousand had voluntarily returned to Eritrea". **[5f] (p24)**

6.87 In comments prepared for the Advisory Panel on Country Information meeting on 8 March 2005, UNHCR stated:

> "There were approximately 190,000 Eritrean refugees in Sudan at the time when the cessation deadline was applied (31 December 2002). Out of the Eritrean refugee population in Sudan, 150,000 persons applied for refugee status in Sudan, while approximately 35,000 persons registered for voluntary repatriation. During 2003, 9,415 refugees returned from Sudan and approximately 9,300 returned during 2004, bringing the recent figure of returns for the last 2 years to approximately 19,000 persons. The UNHCR organised voluntary repatriation operation from Sudan to Eritrea formally ended on 31 December 2004, in agreement with the Governments of Eritrea and Sudan". **[18b]**

Eritreans from Ethiopia

6.88 HRW reported in January 2003 that, "Expellees were asked to fill out a detailed registration form and were issued the same type of registration card that Eritrean refugees returning from exile received. Once registered, the deportees were entitled to the standard government assistance for returning refugees: including short-term housing, food, and settlement aid; medical coverage; and job placement assistance". **[29b] (p28-29)**

6.89 The same report added that:

> "For the first year of the war, the ERREC issued the expellees an identification card known as a 'green card' or 'Repatriated Refugees Card'. The card identified the expellee's name, age, gender, level of education, native language, occupation, and dependents, as well as the date and location of the individual's arrival. The card did not identify the citizenship of the holder. ERREC's clerks were instructed to note, under the heading 'remarks,' that the individual or individuals named on the card had been 'forcibly expelled from Ethiopia'. The cards were written in both Tigrigna and Arabic, the two languages of Eritrea. In mid-1999, the ERREC began issuing expellees from Ethiopia a new identification card, labeled 'Identification Card For Eritreans Expelled from Ethiopia,' and also known as the 'blue card'. The information on the card largely corresponded to that on the green card, although the blue card used English in addition to Tigrigna and Arabic". **[29b] (p28 footnote)**

Return to Contents

Ethiopians in Eritrea

General

6.90 AI in a report dated 21 May 1999 stated that:

> "Before the [border] conflict started, there were an estimated 100,000 Ethiopians working in Eritrea. They consisted of long-term residents, some married to Eritreans, and more recent migrant workers especially from the bordering Tigray region. The Red Sea port of Assab in particular, was host to a community of an estimated 35,000 Ethiopians most of whom worked in the port or ran supporting businesses". **[5c] (p15)**

6.91 They further reported that after the outbreak of the border war the Eritrean Government stated in June 1998 that:

"Ethiopians were free to return to Ethiopia or to stay in Eritrea as they wished. Many did want to leave, as there was no longer any employment for them or because they feared retaliation as enemy nationals or that Assab and other towns in Eritrea would become military targets for Ethiopian military attacks. However, before the Ethiopians could leave Eritrea, they had to clear any tax debts or utility bills and purchase an exit visa. Without work, many Ethiopians were unable to meet these demands and complained that they were thereby being prevented from leaving". **[5c] (p15)**

6.92 A British Fact Finding Mission of April 2003 reported that:

> "One international observer commented to the delegation that since 2000 the attitude towards Ethiopians had changed, not as a result of any Government led initiative but as a result of a shift in the attitude of the public and police towards them. The inability to earn a living had been a leading cause for those that chose to be repatriated. Without the possibility of work they have little option but to leave. The source added that since the end of the war not only have societal attitudes changed, but with so much of the potential workforce in the military it is possibly a lot easier to gain employment now if one is registered as a resident foreigner". **[3] (p45)**

6.93 HRW January 2003 report noted that:

> "Shortly thereafter, Eritrean authorities acknowledged holding at least 7,500 Ethiopian nationals, and allowed the international press to visit one of several internment sites. Eritrean authorities started expelling larger numbers of Ethiopian residents in earnest in July and August 2000, in several instances without prior information to the ICRC to ensure the safety of deportees as they crossed front lines. The ICRC's request of Eritrea and Ethiopia in early August to agree on common routes for border crossings led to better compliance by the two

belligerents with the requirements of safe passage for civilians expelled across the border. Between October 2000 and late 2001, the ICRC accompanied batches of several hundreds of repatriated Ethiopians on a regular basis". **[29b] (p7)**

6.94 SPLMToday.com in an article dated 21 December 2004 stated that:

> "The Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission has found Eritrea liable for persistent and serious violations of international law for its mistreatment of Ethiopians in Eritrea during the war, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told ENA (Ethiopian News Agency) on Monday. It rejected most of the claims made by Eritrea. The commission has determined that Eritrea committed frequent and serious violations of international law in its treatment of Ethiopian civilians in Eritrea". **[39]**

6.95 The USSD 2004 report stated that: "During the year, the Government repatriated approximately 549 Ethiopians to Ethiopia. They were repatriated voluntarily and with ICRC participation". **[4f] (p7)**

Treatment

6.96 More recently, the USSD 2004 report documented that:

> "During the year [2004], ICRC provided shelter to approximately 68,000 persons who were displaced by the conflict with Ethiopia. The ICRC also visited prisons and detention centers where Ethiopians were held, and provided assistance to approximately 157,000 citizens through projects in water supply, health structure rehabilitation and housing". **[4f] (p8)**

6.97 It continued: "Ethiopian nationals reportedly were singled out for arrest because they were unable to pay the necessary fees to renew their residency permits every 6 months. Although numbers of detainees fluctuated from month to month, the ICRC visited approximately 300 Ethiopians were detained at various times during the year". **[6e] (p3)**

Return to Contents

Women

General Situation

6.98 The USSD 2004 report stated that: "The transitional Civil Code prohibits discrimination against women and persons with disabilities, and the Government generally enforced these provisions. However, there continued to be problems with violence against women….". **[4f] (p8)**

6.99 The report continued:

"The Government consistently advocated improving the status of women, many of whom played a significant role as fighters in the independence struggle. Women have a legal right to equal educational opportunities, equal pay for equal work, and legal sanctions against domestic violence; however, in practice, men retained privileged access to education, employment, and control of economic resources, with greater disparities in rural areas than in cities. Women generally did not enjoy a social status equal to men. Laws were enforced unevenly, because of a lack of capacity in the legal system and long-standing cultural attitudes". **[4f] (p11)**

6.100 The USSD 2004 report noted that, "During the year [2004], efforts to detain women draft evaders and deserters generally decreased. According to reports, some women drafted for national service were subject to sexual harassment and abuse. During the year, hundreds of women were demobilized from national service due to age, infirmity, motherhood, marriage or needs of their families. Once demobilized, women were not required to serve in a government ministry". **[4f] (p11)**

6.101 The same report noted that:

"Three women served on the PFDJ's 19-member Executive Council and 11 women on the 75-member Central Council. Women participated in the Constitutional Commission (occupying almost half of the positions on the 50-person committee). They also served in several senior government positions, including the Ministers of Justice, Tourism, and Labor and Welfare. By law, one-third of regional National Assembly seats are reserved for women, and women also may compete for the unreserved seats; however, the National Assembly does not meet". **[4f] (p8)**

6.102 AI reported on 19 May 2004 that: "Women played an important part in the EPLF's liberation struggle in both military and civilian roles and there was an official commitment to gender equality in the EPLF and its social policies". **[5f] (p21)**

Female Genital Mutilation

6.103 The USSD 2004 report noted that:

"FGM was widespread, with estimates placing the number of women and girls who have been subjected to FGM as high as 95 percent. Almost all ethnic and religious groups in the country practiced FGM. In the lowlands, local groups practiced infibulation, the most severe form of FGM. There was no law prohibiting FGM; however, the Government worked to combat the practice. The Government and other organizations, including the National Union of Eritrean Women and the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, sponsored education programs that discouraged the practice. The U.N. Population Fund, through the Ministry of Health, sponsored reproductive health projects

that provided training and awareness programs that focused on the harmful physical and psychological impacts of FGM". **[4f] (p11)**

Domestic & Sexual Violence

6.104 The USSD 2004 report noted that:

> "Violence against women was pervasive. Spousal abuse is a crime; however, spousal abuse, especially wife beating, was widespread. Women seldom openly discussed domestic violence because of societal pressures. Such incidents were more commonly addressed, if at all, within families or by religious clergy". **[4f] (p8)**

6.105 AI reported on 19 May 2004 that:

> "There have been allegations from former conscripts of a pattern of sexual violence against female conscripts. Female conscripts are reported to have been subject to sexual abuse including rape. AI has received reports that some of the new female recruits were selected for sex under duress, through being threatened with heavy military duties or being sent to the battle-front during the war or to a remote and harsh posting, or being denied home leave….There was no mechanism for complaining to the military or civilian authorities, and when complaints were made, no action was known to have been taken to stop and prevent this practice, which appears to have been widely known". **[5f] (pps20-21)**

Return to Contents

Children

General

6.106 The USSD 2004 report noted that: "The Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare is responsible for policies concerning children rights and welfare. The Children's Affairs Division in the Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare covered childcare, counseling, and probation. Although the Government was generally committed to children's rights and welfare, its programs were limited by resource constraints". **[4f] (p9)**

