

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

IN

ETHIOPIA

REPORT

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Violations of Human Rights in ETHIOPIA

The attached document 'ETHIOFIA: THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION' has been prepared by Amnesty International to provide information publicly on the human rights violations which are currently taking place in Ethiopia. This is an extensively revised version of earlier reports.

Amnesty Internation is a worldwide human rights movement which is independent of any government, political faction, ideology, economic interest or religious creed. It works for the release of men and women imprisoned anywhere for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin, language or religion. The organization opposes torture and the death penalty, and advocates fair and early trial of all political prisoners. Amnesty International further seeks observance throughout the world of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

AI has worked on human rights violations in Ethiopia since the organization was founded in 1961. Under the military government which took power in 1974, AI has constantly drawn the government's attention to international concern about the increasingly serious violations of human rights in Ethiopia, but has not received any positive response from Ethiopian authorities.

This report has two purposes. The first is to describe in detail how human rights are violated in Ethiopia in order to increase international awareness of the pattern of human rights violations, which is not always clear from accounts of the current situation in Ethiopia. The second purpose is to request that anyone concerned about Ethiopia should take any steps possible to publicize and use this information in such a way that it could lead to an improvement of the human rights situation. The four main improvements called for by AI are:

- (i) The practise of political murder by government officials and opposition groups should be terminated, as the first step towards restoring the rule of law.
 - (ii) The use of torture of political detainees should be abolished.
- (iii) The Ethiopian government should permit an immediate investigation of prison conditions of political prisoners by an international humanitarian organization such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, which could make recommendations to the government on how prison conditions could be improved.
- (iv) There should be a review of all cases of political detention with a view to either releasing detainees unconditionally or giving them a fair trial in accordance with international judicial standards.

^{*} Details of AI's work throughout the world may be found in the AI Annual Report for 1977, available from any AI national section or the International Secretariat (price UK 52).

ETHIOPIA: THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

INTRODUCTION

Amnesty International's concerns in Ethiopia are:-

- (i) The destruction of the rule of law, through the establishment of military tribunals empowered to impose death sentences and the creation of 'neighbourhood courts' with similar powers, and through the government policy of taking 'revolutionary measures' (i.e. killing without trial) against political opponents.
- (ii) The widespread extra-judicial killings of suspected political opponents, including the mass murder of political detainees.
- (iii) Largescale and arbitrary arrests and detention (often long-term) of suspected political opponents.
- (iv) Extremely harsh conditions of political detention, which have led to the deaths of a number of detainees.
- (v) The common use of torture against suspected political opponents, to intimidate, interrogate and 'punish'.
- (vi) The denial of many other fundamental human rights.

Other serious issues, such as atrocities committed against civilians in the areas of armed conflict and the massacre of prisoners of armed conflict, are properly the concern of the United Nations. Over one quarter million Ethiopians have become refugees in other countries as a result of political disturbances. Currently, there is armed conflict against the regime in 10 out of 14 provinces, and over a third of Ethiopia's territory is in the control of secessionist or opposition movements. Political killings of particular government supporters by opposition groups have also taken place (especially in Addis Ababa and Asmara) at the same time as reprisals and killings by government security officials of suspected political opponents occur on a very much larger scale. AI condemns all such killings or taking of hostages, whether carried out by the government security forces or opposition organizations, as abhorrent. However, AI considers that the government's policy of mass killing of political opponents and largescale and arbitrary reprisals cannot be justified by the level of opposition to the regime.

AI was also very concerned at human rights violations in Ethiopia under the government of Emperor Haile Selassie. AI took several actions in response to the government's use of long-term detention without trial, arbitrary arrest on political grounds, unfair judicial process in political trials, torture, and the imposition of the death penalty. AI also appealed

for the improvement of conditions of detention. However, since the Provisional Military Administration Council (Derg) took power in September 1974, violations of human rights have become worse, especially with regard to extra-judicial killings committed by government security officers. In mid-1977 AI made a submission to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights detailing the persistent pattern of gross and systematic human rights violations which has developed in Ethiopia. The situation had further deteriorated by the end of 1977.

These actions are documented in an AI document titled 'Amnesty International Action on Human Rights in Ethiopia 1961-1974', August 1977 (AI Index AFR 25/04/77)

1. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RULE OF LAW

Military rule by decree of the Provisional Military Administration Council (Derg) began formally on 12 September 1974. The Special Penal Code Proclamation of 16 November 1974 empowered special military tribunals to impose death penalties and long prison terms on civilians for treason, armed rebellion and a range of other offences. For example the death penalty can be imposed on anyone who "intentionally impairs the defensive power of the State" (Article 5), or who "intentionally causes famine, an epidemic or distress (if this leads to loss of life)" (Article 27). The Proclamation thus further extended the wide ranging and harsh decrees of the previous Penal Code.

The death penalty is mandatory if the offence is committed "during or under threat of internal disturbance, civil or foreign war, or during states of emergency or martial law...". Persons convicted by these special courts martial have no right of appeal, though all sentences of death and imprisonment for over 10 years are reviewed by the head of state. The Code is retroactive to the beginning of military rule and cases which "might endanger public order or affect public morals" may be heard in camera.

This Code was severely criticized by the International Commission of Jurists in December 1974 which expressed "grave concern" about the likeli-hood of defendants securing fair trial. Amnesty International also sent a comment to the Ethiopian government on aspects of the penal code, and on the courts martial observed by the Amnesty International mission in January 1975. Objections focus on:

(i) the retroactivity of the law, which is contrary to Article 11(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the very principle of legality;

(ii) the trial of civilians by military tribunals (some of whose members have no legal training), thus destroying the independence of the judiciary;

(iii) the absence of a right of appeal, which is contrary to Article 14, section 5, of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

- (iv) the vague and general nature of the offence;
- (v) the lack of definition of what constitutes circumstances which render the death penalty mandatory, such as "threat of internal disturbance".

The actual practice of military courts however varied. After the large scale arrests of former ministers and civil servants in 1974, early trials on charges of corruption were promised. No such trial ever opened, and initial investigations were abandoned in favour of detaining suspects indefinitely without trial. * A small number of persons have been tried by military tribunal. In some such trials in early 1976 defendants were allowed their own lawyers or state legal aid, and relatives could attend the trial. However, in general, trials were in camera, defendants were denied legal representation, and judgements and sentences appeared to be arbitrary. In one well-known case in 1975, two Jromo officers, General Tadesse Birhu (whose case had been taken up by AI in the 1967 'Galla Trial') and Colonel Haile Ragassa were sentenced to prison terms by a military tribunal, on charges of joining a counter-revolutionary organization but the terms were changed to death penalties by the chairman of the Derg, and both were executed. By 1977 it was fairly certain that military tribunals rarely functioned, for even this unsatisfactory legal process had been replaced by 'revolutionary justice'. In 1977, announcements that 'counter-revolutionaries' have been sentenced by a "special tribunal" almost certainly means that 'revolutionary justice' has been carried out without trial.

On 30 September 1975, a State of Emergency was declared. This followed extensive opposition activity by the marxist-leninist Ethiopian Feople's Revolutionary Farty (EPRF), which announced its formation in August 1975. The Emergency lasted until 5 December 1975. Under the terms of this decree, it was made illegal to assemble or demonstrate without permission, stop work, go-slow, strike, "prepare, write, keep or distribute anti-government pamphlets, placards, posters", "utter any unlawful words (such as poems or songs) in public or any other place", "encourage, urge, issue orders, share opinions, or make people to stop work", or "be absent from work without satisfactory reason". Security forces were also empowered to take "appropriate and final measures against anyone disturbing

^{*}see however page 19, concerning the killing of 59 prominent detainees on 23 November 1974.

In July 1976, further efforts were made by the Derg to counter increasing political opposition and cope with economic problems caused by drought and famine disrupting food supplies, which were blamed on profiteering traders or counter-revolutionaries. This followed the proclamation by the Derg in May of a political program - the 'National Democratic Revolution' - aimed at countering clandestine anti-government political mobilisation by the EPRP and non-marxist Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU). The Derg created the Provisional Organization for Mobilizing Organizations Affairs (POMOA), to establish a mass political party - the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (known as Mei'son).