6.107 The same report noted that:

> "The Government has a national plan of action to protect children from exploitation in the workplace; however, child labor occurred. The legal minimum age for employment is 18 years, although apprentices may be hired at age 14. Proclamation 118 bars children, young workers and apprentices under 18 years of age from performing certain dangerous or unhealthy labor, including working in transport industries, jobs involving toxic chemicals or dangerous machines, and underground

work such as in mines and sewers. It was common for rural children who did not attend school to work on family farms, fetching firewood and water, and herding livestock among other activities. In urban areas, some children worked as street vendors of cigarettes, newspapers, or chewing gum. Labor inspectors from the Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare are responsible for enforcing child labor laws; however, due to the small number of inspectors, inspections were infrequent". **[4f] (p11)**

6.108 BBC News in a report dated 11 January 2004 stated that:

"The United Nations children's agency, Unicef, says the north-east African country of Eritrea is breaking human rights regulations by making children complete the final year of their secondary education at the site of a military training camp. Eritrea's recent history has been dominated by conflict with Ethiopia and 10% of the population is thought to be in the army. Sawa - in the far west of the country near the Sudan border – has always occupied a special place in Eritrean society. It is the site of a massive military training camp where every Eritrean aged between 18-40 must go as part of their compulsory military service. Now to matriculate you must leave home and complete Grade 12 in Sawa - a move the government say was taken because they do not have the money to expand secondary schools around the country.… Those who attend grade 12 in Sawa and matriculate will have the chance to pursue further educational opportunities. For those who choose not to go - their national service begins when they turn 18 and that usually starts with training in Sawa's military camp". **[8c]**

6.109 AI reported on 19 May 2004 that:

"The government should strictly forbid and denounce recruitment of children under 18 years to national military service, and immediately allow any child conscripts to return to their families; Detention of a child for a suspected criminal offence should only be allowed as a measure of last resort, in conformity with the law and international principles of juvenile justice, and for the shortest possible time – there should be no arbitrary detention on account of religious belief; Children should not be detained together with adults, except in special circumstances where it is in the best interests of the child". **[5f] (pps32-33)**

6.110 IRIN News reported on 20 July 2004 that: "Hundreds of thousands of Eritrean children are living in extreme poverty due to prolonged drought, the aftermath of border conflict with neighbouring Ethiopia and its impact on the country's economy, the United Nations Children's Fund reported. UNICEF said in a humanitarian update that an estimated 425,000 children under 14 years of age were affected, mostly in families that were dependent on and headed by women". **[19g]**

Childcare Provisions for Orphans

6.111 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that:

> "The number of orphans within Eritrea is identified by the MLHW [Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare] as one of the main social problems in Eritrea. In 1992 - 1993 a national survey identified approximately 90,000 orphans in the country. A survey conducted in 1999 - 2000 identified 51,000 in need of urgent support. A survey is presently underway to identify the number of AIDS orphans, as of October 2002 there were a total of 552 registered with the ministry on this basis. Within Eritrea the term orphan is defined as 'a child who lost either one or both parents or has been abandoned'". **[3] (p72)**

6.112 The same report stated that, "the Government policy with regards to orphans and unaccompanied children is against the proliferation of orphanages and other forms of institutionalisation. Instead, the policy is to strengthen the traditional safety nets that have been in place within communities throughout Eritrea for generations. On the basis of information provided by the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare's Report on the implementation of the convention on the rights of the child the Government strategy for caring for orphans and unaccompanied children can be summarised as follows: -

- **Reunification of orphans** with close relatives is regarded as the best solution for guaranteeing their psychological integration and developmental needs. This is the most favoured option; between 1994 and 1997 just under 14,000 orphans were re-unified with nearly 7,000 families.

- **Foster care** with an unrelated family has been tried as a second alternative to reunification in Eritrea since 1992 in situations where a close relative can not be found. However, for a number of factors, including the rejection of foster care by communities as an alien concept, the Government does not consider the foster care programme to have been successful and has no plans to extend the programme.

- **Adoption** is possible within Eritrea and involves the legal recognition that the child is part of the adopted family. Consent of any surviving parent is required, as is the consent of the adopted child itself if aged over 10 years of age. A relatively large number of families wish to adopt but priority is given to childless families or those with one child, hence few Eritrean families qualify. In the case of infants adoption is only permitted where the child has been abandoned; the Government states there are an average of 6/7 abandoned infants per year. A total of only 50 children have been adopted in Eritrea since independence.

- **Community based children's homes (Group care)** have been considered the best alternative to reunification, foster care or adoption. It is considered that this option, in which children are established in group-homes within the community, can limit the social and psychological effects of institutional living. Residents are kept to a manageable size of 10-12 children and two housemothers. As of 2002 a total of 132 children had

been placed in 12 group homes situated within larger towns; six further homes are under construction. Children aged between 1 and 12 are selected for placements in group homes, siblings are kept together and where possible placements are within the region the child originates from. Government evaluations of group-homes in 1998 and 2002 conclude that these homes provide a secure and caring environment for the children.

- **Institutional care (orphanages)** is considered as the Government's least desirable option. Due to the effective reunification programme and the reunification of many children within their extended families all but one of the Government run orphanages have been phased out. There are however ten non-governmental orphanages within Eritrea, all these are administered by religious organisations. The (MLHW) carries out supervision of all orphanages. Children may be admitted to orphanages from birth up until the age of 11; in 2002 official estimates suggested a total of 1,500 were in such institutions".

[3] (p72-73)

6.113 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that:

> "Review of Placements is undertaken by social workers of the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare. All children placed under the provisions of the reunification or foster care programmes are checked upon regularly. However, the authorities do acknowledge that there is a need to develop guidelines for social workers working in the field, particularly in respect of their handling of cases involving children. It is also the case that many social workers have not received formal training, however the MLHW have worked in conjunction with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to upgrade social workers skills". **[3] (p73)**

6.114 The same report stated that: "[The] UNICEF Representative to Eritrea commented to the UK delegation to Eritrea that there is a very well defined programme for alternative childcare arrangements within Eritrea. The Child Protection Officer, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), confirmed this was the case, so much so that the UN agency considers the Eritrea model suitable to export to other countries". **[3] (p73)**

6.115 It continued that:

> "[The CPO] confirmed that the authorities' favoured arrangement is reunification of orphans within their extended family. She considered that in practice, the second option favoured by the authorities is the placement of children into group homes. The third option is the use of orphanages; she advised that Eritrea has one state run orphanage and 10 further orphanages managed by churches. UNICEF stated that there are approximately 1,500 children in these facilities, 300 of whom are in the state orphanage. With regard to adoption of children, either to foreign families or within the country, she confirmed that this could sometimes be arranged but commented that it was a difficult process". **[3] (p73)**

6.116 It also said that:

> "There are several large orphanages within Eritrea adding that Asmara has one of the biggest. Orphanages are either run by the state or Christian NGOs in the country. They are considered by UNICEF to have satisfactory facilities such as adequate bedding, food and clothing provisions etc. Acceptability for entry to an orphanage is universal; there are no unacceptability rules that apply. Eritrea does all that it can for orphans and the Eritrean public and expatriate community supports them in this policy". **[3] (p73-74)**

6.117 It further added that: "The Government's priority is to place orphans with surviving family if at all possible, if that is not possible then the authorities will attempt to place in a group home (essentially an extended foster family). The last resort is for a child to be put in an orphanage". **[3] (p74)**

Abuse & Trafficking of Children

6.118 A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that:

> "A parent or guardian may not treat their child with negligence, give too large a task for the child to complete, beat the child in a way which may affect their mental or physical development, abandon the child in dangerous places or conditions or deny the child necessities. The court is sanctioned to impose a punishment against the parent or guardian in respect of any breaches of the above, the Transitional Penal Code of Eritrea (TPCE) also provides for the rights of the parent or guardian to be limited". **[3] (p82)**

6.119 The same report stated that:

> "According to the MLHW [Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare] Report on the implementation of the convention of rights to the child sexual abuse within the family is said to be unknown. In practice though, it is acknowledged that there has been no research undertaken to find the extent of the problem. However, the report accepts that 'it is difficult to conclude that it does not occur at all'. The TPCE prescribes for more severe penalties for sexual offences committed by family members and others in a position of trust against a minor. Although the law strongly condemns sexual exploitation of children the MLHW states that it is rare that children or their guardians exercise the right to take perpetrators to court. However, various customary laws also recognise incest and prescribe punishments such as the loss of land (livelihood) and public office for offenders". **[3] (p82)**

6.120 It further stated that:

> "The above mentioned report also refers to the rape of large numbers of young girls by Ethiopian soldiers during the border war. Rape is not

dealt with openly in Eritrean society and the families of rape victims often keep such incidents a secret as a consequence of the shame brought on the family of a rape victim. In most Eritrean families' virginity is a pre-requisite for marriage and consequently marriage for a girl who has been raped can become unattainable". **[3] (p82)**

Homosexuals

6.121 According to the British Embassy in Asmara, "Penal Code Proclamation of 1957 No. 158/1957 Book V Title IV Section II which is still in force in Eritrea strictly prohibits 'Sexual Deviations', among which is performing sexual acts with someone of the same sex". Confirmation is given that people who commit "such an act are prosecuted and punished whenever found guilty". **[23]**

6.122 However the International Lesbian and Gay Association state that same-sex sexual activity is legal for men and women in Eritrea, however they do note that much of the information is out of date. **[12]**

6.123 The FCO in a letter dated 26 April 2005 assess that homosexuality in Eritrea is considered illegal. **[10]**

6.124 According to Globalgayz in an article dated 5 November 2003: "Despite the fact that homosexuality is legal under the interim Eritrean law, Asmara Military Police say those whom they arrested were involved in gay behaviour, gathering in a public bathroom in mid-town Asmara, the county's [sic] capital. After some days spent in the Capital, Military Police then transferred the men to Diabeto, outside Asmara to the north". **[43]**

Return to Contents

6.C Human Rights - Other Issues

Use of Torture

6.125 The USSD Report 2004 noted that:

> "The Penal Code prohibits torture; however, there were numerous reports that police resorted to torture and physical beatings of prisoners, particularly during interrogations. During the year [2004], police severely mistreated and beat army deserters, draft evaders, and members of particular religious groups. Security forces detained deserters and draft evaders and subjected them to various disciplinary actions that included prolonged sun exposure in temperatures of up to 113 degrees Fahrenheit or the binding of the hands, elbows and feet for extended periods". **[4f] (p2)**

6.126 The AI report of May 2004 stated that: "Torture is systematically practiced within the army for interrogation and punishment, particularly of conscription evaders, deserters and soldiers accused of military offences, and members of minority churches. Torture is also used against some political

prisoners. Furthermore, the atrocious conditions under which many political prisoners are held amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment". **[5f] (p2)**

6.127 AI in its report dated 19 May 2004 described the following methods of torture:-

> **"The helicopter"**: the victim is tied with a rope by hands and feet behind the back, lying on the ground face down, outside in the hot sun, rain or freezing cold nights, stripped of upper garments. This is a punishment allocated for a particular number of days, the maximum reported being 55 days in the Dahlak Kebir island prison, but it is more often one or two weeks. The prisoner is tied in this position 24 hours a day, except for two or three short breaks for meals and toilet functions.
>
> **"Otto" (Italian for "eight")**: the victim is tied with hands behind the back and left face down on the ground, but without the legs tied.
>
> **"Jesus Christ"**: the victim is stripped to the waist, wrists tied, and standing on a block with hands tied to a tree branch; the block is removed, leaving the victim suspended with the feet just off the ground in a crucifix-like posture. Beatings are inflicted on the bare back. This is said to be an extremely severe torture, restricted to only 10-15 minutes to avoid serious lasting injury. This method was first reported from Adi Abeto prison in 2003.
>
> **"Ferro" (Italian for "iron"**): the wrists are bound behind the back with metal handcuffs while the victim lies on the ground face down and is beaten with sticks or whipped with an electric wire on the back and buttocks.
>
> **"Torch" or "Number eight":** inside a special torture room, the victim is tied up by wrists behind the back and with the feet bound; a stick is placed under the knees and supported on a framework on both sides horizontally, and the body is turned upside down with the feet exposed. The soles of the feet are beaten with sticks or whipped…. Torture used in interrogations of political prisoners held in security prisons has allegedly also included electric shocks and sexual torture – a coca-cola bottle filled with water and tied to the testicles". **[5f] (p15)**

6.128 HRW noted in their 2003 report that:

> "Because of the volume of arrests, prisoners are often held in improvised cargo containers. At Aderser, near Sawa, prisoners are held in underground cells. At least six high school students were also reported incarcerated in solitary confinement in underground cells at Sawa. In addition to psychological abuse, escapees report the use of physical torture at some prisons. Prisoners have been suspended from trees, arms tied behind their backs, a technique known as almaz (diamond). Prisoners have also been placed face down, hands tied to feet, a torture known as the 'helicopter'". **[29c] (p2)**

6.129 The USSD report on Religious Freedom 2003 noted that: "Some of the detainees reportedly have been rolled around in oil drums, abused by fellow prisoners, and the women sexually abused; some of the detainees reportedly suffer from partial paralysis and other injuries as a result of their torture. Other reports describe other individuals and groups in the military and national service who have been detained, harassed, and physically tortured for practicing non-sanctioned religions". **[4a] (p4)**

Refugees in Eritrea

6.130 The U.S. Committee for Refugees World Refugee Survey 2004 reported that:

> "Nearly 280,000 Eritreans were refugees at the end of 2003, including some 270,000 in Sudan, nearly 7,000 in Ethiopia, and some 3,000 Eritrean asylum seekers in various Western countries. About 75,000 Eritreans were internally displaced at year's end [2003]. Fewer than 10,000 Eritrean refugees repatriated during the year, primarily from Sudan. Eritrea hosted nearly 4,000 refugees, including more than 3,000 from Somalia and fewer than 1,000 from Sudan". **[26c]**

6.131 The US State Department Report 2002 on Human Rights noted that:

> "The few deportees of Eritrean origin from Ethiopia who could not demonstrate their ties to the country were issued documents that identified them as Ethiopians, which permitted them to stay in the country. Government and army officials reportedly considered these Ethiopian deportees to be citizens who were trying to avoid national service. As a result, they were subjected to harassment and detention while the authorities checked their status". **[4c] (p4)**

6.132 The USSD 2004 noted that:

> "The law does not provide for the granting of refugee status or asylum to persons who meet the definition in the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and there is no domestic legislation relating to refugees. Consequently, the Government cannot issue legal refugee status or asylum to persons seeking protection on its territory; however, the Government offers temporary protection to persons from Sudan and Somalia on a prima facie basis and provided protection against refoulement, the return of persons to a country where they feared persecution. The Government cooperated with the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in assisting refugees. There were 732 Sudanese refugees at Elit camp in the west and 3,400 Somali refugees at Emkulu camp, near Massawa. There were also up to 30,000 Beja Sudanese and approximately 600 Ethiopians in the Gash Barka region to which UNHCR has no access or responsibility. UNHCR accommodated 441 Ethiopians in urban areas who arrived over the past several years.

The Government issued, for a fee, residency permits to Ethiopians living in the country". **[4f] (p8)**

6.133 The report further noted that: "The Office of Refugee Affairs (ORA) was responsible for refugees of non-Eritrean origin, including management of the Elit and Emkulu camps. In November and December [2003], the Government cooperated with UNHCR to re-register Sudanese and Somali refugees at the Elit and Emkulu camps". **[4f] (p9-10)**

6.134 IRIN News stated on 23 January 2004 that: "Thousands of refugees who fled northeastern Sudan into Eritrea are living in appalling health conditions, with no access to adequate water and unable to send their children to Eritrean schools". **[19a]**

6.135 The report goes on to state that Action by Churches Together (ACT), a worldwide alliance of churches and related agencies said that: "'The water supply for human and animal use is desperately inadequate. Girls take water from small, shallow pools in the dry riverbeds, the same pools where animals drink and pollute the water. Waterborne diseases are frequent among young children, weakening further their already weak status'". **[19a]**

Internally Displaced Persons

6.136 The World Refugee Survey 2004 reported that:

"About 75,000 war-uprooted Eritreans remained displaced throughout the country at year's end [2003]. The prevalence of landmines, poor security, and the widespread destruction of business, homes, and water and transportation systems within the Temporary Security Zone prevented the return of tens of thousands of internally displaced Eritreans. As in previous years, the absence of basic health care and education services in war-destroyed villages also impeded large-scale return. More than 55,000 internally displaced persons continued to live in camps in western Eritrea's Gash Barka and Debub Zones. An additional 8,000 resided in makeshift camps and host communities. Eritrea's displaced population also included some 15,000 people of Eritrean descent who Ethiopian authorities deported frorm Ethiopia during the war. Sever drought, food shortages, and Eritrea's depressed economy compounded the already difficult lives of the country's displaced population. Insufficient rainfall left rivers dry and dams and wells empty. Most war-uprooted internally displaced persons lacked alternative sources of income and continued to rely exclusively on relief organisations for their daily needs, including WFP food rations. 'The emergency needs of internally displaced persons and expellees, living in and outside camps, has not improved,' the UN reported. Most camp-based war-uprooted internally displaced persons continued to live in temporary shelters. Nearly 75% of tents sheltering internally displaced persons required urgent replacement, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs". **[26c]**

6.137 IRIN News reported on 23 January 2004 that:

> "ACT said many of its target communities were situated in the war-affected extreme south of Eritrea, which also hosts many internally displaced people. Another 66,000 vulnerable poor people were in Zoba Maekel in central Eritrea, where most households are headed by women. 'About 90 percent [of the vulnerable community consists of] women-headed households; the rest are vulnerable groups consisting of disabled, elderly persons with nobody to look after them. Most of the female-headed families lost their husbands during the 30-year war for liberation and the recent bloody border war with Ethiopia,' ACT added". **[19a]**

6.138 The USSD 2004 report stated that: "Approximately 67,000 IDPs from the conflict with Ethiopia remained in 11 camps in the Debub and Gash Barka zones at year's end. Camp facilities were rudimentary, but conditions generally were adequate. There also was a large but unknown number of IDPs residing outside camps during the year [2004]. **[4f] (p7)**

Treatment of returned failed Asylum Seekers

6.139 AI in its 2002 report stated that: "Over 200 Eritreans who had originally entered Sudan were deported back to Eritrea from Malta in September 2002 and detained on arrival". **[5a] (p1)**

6.140 The HRW 2003 report noted that, "They were arrested upon arrival in Asmara, taken to a military camp, and held incommunicado". **[29a]**

6.141 The USSD 2004 report noted that:

> "There were no developments concerning the approximately 220 citizens deported from Malta in 2002 on suspicion that they had fled the country to escape or avoid national service. It is believed they were held at secret locations without contact with their families and without formal charges. There were reports that security forces killed some of those who tried again to escape". **[4f] (p3)**

6.142 However UNHCR, in their position paper of January 2004, also noted the treatment of the Malta returnees and conclude "It appears that the deportees from Malta to Eritrea may have faced persecution owing to an imputed political opinion, conscientious objection or other reasons. It cannot be excluded that future deportees would face a similar risk". **[18a] (p7)**

6.143 This report continued:

> "It is again emphasized that the scope of the cessation clauses for Eritrean refugees announced by UNHCR in May 2002 is limited to persons who fled their country as a result of the war of independence which ended in 1991, or the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia which ended in June 2000. Other Eritrean refugees, i.e. those

fleeing persecution, remained and continue to be unaffected by the cessation clauses. It is also underlined that the applicability of the cessation clauses is always rebuttable and, upon request, each individual case is to be examined on it merits. In this context, the possibility of a valid 'sur place' claim should not be excluded.