On 5 July 1976 certain articles of the Penal Code were amended to include with the range of capital offences the following:

- (i) "causing grave damage to the economy" hoarding grain or consumer commodities, overcharging, preventing grain or other commodities reaching the public, destroying public vehicles, damaging government property, manufacturing, making or using fake currency.
- (ii) "committing anti-revolutionary activities" the death penalty is the maximum for "anyone who prevents or discourages, directly or indirectly, farmers or other workers from following the various decrees to organize themselves and puts obstacles in the way of revolutionary progress; any person who establishes contact with anti-revolution and anti-people organizations, within and outside the country, and sympathizes with them or assists them; any person who leaves the country illegally or attempts to leave, by betraying the people and the country."
- (iii) the death penalty may be imposed for taking bribes or enriching oneself illegally.

These amendments created offences that were even more vague than in the 1974 Code, such as "hoarding" and "sympathizing" with anti-revolution or "anti-people" organizations. Penalties were increased for certain offences under the 1974 Penal Code such as "disseminating 'subversive

information or insimutions calculated to demoralize the public and to undermine its confidence or its will to resist", "culpable negligence resulting in the weakening of the defensive power of the state or creating misery, want, famine, disease or distress", and failure to comply with decrees promulgated to implement the Derg's motto "Ethiopia Tikdem" (Ethiopia first).

In effect the July 1976 amendment brought under liability of judicial execution any persons whose opinions or alleged political affiliations, as defined by the Derg and military tribunals, were opposed to the Derg. Under this new measure a number of rural and urban traders were arrested, some were executed and others imprisoned. It is not known if the anti-corruption article was widely implemented, though according to one report, a leading Derg member named Major Abdu Salaam, was executed (or possibly killed without trial) after alleged corruption, shortly after the decree was implemented. The second article of the decree was aimed more directly at active political opposition elements, particulary the EPRP.

The measure proved inadequate to reduce increasingly widespread and violent opposition, and on 9 October 1976, the urban dwellers associations (kebelle), which has been created in the urban land nationalization and administration reorganization measures of July 1975 were empowered to set up judicial tribunals for dealing with certain lesser offences, at a lower judicial level than military tribunals (which had by now totally superseded civil courts in criminal cases and much civil litigation). These tribunals have no members with legal training, do not adhere to any concept of an independent judiciary - since they are appointed by and from the ranks of non-elected kebelle leaders - and from the start, they followed no acceptable judicial processes. Their orders are carried out by the civilian guards attached to each kebelle. (There are currently 294 in Addis Ababa, covering the whole city.) Despite the largescale arrests and murders of alleged EFRP members in late 1976, the political opposition increased further in 1977, and led to new measures decided by the Derg and Meison leaders. After a power-struggle within the Derg resulted in the killing of the head of state and other Derg members of different factions, the new head of state Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam ordered that 'revolutionary justice' should be administered by soldiers and administration officials and their armed supporters. The Revolution was to 'move from the defensive to the offensive' and orders were given in Addis Ababa to 'cleanse the city of counter-revolutionaries'. At mass government rallies, Derg leaders urged their supporters to liquidate all those who have opposed the revolution. The administration of 'revolutionary justice' involved the shooting

on sight by soldiers of alleged 'counter-revolutionaries', summary trials by kebelle tribunals, and arbitrary killings by people's militia, kebelle guards, and newly recruited 'revolutionary workers defence squads'. From the kebelle tribunal there is no right of appeal, and death sentences passed by kebelle tribunals have been reportedly carried out immediately by kebelle guards.

The powers of kebelle officials were extended also to the issuing of "identity cards" (with a parallel system of identity papers being issued by pro-Derg political cadres), which everybody must carry and show when challenged, both in movement within the kebelle at night, and in movement between different kebelles at night. Kebelle guards patrol at nights, or set up checkpoints. The system is intended to identify all persons in the city to pro-government local leaders, who search for 'counter-revolutionary elements' and administer 'revolutionary justice' to them. Soldiers and kebelle guards from time to time carry out house-to-house searches for alleged 'counter-revolutionaries' in conjunction with military personnel. The tribunals also punish people who fail to attend government rallies, by fining them up to Ethiopian \$50, denying rights to use the kebelle cooperative shop, or accusing them of being 'counter-revolutionaries'.