In the light of the above, UNHCR recommends that asylum claims submitted by Eritrean asylum seekers should undergo a careful assessment to determine their needs for international protection. It is also recommended that states refrain from all forced returns of rejected asylum seekers to Eritrea and grant them complementary forms of protection instead, until further notice. This position will be reviewed in the second half of 2004". **[18] (p7)**

6.144 AI reported on 19 May 2004 that:

"In response to Amnesty International's concern about the deportations, the Maltese government said that it was "not in possession of any evidence that any ill-treatment was afforded to the Eritreans repatriated from Malta" and that the Eritrean Director for Refugees "was reported to have rejected any allegations of ill-treatment".
As Amnesty International learned later, women, children and those over the conscription age limit of 40 years were released after some weeks in Adi Abeto prison but the rest of the Malta deportees – mostly army deserters – were kept in incommunicado detention and tortured. Some EPLF veterans among them were sent separately to "Tract B" military prison in Asmara. The rest were transferred to the secret Dahlak Kebir island prison in December 2002. Later the civilians (about 95) were sent to secret mainland prisons in July 2003, leaving behind about 85 conscript deserters in Dahlak Kebir. About 30 later escaped and fled again to Sudan, where they sought UNHCR protection. They gave testimonies of their detention and torture to Amnesty International. Some 200 other Eritreans – also mostly army deserters or conscription evaders – remained in detention in Malta in poor conditions, some appealing in court against the threat of deportation. The Maltese authorities were much criticized for their treatment of the Eritreans and other migrants and asylum-seekers, at a time when Malta was applying to join the European Union and therefore expected to comply with European Union asylum standards and establish refugee status determination procedures more in line with international standards. In December 2003 they released most of the remaining Eritrean asylum-seekers to a non-custodial hostel. The rest were released in February 2004 and resettlement was being considered for all 105 Eritrean asylum seekers still in Malta.(29) More Eritreans reportedly arrived in Malta in April 2004 after encountering difficulties at sea". **[5f] (p23)**

6.145 Malta Media reported on 23 May 2004:

> "With reference to reports in some newspapers on the deportation of Eritrean citizens in 2002, the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs insists that the United High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) did not oppose their repatriation". The Ministry also said that the Eritreans did not apply for refugee status in Malta and were illegal immigrants to all effects. The reaction was triggered by reports from Amnesty International that some of these Eritreans in question were imprisoned and tortured after their return from Malta." **[23]**

6.146 UNHCR, in their position paper of January 2004, have stated that they have not noted any "incidents of reprisals or persecution perpetuated by the Government of the State of Eritrea against refugees who voluntarily elected to return to their country, and did so under the auspices of UNHCR's voluntary repatriation programme." UNHCR add that, "the voluntary repatriation programme continues and UNHCR hope to be able to assist as many refugees as possible to repatriate, including the remaining 35,000 refugees who are currently registered for voluntary repatriation in Sudan". **[18a] (p6)**

6.147 IRIN News stated on 12 March 2004 that: "After more than 30 years in exile, an estimated 1,700 Eritrean refugees left their camps in eastern Sudan to return home to Eritrea this week, in the biggest return convoy this year [2004]. On Wednesday, a convoy of 58 passenger buses and more than 30 luggage trucks carrying 1,770 refugees and their belongings crossed into Eritrea under the escort of officials from Sudan and the UN refugee agency". **[19c]**

6.148 The article further stated that:

> "Eritrea is one of several countries that has been chosen for UNHCR's pilot testing of a new initiative dubbed the 4Rs – Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction – which is already being tested in Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. The 4Rs project aims to ensure that the return of the refugees and their reintegration is backed by 'solid rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes', UNHCR reported". **[19c]**

6.149 The article noted that: "The Sudanese government estimates the total number of Eritreans remaining in Sudan to be over 200,000. About 35,000 people have signed up for voluntary repatriation to Eritrea this year [2004], while over 29,000 families have applied to remain in Sudan as refugees". **[19c]**

Human Rights Organisations in Eritrea

6.150 The USSD 2004 report noted that: "The Government prohibited political activity by religious groups and faith based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The Government's Office of Religious Affairs monitored religious compliance on this proscription against political activity". **[4f] (p6)**

6.151 Europa stated that:

"From the first years of independence both international and local NGOs have been tightly controlled….Financial controls were also tightly mandated, with organizations only allowed to maintain an office in country, if administration comprised less than 10 percent of the overall budget. Local organizations, of which there are 14, are required by law to rely mainly on local, rather than international financial support, although in practice this requirement is not met. In 1996 these restrictions were tightened with the result that international organizations could only work in the areas of health and education. Many NGOs left in 1997, when foreign staff were required to pay high rates of local tax. Some NGO representatives insisted that they were 'asked to leave'. Although a few NGOs returned in the aftermath of the Ethiopian-Eritrean border war, donor reluctance to fund non-humanitarian aid has diminished the sector". **[1a] (pps 406-7)**

Return to Contents

ANNEX A

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS

1889 Ethiopia recognises Italian control over Eritrea in Treaty of Ucciali. **[1a] (p402)**

1941 British forces capture Eritrea during the Second World War; Eritrea remains under British military administration until 1952. **[1a] (p402)**

1952 UN approves federation between Eritrea and Ethiopia; however Ethiopian rule effectively stifles Eritrean autonomy. **[1a] (p402)**

1958 Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM) founded. **[1a] (p402)**

1961 Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), which had superseded ELM, begins armed campaign for Eritrean independence from Ethiopia. **[1a] (p402)**

1962 Eritrea's status reduced to that of an Ethiopian province. **[1b] (p1573)**

1972-74 Civil war in Eritrea between ELF and breakaway Popular Liberation Forces (which went on to form the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in 1977). **[1a] (p402)**

1974 Revolution which brings hard-line Marxist 'Derg' regime to power. **[1a] (p402)**

1977-78 Further splits within ELF. **[1a] (p402)**

1985 Second civil war between ELF and breakaway factions, leading to further splits from ELF, effectively neutralising it as an effective military force; EPLF now the main opposition force to Ethiopian rule. **[1a] (p402)**

1990 EPLF captures Massawa. **[1a] (p402)**

May 1991 EPLF captures Asmara; at same time EPRDF captures Addis Ababa and overthrows Derg; EPRDF recognises EPLF as government of Eritrea and agrees independence referendum for Eritrea in 1993. **[1a] (pps402 and 426)**

April 1993 UN-supervised referendum overwhelmingly approves independence from Ethiopia. **[1a] (p403)**

24 May 1993 Independence proclaimed. **[1a] (p403)**

28 May 1993 International recognition of independence of the State of Eritrea; EPLF establishes transitional government, with EPLF leader Issayas Afewerki becoming first President of Eritrea. **[1a] (p403)**

8 June 1993 Issayas Afewerki elected first President of Eritrea by the National Assembly. **[1a] (p403)**

February 1994 EPLF becomes the People's Front for Democracy & Justice (PFDJ) and espouses its support for a pluralistic political system. **[1a] (p403)**

1994-1995 Conferences on constitutional reform held throughout Eritrea, but Government opponents not invited to participate. **[1a] (p403)**

May 1995 Government rationalisation programme cuts size of civil service and reorganises administrative regions. **[1a] (p403)**

May 1997 New Constitution adopted by Constituent Assembly but not fully implemented. Government officials continued to insist that it [the Constitution] would be implemented gradually. **[1a] (p403)**

May 1998 Border conflict with Ethiopia erupts into heavy fighting, thousands of Eritreans expelled from Ethiopia and many Ethiopians leave Eritrea. **[1a] (p404)**

February 1999 Upsurge in fighting with Ethiopia. **[1a] (p404)**

March 1999 10 opposition groups based in Sudan form Alliance of Eritrean National Forces (AENF), led by ELF-CC's Chairman. **[1a] (p408)**

May 2000 Ethiopia launches all-out attack on Eritrea, capturing territory taken by Eritrea in May 1998. **[1a] (p404)**

June 2000 Eritrea and Ethiopia sign cease-fire agreement and agree to UN monitoring force along border. **[1a] (p404)**

October 2000 Eritrean professionals and academics meet in Berlin, Germany, and write a letter to President Issayas Afewerki, since known as the "Berlin Manifesto", about the "political and economic challenges that confront us as a new nation". **[1a] (p405)**

December 2000 Eritrea and Ethiopia sign peace agreement in Algeria establishing commissions to mark border, exchange prisoners, return displaced people and hear compensation claims. **[1a] (pps404-405)**

February 2001 Eritrea accepts United Nations plans for a temporary demilitarised zone along its border with neighbouring Ethiopia. **[1b] (p1576)**

22 February 2001 Ethiopia says it has completed its troop withdrawal from Eritrea in accordance with a United Nations-sponsored agreement to end the border war. **[1b] (p1576)**

April 2001 Eritrea announces that its forces have pulled out of the border zone with Ethiopia - a key provision of the peace agreement signed between the two countries. **[1b] (p1576)**

May 2001 A dissident group at the centre of the PFDJ publicly express strong criticisms of the President. This group is known as the "Group of 15" or "G-15". **[1a] (p405)**

July 2001 Semere Kesete, the student union president at the University of Asmara, makes a speech at the graduation ceremony criticising the Government. He was arrested shortly afterwards. **[1a] (p406)**

August 2001 Hundreds of students protested about Kesete's arrest, police arrest 400 of them, two of which die during hard labour in detention. **[1a] (p406)**

18 September 2001 Security authorities detain 11 members of the G15 group. Four members escape arrest. **[1a] (p406)**

September 2001 The Government closes all privately – owned newspapers. Following this the police arrest 10 leading journalists. **[5b] (p6)**

February 2002 It was decided that the National Assembly would comprise 75 members of the PFDJ Central Committee, and 75 directly elected members. All but eight of the 50 – member Constitutional Commission were government appointees, and there was no provision for any opposition participation in the interim system. **[1a] (p403)**

31 March 2002 The 10 journalists arrested in September 2001 begin a hunger strike. Nine of the ten were moved from the 1st Police Station in Asmara to an unknown location. **[5b] (p7)**

13 April 2002 The International Tribunal announces the border decision. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia declare victory. Confusion over which country controls Badme remains. **[1a] (p405)**

May 2002 Roma Gebremichael, the wife of one of the G-15 detainees is arrested. **[5b] (p7)**

May 2002 The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announces that by the end of the year Eritreans in Sudan would no longer automatically be entitled to refugee status. **[5a] (p1)**

August 2002 Semere Kesete escapes prison and flees to Ethiopia. **[8l]**

August 2002 Eritrea repatriates 279 Ethiopian prisoners of war. **[38]**

October 2002 Malta deports over two hundred asylum seekers back to Eritrea. They are detained on arrival and held incommunicado without charge or further explanation. **[26a] (p2)**

29 November 2002 1,130 POWs and 95 civilian internees of Eritrean origin are released by the Ethiopian authorities and repatriated. **[1a] (p405)**

March 2003 The Boundary Commission categorically rules Badme to be in Eritrean territory. Ethiopia voices its opposition to the ruling. **[1a] (p405)**

August 2003 The Government detained 57 students who were members of non-sanctioned religious groups; the students were arrested while at a mandatory 3-month summer course at the Sawa Military Camp. **[4d] (p8)**

January 2004 UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, says in a report to the Security Council that the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea 'remains difficult, even precarious'. He says he is 'concerned that a minor miscalculation by either side could have serious consequences'. **[19n]**

February 2004 Former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy is named UN special envoy to help defuse the stand-off between Ethiopia and Eritrea. **[1a] (p405)**

May 2004 The Security Council expresses deep concern over the 'continued lack of progress' in resolving the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It urges Eritrea to end restrictions imposed on UN peacekeepers in the region – including limits on their freedom of movement, saying the Council is concerned over deterioration in cooperation with UNMEE. **[19o]**

July 2004 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan visited the Horn of Africa in a new initiative to kick start the stalled Ethiopian Eritrean peace process. **[8m]**

September 2004 UNMEE expresses disappointment after the Eritrean government re-imposed restrictions of movement along a crucial supply route for its peacekeepers. **[19o]**

November 2004 Prime Minister Zenawi announces a five-point plan to try and end the border stalemate with Eritrea, saying his country would accept, 'in principle', the April 2002 ruling of the independent boundary commission that was intended to end hostilities between the two neighbours. He, however, insists that the ruling is still 'illegal and unjust'. Any attempt to implement the Hague-based decision, he adds, 'might lead to a serious escalation of the tension between the two countries and thereby undermine the peace'. **[19o]**

December 2004 Eritrea calls on Ethiopia to abide by the ruling of an independent commission that delineated their disputed border in 2002 and urges the international community to help secure peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. It demands Ethiopia's 'cooperation with the Boundary Commission to ensure expeditious demarcation of the boundary' and calls for 'full and unconditional respect of the Algiers Agreement'. **[19o]**

February 2005 A large number of troops being deployed at the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea is worrying the United Nations. The troops remained on their own soil, but Ethiopian soldiers had come within a 20-40 kilometre range of the frontier. **[8n]**

Return to Contents

ANNEX B

POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

Alliance of Eritrean National Forces (AENF) - see ENA. **[1a] (p419)**

Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Eritrea (DMFLE) - Opposition group; leader Hamid Turky. **[1a] (p418)**

Eritrean Islamic Jihad (EIJ) - Radical opposition group; in August 1993 split into a military wing and political wing; leader of political wing Sheikh Mohamed Arafa. **[1a] (p419)**

Eritrean People's Liberation Front – After 1962, Eritreans who opposed union carried on sporadic guerilla warfare against Ethiopia and the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) was founded. In 1972 a rival insurgent group, the Eritrean Popular Liberation Forces (EPLF), was formed and battled the ELF for supremacy. **[22]**

'**Islamic Salvation Movement**, Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM), Harakat al Jihad al Islami' The Federation of American Scientists (last updated 1999) stated:

> The Eritrean opposition group Harakat al Jihad al Islami (EIJM) changed its name to harakat al Khalas al Islami (Islamic Salvation Movement) in September 1998. The movement has been seeking the forceful overthrow of Eritrea's government and its replacement by an Islamic government. Sudanese authorities indicated their support of the movement allowing the Movement's Secretary-general Sheikh Mohamed Amer to hold a news conference in Khartoum". **[24]**

Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) - founded 1958; commenced armed struggle against Ethiopia in 1961; subsequently split into numerous factions; mainly Muslim support; opposes the PFDJ; successor to the Eritrean Liberation Movement. Factional splits in 1970s led to formation of rival EPLF, with which ELF fought, and lost, two civil wars in the 1970s and 1980s; now broken into several factions - see principal factions **ELF-CC**, **ELF-NC**, **ELF-RC.** **[1a] (p419)**

Eritrean Liberation Front-Central Command (ELF-CC) - Founded 1982; Chairman Abdella Idriss. **[1a] (p419)**

Eritrean Liberation Front-National Council (ELF-NC) - Leader Hassan Ali Assad. **[1a] (p419)**

Eritrean Liberation Front-Revolutionary Council (ELF-RC) - Established by former ELF members who remained outside EPLF; President Seyoum Ogbamichael; Leader Ahmed Mohamed Nasser. **[1a] (p419)**

Eritrean National Alliance (ENA) - Formally **Alliance of Eritrean National Forces (AENF)** and founded in 1999. Changed name in 2002 - Grouping of 13 opposition organisations (including EIJ, EIS, ELF, and a number of ELF factions). Military wing aimed set up in 2003; Chairman Hiruy Tedla Bairu; Secretary General Husayn Khalifa. **[1a] (p419) [41]**

Eritrean People's Liberation Front Democratic Party (EPLF-DP) – Founded 2001; breakaway group from the PFDJ. Gains credibility in not being connected to Sudan or Ethiopia as most opposition groups are. Leader the former Defence Minister Mesfin Hagos. **[1a] (p403) [8b]**

People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) - Founded 1970 as the Eritrean Popular Liberation Forces (EPLF); following a split in the Eritrean Liberation Front; renamed the Eritrean People's Liberation Front in 1977; adopoted present name in February 1994. Christian and Muslim support; in May 1991 took control of Eritrea and formed provisional Government; formed transitional Government in May 1993; Chair Issaias Afewerki President of Erritrea; Secretary General Alamin Mohamed Said. **[1a] (p419)**

Popular Liberation Forces - Breakaway faction from ELF which went on to form **EPLF** in 1977. **[1a] (p402)**

Red Sea Afar Democratic Organisation: Afar opposition group; Secretary General Amin Ahmmad. **[1a] (p419)**

Return to Contents

ANNEX C

PROMINENT PEOPLE*

Adhanom Gebremariam **-** Former Ambassador to Nigeria, member of G-15 group of dissenters. **[19b]**

Ahmed Nasser – Until recently [2003]Leader of ELF-RC. **[1a] (p403)**

In its 6th regular meeting in Addis Abeba (October 2003), the ENA had resolved and appointed a committee for national conference chaired by Ahmed Nasser, who recently abandoned his official position in the ELF-RC and later joined the ENA without assessment of his past withdrawal from it. **[30]**

Alamin Mohammed Said - Secretary-General of PFDJ. **[1a] (p419)**

Ali Said Abdullah – Minister of Foreign Affairs **[1a] (p418)**

Amin Ahmmad - Secretary General of Red Sea Afar Democratic Organisation. **[1a] (p419)**

Berhane Abrehe – Minister of Finance **[1a] (p418)**

Haile Menkorios – former Eritrean ambassador to the United Nations, member of G-15 group of dissenters. **[19b]**

Haile Woldensae - Former Trade and Industry Minister arrested in September 2001 following involvement with G-15 group of dissenters. **[8a]**

Hamid Turky - Leader of Democratic Movement For the Liberation of Eritrea. **[1a] (p418)**