This system of 'revolutionary justice' is also open to abuse since there are no legal safeguards protecting the rights of citizens, and kebelle officials are not accountable for their actions. It is reported that people have been killed by kebelle leaders as a result of personal enmities, for corrupt reasons, or on the unsubstantiated secret report of an informer.

After the 'revolutionary measure' (i.e. summary killing) of the vice-chairman of the Derg, Colonel Atnafu Abate, on 11 November 1977, the Derg chairman stated 'it is an historical obligation to clean up vigilantly using the revolutionary sword' (13 November 1977, Ethiopia Radio). The following day he stated 'your struggle should be demonstrated by spreading red terror in the camp of reactionaries. Turn the white terror of reactionaries into red terror'. Since around August however, the pro-Derg political organization Meison, which was reportedly responsible for urging the Derg onto extreme measures against the marxist-leninist EPRP, had come into serious conflict with the Derg. Over 70 of their leaders were arrested, killed, or fled the country, and a purge of Mei'son members throughout Addis Ababa and elsewhere began, under the control of the new dominant pro-Derg political group called Seded (Revolutionary Flame). Political killings became widespread in late November and early December 1977, with

an increasingly arbitrary nature, but focusing on Mei'son members, EPRP and EDU supporters, Eritreans, etc. By mid-December 1977, any semblance to the rule of law had totally disappeared. The situation is also confused by reported internecine killings within opposition groups, and non-political murders for robbery or personal reasons, in addition to killings by political opposition groups. In other parts of Ethiopia excluding Eritrea, the nationalization and redistribution of land, which began in March 1975, led to the creation of new local administration structures - peasants association - which came to be dominated by Mei'son political cadres in some regions. These associations also have their armed guards - the 'people's militia' - and judicial tribunals which function in similar ways to kebelles.

The political conflict in the rural areas is dominated by armed guerilla movements fighting a 'nationalist struggle' and advocating secession of large areas where particular ethnic groups live. Such movements in the south and south-east are the Oromo Liberation Front, the Western Somali Liberation Front, and there are smaller movements among the Sidamo, Bale, Gurage, etc. In the north, (excluding Eritrea) there is the Tigre People's Liberation Front, and in the east, the Afar Liberation Front, In addition, the Ethiopian Democratic Union has a guerilla army in Begem (operating from inside Sudan) which seeks to overthrow the Derg, while the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Army (associated with the urban-based EPRP) has a small force in Tigre, likewise fighting the Derg, but from an opposed ideological position. There is minimal armed opposition to the Derg in Gemu Goffa, Illubabor, Kaffa and Shoa. In all these areas of conflict. there have been Ethiopian government reports of 'mopping-up operations of counter-revolutionaries and bandits' which refer to killings by the army and local people's militia. In such conflicts many atrocities have taken place, including the destruction of whole villages accused of harbouring guerrilla (especially in the Ogaden, Harrar and Bale), killing of prisoners of armed conflict, taking and killing of hostages, as well as pillage and rapine. With the attempt to conscript all adult males into the people's militia for the fighting in the Ogaden and Eritrea, there has been resultant economic chaos in many rural areas. The Ethiopian News Agency on 19 October 1977 stated that 40 million Ethiopian dollars worth of crops had rotted in fields - this being blamed along with educational disruption and other kinds of instability on counter-revolutionaries.

In Eritrea the State of Emergency imposed under the former government has continued in force, with the same kind of atrocities against civilians,

use of torture, and arbitrary killing of alleged supporters of the secessionist movements, as under Emperor Haile Selassie's rule. The two major secessionist movements are the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which during 1977 extended their control to all Eritrea except the major towns, which were also subject to attack. These movements have, according to reliable reports, established new administrative structures in the territory they hold, and treat prisoners humanely. One well-informed writer sums up a widely-accepted analysis of the human rights situation in Eritrea as follows:-

"Reports in Eritrea have been chillingly consistent over the past years, the accounts telling of civilian massacres, martial law, executions without trial, widespread political arrest and torture of suspected dissidents, and random atrocities apparently designed to instill fear in the general populace." (Dan Connell, The Nation, New York, vol. 224.11, March 1977).