Hassan Ali Assad - Leader of ELF-NC. **[1a] (p419)**

Hiruy Tedla Bairu – Leader of the Eritrean National Alliance (ENA); replaced Abdallah Idris in January 2005. **[41]**

Issayas Afewerki - Secretary-General of EPLF, Chairman of PFDJ and President of Eritrea June 1993 to present. **[1a] (p403 & 419)**

Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo **-** Former Foreign Minister, former Vice President, former Minister of Local Government, arrested in September 2001 following involvement with G-15 group of dissenters. **[5b] (p8 & 10)**

Mesfin Hagos **-** Former Defence Minister, member of G-15 group of dissenters. Hagos escaped arrest in September 2001 by being out of the country. Leader of the new EPLF-DP. **[1a] (p419) [8b]**

Petros Solomon - Former Minister of Maritime Resources; previously Minister of Foreign Affairs, EPLF military commander and intelligence chief, EPLF political bureau member since 1977. Arrested in September 2001 following involvement with G-15 group of dissenters. **[5b] (p8 & 10)**

Sebhat Ephrem – Minister of Defence **[1a] (p418)**

Seyoum Ogbamichael – President of the ELF-RC. **[1a] (p419)**

Sheikh Mohamed Arafa - Leader of EIJ. **[1a] (p419)**

- **It is more usual for people in Ethiopia and Eritrea to be addressed by the first name. This is reflected in this list and at times in the text of this report.**

ANNEX D

Tribal Groups

Ethnic Groups

[A map of Eritrea showing distribution of ethnic groups is annexed as source document 11]

The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, language, colour, sex, religion, disability, political belief or opinion, or social or economic status or any other factors. **[2]**

Europa 2005 stated that, "The population is fairly evenly divided between Tigrinya-speaking Christians, the traditional inhabitants of the highlands, and the Muslim communities of the western lowlands, northern highlands and east coast". **[1a] (p402)**

The UK Fact Finding Mission to Eritrea stated that, "while there are problems with ethnicity in all areas of the world, Eritrea has no real problem with the individual racial groupings, in fact in comparison to other areas of Africa it is remarkably stable. The source stated that nobody in Eritrea truly believes that a person would be persecuted for being part of any particular Eritrean ethnic group, as this would go against the beliefs of Eritrean unity espoused by the Government". **[3] (p40)**

Languages

Lonely Planet in its guide to Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti published November 2000 stated that, "In theory Tigrinya, Arabic and English are all the official languages of Eritrea. In practice Tigrinya is mainly confined to the highlands, Arabic to the coastal regions and along the Sudanese border and English to the educated urban populations (particularly in Asmara)…Each of the nine ethnic groups speaks its own language…Amharic, a legacy of Ethiopian rule is still widely spoken". **[32] (p334)**

The Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the World published 1993 stated that, "the Eritreans consist of nine ethno-linguistic groups: Rasha'ida, Baria, Kunama, Beja, Tigre, Tigray, Bilin, Saho and Afar". **[31] (p195)**

A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that, prior to independence Amharic "had been used by the Derge regime as the language of education. This 'language of domination', although still widely known and understood in Eritrea, is now generally avoided. While a person would not be shunned as an Amharic speaker, it is known that deportees from Ethiopia were badly thought of if they had not mastered another language for communication as soon as possible. Tigrinya, Arabic and English were

popular choices as these are the most widely spoken. It would be considered taboo for a person to try to converse in Amharic unless there was no alternative". **[3] (p78)**

[Please note that as different people may be known differently to other groups, there may be more than one name for each group. This is indicated where possible.]

Afar/Danakils

Lonely Planet stated that, the "Afars also known as the Danakils, make up 5% and inhabit the long coastal strip stretching from the Gulf of Zula into Djibouti. Predominantly nomadic pastoralists, the people are Muslim, though elements of ancient ancestor-worship still persist". **[32] (p331)**

The World Directory of Minorities published 1997 stated that, "They speak Afar and Arabic". **[6] (p411)**

The Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the World published 1993 stated that, the Afars have been involved in salt mining and "They were also involved in the slave trade practiced by Arabs in this part of Africa, and were famous as a war-like people". **[35] (p19)**

This publication also stated that, "Distinction is made between two ancestor-related groups, the Asaymara ("red") and the Adoymara ("white"). The former is considered of higher status and lived mainly in the interior. Currently both groups are dispersed over Afar territory and the status distinction is less marked". **[31] (p19-21)**

The World Directory of Minorities published 1997 stated that "Afar leaders are highly critical of the EPLF although they were in favour of the freedom enjoyed by Danakalia's Afar regional assembly and Eritrea's promise to provide Humanitarian and medical support to the Afar Front pour la Restoration de l'Unite et la Democratie (FRUD) in Djibouti". **[6] (p411)**

Baria/Nara

Lonely Planet stated that, "The Nara, also known as the Baria, tribes make up 1.5% of the population and inhabit the Barka Valley near the Sudanese border". **[32] (p333)**

The Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the World stated that, "They speak Nara, a Nilotic language. The Baria are Sunni Muslims. They are sedentary agriculturalists. The academic ethnic label 'Baria' (Bareya) has in Amharic has the literal meaning of 'slave', denoting the status of the Baria (and the adjacent Kunamas) in the eyes of their dominant neighbours". **[31] (p97)**

Hedareb/Beja/Beni Amber/Beni Amer

Lonely Planet stated that, “The Hedareb, along with their ‘brother’ tribes the Beni Amer and Beja, make up 2.5% of the population, and inhabit the north-western valleys of Eritrea, straddling the border with Sudan”. **[32] (p331)**

It further stated that, “Most Hedareb are nomadic and travel great distances in search of pasture. The people are Cushitic in origin (probably directly descended from the ancient Beja tribe) and speak mainly Tigre and an ancient Beja language. The Beni Amer are a strongly patriarchal, socially stratified, almost feudal people. Their skills as camel drivers and in raising camels are legendary. Many of the men scarify their cheeks with three short, vertical strokes – the Italians called them the ‘111 tribe’”. **[32] (p331-332)**

Bilen/Bogos

Lonely Planet stated that, “The Bilen inhabit the environs of Keren and make up 2.1% of the population. Cushitic in origin, the Bilen are either sedentary Christian farmers or Muslim cattle rearers”. **[32] (p332)**

The World Directory of Minorities stated that, “The mostly agricultural people comprise two main tribes of about 15,000 each: Bet Teqwe and the Gebre Terqe”. **[6] (p411)**

The Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the World stated that, “They speak Bilin and Tigre, members of the central Cushitic language group. Until the second half of the nineteenth century, they were Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, but since then have shifted to Sunni Islam with a smaller number becoming Roman Catholics”. **[31] (p112)**

Lonely Planet stated that, “Bilen traditional society is organised into kinship groups. The women are known for their brightly coloured clothes and their gold, silver or copper nose-rings which indicate their means and social status. Like the Beja language, Bilen is slowly being replaced by Tigre, Tigrinya and Arabic, due to intermarriage, economic interactions and because Arabic is taught in local schools”. **[32] (p332)**

Kunama - Cultural

Lonely Planet stated that, “The Kunama are Nilotic in origin, and are very dark skinned. They are the original inhabitants of the region” **[32] (p332)**

A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that, “Although little is known of the origin of the Kunama; little is recorded about them, probably because they have no alphabet and, therefore, no recorded history. Many regard them, however, as the very first Eritreans. Today, Kunama children use the Latin alphabet, but are taught in their own language”. **[3] (p41)**

This report further stated that, “Originally, the Kunama were nomads; eventually they settled near the disputed border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Kunama are peaceful, but the ongoing wars between Ethiopia and Eritrea

have been devastating, drastically reducing the tribe's population to roughly 50 - 60,000 people. **[3] (p41)**

It also stated that, "The region of Gash-Barka, home of the Eritrean Kunama, was formerly known as Gash-Setit, so named after the two important rivers of the area. The name change occurred after the Eritrean provinces were changed from 9 to six provinces". **[3] (p41)**

It continued that, "Isolation and a tenacious adherence to tribal customs have enabled the Kunama to retain their traditions, which existed long before the introduction of Christianity and Islam into the area. Living in close harmony with nature and each other, they have survived by excluding the dominant cultures of the outside world". **[3] (p41)**

It also stated that,

> "The Kunama venerate their ancestors and have a special reverence for the elders of the tribe. This respect for their elders allows the tribe to make important decisions, called 'democratic choices', which alway involves two elders. The Kunama work together, designating certain months for special 'events'. September, for example, is the time for harvest; January is the month for repairing houses. Everything is done as a community, each helping the other. Even at funerals, the entire village attends: it is their custom to bid farewell as a group, though children are not allowed to participate". **[3] (p41)**

The Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the World stated that, "Their exogamic clan system still bears the traces of an older system of matrilineal descent". **[31] (p340)**

A British Fact Finding Mission explained in its April 2003 report that, "the Kunama are organised matrilinearly, so that daughters inherit from their mothers instead of sons from their fathers. Women therefore have far more freedom and decision power then women from other ethnic groups". **[3] (p41-42)**

The report further stated that,

> "Kunama marriage customs reveal the tribe's practical yet gentle lifestyle. After much dancing and celebration, the newlyweds spend a few days together, but then the young woman returns to her mother, often for a year or more. During this time, the mother teaches her daughter the role of a wife and mother. This does not mean only learning how to cook and sew, but how to manage finances, how to organise, how to cultivate skills, how to care for a baby and more. By the time the couple are reunited, her husband and his family will have completed the new couple's home". **[3] (p42)**

It also stated that, "For over 50 years, the highlanders in Ethiopia and Eritrea have pushed the Kunama territories to smaller and smaller dimensions. The population density in the Kunama lands are minute in comparison to the

highland areas where most people are living, so as the non Kunama population grows, Kunama land is needed". **[3] (p42)**

And that, "This is broadly in accordance with the 1994 Land Proclamation (Law No. 58/1994). This is the principal piece of legislation regulating land ownership, and stipulates that all land is the property of the state". **[3] (p42)**

Kunama – Treatment

A British Fact Finding Mission reported in April 2003 that, "the Kunama has traditionally relied on the Ethiopian Army when larger and more powerful ethnic neighbours attacked them. For historic reasons, although the majority of the Eritrean population strongly supported Eritrean independence, the Kunama still maintained their support for the Ethiopian army, although there was also support for independence and a number of Kunama fought on the side of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF)". **[3] (p42)**

The same report stated that, "But the perception has always been that the Kunama were the least enthusiastic of the Eritrean peoples with regards to Eritrean independence….'the Kunama people were in fact divided in opinion and had a great respect for the Ethiopians as well as many believed in Eritrea as a separate and independent nation. In the absence of a unifying Kunama political figure all conflicting opinions were heard' stated Gilkes [a consultant on the Horn of Africa]". **[3] (p42)**

It also stated that, "the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) has tried to foster a closer relationship with the Kunama both before and after independence, but the fiercely independent nature of the Kunama leads many Eritreans to believe that the Kunama are pro-Ethiopia, whether this is true or not". **[3] (p42)**

And that, "the Kunama have been mistrusted due to alleged support for Ethiopia in the border war of 1998-2000. However most people in Eritrea tend to dismiss the stories of persecution against the Kunama as being a way that the Ethiopians and supporters of Ethiopia can attack Eritrea". **[3] (p43)**

The USSD Report 2003 noted that:

> "There were reports of government and societal discrimination against the Kunama, one of nine ethnic groups, who reside primarily in the west. Because a Kunama opposition group operated out of Ethiopia and was supported by Ethiopian authorities, some Kunama in the country were suspected of supporting or having sympathies with the Ethiopian Government. There continued to be unconfirmed reports that the Government took land from Kunamas without compensation and gave it to other ethnic groups on the grounds that the land had not been efficiently exploited. There was some societal discrimination against Kunamas because they were seen as ethnically and culturally different from most citizens". **[4d] (p12)**

> The report further noted that "Members of the Kunama ethnic group were detained without charges during the year [2003]". **[4d] (p12)**

UNHCR comment that: "Those Kunama who were detained during 2004 were also released during 2004". **[18b]**

A British Fact Finding Mission report of April 2003 noted Amnesty International believe that the "Kunama are the only ethnic group considered as being likely to have any basis for an asylum claim from the ethnic groups in Eritrea". **[3] (p43)**

The report however further noted that the UK delegation to Asmara was told that "the Government does not discriminate along ethnic lines and that different groups within Eritrea co-exist peacefully". **[3] (p43)**

The report noted that, "the same source added that the Government strives to promote ethnic balance and that is one of its strengths. However, it was explained that the authorities would be likely to react harshly if members aligned to any particular ethnic group politicised issues". The UK delegation was told that "a specific ethnic group such as the Kunama could not seriously cite ethnic persecution in Eritrea". **[3] (p43)**

It further stated that, "there is a long history of conflict between the EPLF/PFDJ (People's Front for Democracy and Justice) and the Kunama.…at least 55 Kunama, administrators and civil servants under the previous regime of Ethiopia, were arrested in 1991 when the EPLF took over for alleged human rights abuses under the Derg, and have not been seen since. None have been released and it is unclear if any have been charged or tried publicly". **[3] (p44)**

The same report stated that,

> "the Kunama have also suffered from extensive land take-overs.…in Barentu.…between 1991 and 1997 some 30,000 Tigreans were moved into the towns and given land/houses by the Government. 'They [the Tigreans] fled on arrival of the Ethiopian troops in 2000 [and the destruction by Ethiopian troops was very precisely targeted at their houses] and I think they have largely returned despite Kunama complaints, [both before and after the war] about the way the fighters were losing lands and property'" as stated by Dr Patrick Gilkes, a consultant on the Horn of Africa". **[3] (p44)**

The report further noted that Gilkes stated probably the two best known Kunama resistance groups are the "Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Eritrean Kunama (DMLEK) and the Eritrean Democratic Resistance Movement - Gash Setit (EDRM)". **[3] (p44)**

The report further quoted that, "the Eritrean Democratic Resistance Movement - Gash Setit (EDRM), which also calls itself "Sawrawi Baito" is led by Ismail Nada and is reportedly close to the current ELF. Some expect them

to merge with the ELF at some point. Nada is a former ELF fighter is said to think along similar lines to leading ELF-RC members". **[3] (p44)**

A British Fact Finding Mission also noted, in April 2003, that: "the Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Eritrean Kunama (DMLEK) is led by Kerneolos Osman and is best known for the material it places on pro-opposition websites. The DMLEK is based in Addis Ababa". **[3] (p44)**

Refugees International in an article dated 18 February 2004 stated that:

> "UNHCR has begun discussions with the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea concerning the possible voluntary return of the Kunama to Eritrea. Repatriation would be the ideal, most durable solution for the refugees; however, there are no concrete plans in place at this time. Eritrean officials insist that the refugees would be welcomed back to Eritrea, but refugees are skeptical of this claim. Many of the Kunama refugees fled Eritrea to avoid having their sons conscripted into the army. 'I came here to save myself and my family,' one refugee told the UN. 'Until things change I do not want to return.' Resettlement in Ethiopia does not appear to be a viable option for the Kunama, and few of the refugees have made efforts to seek relocation in a third country". **[21] (p2)**

Rashaida

Lonely Planet stated that, "The Rashaida are the only true Eritrean nomads. Making up just 0.5% of the population, they roam the northern coasts of Eritrea and Sudan, as well as the southern reaches of the Nubian desert. Like their neighbours the Beja *(related to the Hedareb) they live by raising cattle and are Muslim….Their language is Arabic". **[32] (p333)**

It also stated that, "The Rashaida people are known for their great pride; marriage is only permitted within their own clan. The people are expert goat rearers, as well as merchants and traders along the Red Sea coasts". **[32] (p333)**

Saho

The World Directory of Minorities stated that, "Sandwiched between Afar and Tigre are Saho momads and semi-nomads.…Saho speak local languages but have also used Arabic in commercial dealings and have long been exposed to foreign influence in the form of trade with expanding empires". **[6] (p411)**

The Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the World stated that, "They are Sunni Muslims, with some Ethiopian Orthodox Christians". **[31] (p509)**

Lonely Planet stated that, "Many Saho children (up to the age of 16) wear little leather pouches around their neck, which are full of herbs and spices to ward off evil spirits….The Saho are organised in patrilineal descent groups. The leaders, elected by the male assembly, are known as 'rezantos', and were formerly military chiefs in times of war". **[32] (p331)**

Tigrinya

This guidebook also stated that, “The Tigrinya make up 50% of the Eritrean population and inhabit the densely populated central highlands, extending over the provinces of Seraye, Hamasien and Akele Guzay. The people are sedentary farmers and are overwhelmingly Orthodox Christian, with just a small minority of Muslims, who are better known as Jiberti”. **[32] (p330)**

According to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in a letter dated 10 May 1996, the Tigrinya Jiberti are “Muslims scattered throughout the Christian Highlands who practice Islam but also observe some customs of the Christians among whom they live”. The document also concludes that the Jiberti speak the Tigrinya language and some Arabic. **[10]**

Tigre/Tegre

The World Directory of Minorities stated that, “The Tigre peoples, who represent about one-third of the country’s population, are dominant. Culturally and ethnically they are related to the Beja of Sudan. Claiming Arab origin, their language, Tigre, is Semitic.…Its use is declining under the impact of Tigrinya in Eritrea”. **[6] (p410)**

The Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the World stated that they also speak “Bedawiye and Arabic. They are Sunni Muslims or Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. A Major shift from the latter to the former religion took place during the first half of the nineteenth century which loosened Tigre links with the Ethiopians”. **[31] (p600)**

The World Directory of Minorities goes on to state that, “Their primary occupation is cattle herding. Most are nomadic, however, some have settled by rivers such as the Barka and on state cotton plantations”. **[6] (p410)**

The Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the World noted that “The Tigre include ten major tribal units: Ad Sawra, Ad Sheikh, As Mu’allim, Aflenda, Bet Asgede, Bet Juk, Marya, Mensa, Meshalit and Sabdarat”. **[31] (p600)**

Lonely Planet stated that, “Tigrean society is traditionally hierarchical, with a small aristocracy known as shemagille ruling the masses. When the village leader dies, his power passes to his offspring”. **[32] (p330)**

The Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the World stated that **“**Historically ‘Tigre’ was used to denote a vassal to a ruling stratum claiming descent from the Beni Amer or Saho”. **[31] (p600)**

Eritreans Returning from Sudan

The AI 2003 report stated that: “over 100,000 Eritreans who had lived in Sudan for up to 25 years were offered voluntary repatriation, which many refused, or an alternative option of alien resident status in Sudan. Voluntary

repatriation was suspended by the UNHCR in October 2002 for security reasons. The cessation of refugee status was widely misunderstood to mean that Eritrea was sage for all refugee returns, which was not the case. Many of the long-term refugees in Sudan feared persecution on return on account of their links with the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), a rival to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) which formed the independence government in 1991, or because of conscientious objection to military service. Army deserters during and after the Ethiopian war feared persecution on return. Over 10,000 refugees applied for exemption from the cessation". **[5a]**

ANNEX E

LIST OF SOURCE MATERIAL

[1] Europa Publications:

a. South of the Sahara 2005

b. **Europa World Year Book 2004,** 45th Edition, Volume 1, Europa Publications Ltd, London. 2004

c. EU relations with Eritrea – 27 November 2003

[2] Draft Constitution of Eritrea, Constitutional Commission of Eritrea, Asmara July 1996

[3] Home Office, Report of Home Office fact-finding mission to Eritrea: 4 - 18 November 2002

[4] United States Department of State http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/

a. Eritrea Country Report on Religious Freedom for 2003: 18 December 2003

b. Ethiopia Country Report on Human Rights for 2002: March 2003

c. Eritrea Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2002: March 2003

d. Eritrea Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2003: March 2004

e. Background Note – Eritrea: January 2005

f. Eritrea Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2004: February 2005

[5] Amnesty International http://web.amnesty.org

a. **Eritrea Annual Report 2003** (covers 2002)

b. **Eritrea:** Arbitrary detention of government critics and journalists – 18 September 2002

c. **Ethiopia and Eritrea:** Human Rights Issues in a Year of Armed Conflict, 21 May 1999

d. **Eritrea:** Human Rights Appeal for 10th Independence Anniversary - 19 May 2003

e. **Eritrea:** 28 Jehovah's Witnesses – 18 February 2004

f. **Eritrea:** 'You have no right to ask – Government resists scrutiny on human rights' – 19 May 2004

g. **Eritrea:** Fear of torture – 1 June 2004

h. **Eritrea:** Government resists scrutiny on human rights and calls to end torture and arbitrary detention – 19 May 2004

[6] World Directory of Minorities, Eritrea, Minority Rights Group International, London 1997

[7] Eritrean Nationality Proclamation (Number 21/1992), Gazette of Eritrean Laws, Vol. 2/1992, Number 3, Eritrean Provisional Government

[8] British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News
http://news.bbc.co.uk/
a. Eritrean president sacks dissenters – 11 June 2001
b. Cyber Party challenges Eritrean leaders – 14 January 2002
c. Eritrea rapped for 'military' schooling - 11 January 2004
d. New unity in Eritrean opposition – 15 August 2004
e. Eritrea running out of food aid – 21 February 2005
f. Eritrean jail deaths 'overblown' – 8 November 2004
g. Religious persecution in Eritrea – 17 September 2004
h. Eritrea imposes fuel rations – 22 September 2004
i. Petrol sales suspended in Eritrea – 15 October 2004
j. Soldiers demobilised in Eritrea – 2 March 2004
k. Asmara university stays shut – 20 September 2001
l. Students daring jailbreak in Eritrea – 9 August 2002
m. Fresh Annan push for Horn peace – 4 July 2004
n. Concern at Horn troop deployment – 17 February 2005

[9] Die Volker Afrikas Atlas, Map of ethnic groups of Eritrea, Geographischer Dienst, Germany 1998

[10] Foreign and Commonwealth Office 10 May 1996, 3 March 2000, 26 April 2005

[11] Global Edge http://globaledge.msu.edu **Eritrea - Government** – using CIA World Factbook 2003 and USSD Country Background Note (March 2004)

[12] The International Lesbian and Gay Association
http://www.ilga.info/Information/Legal_survey/ilga_world_legal_survey%20introduction.htm (ILGA) - World Legal Survey Eritrea, 1999, Date accessed 3 March 2004

[13] The AfroCentric Experience – Decades of assistance and cooperation http://www.swagga.com/news14.htm **-** 2 July 2004

[14] Letter from the Eritrean Embassy - 27 January 2004

[15] Letter from the British Embassy in Addis Ababa - 2 July 2001

[16] Afrol News
a. SA, Benin best, Eritrea worst on press freedom – 21 October 2003"
http://www.afrol.com/printable_article/10256
b. Torture fears for Eritrean Jehovah's Witnesses – 20 February 2004
http://www.afrol.com/articles/11334

[17] Reporters sans Frontieres – Eritrea – 2003 Annual Report - 2 May 2003

[18] UNHCR
a. Position on return of rejected asylum seekers to Eritrea – January 2004

b. UNHCR comments to the Advisory Panel on Country Information on the October 2004 Home Office Country Report for Eritrea – 8 March 2005

[19] Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)
http://www.irinnews.org/
a. Eritrea: Sudanese refugees living in appalling conditions NGO - 23 January 2004
b. Passports of government critics revoked - 26 September 2001
c. Eritrea-Sudan: Biggest convoy of returning refugees this year - 12 March 2004
d. Special Report on Returnees - 22 February 2002
e. Opposition alliance says it has military wing – 1 May 2003
f. Eritrea: Slight improvement, but humanitarian situation still grave - 17 March 2004
g. Eritrea: Hundreds of thousands of children living in extreme poverty – UNICEF – 20 July 2004
h. ETHIOPIA-ERITREA: UNMEE allowed direct Addis-Asmara flights – 20 August 2004
i. Relief agencies appeal for $157m for 2005 – 24 November 2004
j. Eritrea: $4.38m sought for drought affected people – 4 February 2005
k. Ethiopia-Eritrea: UNMEE deputy representative appointed – 18 November 2004
l. Gov't says HIV prevalence stabilising – 21 October 2004
o. Ship delivers donated wheat to Massawa port – 6 December 2004
p. Peace process remains difficult, says Annan – 5 January 2004
q. Chronology of key events in 2004 – 5 January 2005

[20] The Economist Intelligence Unit
http://db.eiu.com/report_dl.asp?mode=pdf&eiu_issue_id=1847085584
Country Profile Eritrea - 2004

[21] Refugees International
http://www.refugeesinternational.org/cgi-bin/ri/index
Forgotten People: The Kunama of Eritrea and Ethiopia – 18 February 2004

[22] Global IDP
http://www.db.idproject.org
Eritrea: deadlock in demarcation process delays IDP return – 6 August 2004

[23] Malta Media
http://www.maltamedia.com/news/2004/In/printer_1905.shtml
UNHCR did not oppose the repatriation of Eritreans, Justice Ministry insists – 23 May 2004

[24] The Federation of American Scientists
http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/ism.htm **Islamic Salvation Movement (EIJM)** – 29 October 1999

[25] InfoPlease http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/AO858026.html **Eritrea - History**

[26] United States Committee for Refugees (USCR)
http://www.refugees.org/
a. Country Report - Eritrea 2003 (for 2002)
b. Country Report - Eritrea 2000 (for 1999)
c. World Refugee Survey 2004 - Eritrea

[27] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - OCHA –
http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/
Eritrea: Humanitarian Update 5 March 2004

[28] CIA Factbook – Online (updated 27 January 2005)
http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html

[29] Human Rights Watch: http://www.hrw.org/
a. Eritrea Report 2003 (covering 2002)
b. The Horn Of Africa War: Mass Expulsions and the Nationality Issue (June 1998 – April 2002) – January 2003
http://hrw.org/reports/2003/ethioerit0103/ Date accessed 2 March 2004
c. Eritrea Report 2004 (covering 2003)
d. Eritrea Report 2005 (covering 2004)

[30] Gabeel
http://www.gabeel.com/ARTICLES/ENGLSIH/Nair_ENA_National_Conference_18 nov_03.htm - 'Has the Eritrean National Alliance an idea about National Conference?' 18 November 2003

[31] The Encyclopaedia of the Peoples of the World – Edited by Amiram Gonen. Henry Holt Reference Books. 1993.

[32] Lonely Planet – Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti. By Frances Linzee Gordon. 2000.

[33] Freeglossary.com
http://www.freeglossary.com/Use_of_death_penalty_worldwide – Use of death penalty worldwide 2004

[34] Awate Website/Gedab News http://www.awate.com/
a. ELF-RC (Kassel) elects an Interim Leadership Report dated 10 August 2003

[35] USAID http://www.usaid.gov/index.html
Country Profile HIV/AIDS Eritrea – May 2003

[36] Christian Partners in Africa –
http://www.cpafrica.org.uk/news_detail.asp?twoID=159
Eritrea and Ethiopia on brink of war – 14 December 2004

[37] News 24.com
http://www.news24.com
a. Eritrea: Huge food shipment – 29 October 2004
b.Eritrea boycotts neighbour – 5 October 2004

[38] Zete Delina
http://zete.delina.org/zete/346.asp?quSri=346
Eritrean authorities deny reports 20 died in prison 'incidents' – 7 November 2004

[39] SPLMToday.com
http://splmtoday.com/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=5629
Eritrea-Ethiopia claims commission rules: report – 21 December 2004

[40] Freedom House – Freedom in the World
http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2004/countryratings/eritrea.htm
Eritrea - Overview

[41] Keesings Record of World Events – January 2005

[42] Africa Home
http://www.africahome.com/annews/categories/ethiopia/EpFplFVElurfllRnta.shtml
UN confirms Eritrea's release of Ethiopian prisoners of war – November 2004

[43] Globalgayz
http://www.globalgayz.com/eritrea-news.html
Eritrea: Asmara Military Police arrested 6 gay men in October – 5 November 2003

Return to Contents