In Ethiopian-held areas, tribunals exist to try people charged with political offences, with similar disregard for fair judicial process as elsewhere in Ethiopia. Host people arrested on political grounds are however detained indefinitely without trial and nearly all (if not all) are tortured. Those in custody have no legal protection but are liable to killing. Political killings by secessionist forces of particular pro-government leaders are followed by reprisal killings which are arbitrary and on a large scale. An example is the random killing of 50 persons after a military officer was assassinated in October 1975.

2. POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT

The progressive destruction of the rule of law, as mentioned above, has taken place in a situation of escalating armed conflict in most urban and rural areas of Ethiopia. The armed forces, military police, Public Security Forces, the Derg's secret security force, people's militias, workers revolutionary defence squads, and kebelle guards, have over this period arrested and detained very large numbers of people on political grounds, named as alleged 'counter revolutionaries', 'reactionaries', 'anarchists', 'feudalists', 'outlaws', bandits' etc., according to the propaganda style at the time. Arrests have occurred almost continually since the Derg took power in September 1974, but there have also been a number of large-scale arrests, sometimes involving hundreds of people at a time. Almost all are denied trial, and are subject to detention without any form of judicial safeguards. Many have been interrogated under torture, or 'punished' by cruel and degrading treatment. Many were killed, a few

have died from illness or maltreatment, and a small number have been freed. An AI estimate of 8000 political prisoners being held in March 1977 was without doubt a considerable underestimate. Since then political disturbances have led to very large-scale arrests, and the figure of 30,000 people arrested since 1974, as estimated by the secretary general of the Ethiopia Teachers Association (who fled Ethiopia after a period of detention in 1977), is probably not greatly exaggerated. The rise in the prison population of Akaki prison during 1976 may be taken as an indication of the magnitude of recent political arrests: In March 1976 the number of prisoners held there was officially around 2,800. Less than 100 were political detainees. By late 1976 the total prison population was thought to be 6,000, with a massive influx of new political detainees, including women and girls, and many students. All prisons, police stations and military camps hold political detainees. Large numbers of persons have also been detained in Eritrea on political grounds.

No international organization has been given access to political prisoners in Ethiopia since 1974 and the Derg does not publish any information about detainees. Relatives of political detainees are usually afraid of informing the outside world, or even friends, since their fears of reprisal are very real. This may be judged from the situation which became quite common in 1976, for relatives (even women and young children) to be arrested in place of someone sought by the security forces, if he or she was not to be found. Even Ethiopians who escape from Ethiopia, or seek asylum while abroad on a government mission or scholarship, are often afraid to contact Amnesty International, despite the organization's policy of never revealing its source of information without the informant's permission, and of not naming individual prisoners where they might suffer from reprisals. Thus, it is extremely difficult to document political imprisonment in Ethiopia. Al's confidential list of prisoners contains less than 400 names, who are a small fraction of those who have been detained on political grounds, representing mainly those who are known to people outside the country. A small number of political detainees have been released by the Derg, but several hundred remain in detention since 1974 and early 1975 and many thousands have been arrested since. What can be done however, is to describe the various categories of people subject to political detention, with examples to illustrate the situations which face them, and some indication of the extent of the practice in each category.

- (i) Emperor Haile Selassie and his immediate family, including children, grandchildren and close relatives by marriage. Nearly all the men in this category were senior officials in the government. The former Emperor died on 27 August 1975; reportedly he was poisoned and buried in the Palace. No doctor's death certificate was made, nor was his body returned to relatives for burial. He had reportedly made a good recovery after an operation, shortly before his death after almost a year's detention without charge or trial.
- (ii) Prominent persons in the former government such as ministers, detained in 1974, and many others detained later, such as civil servants, teachers, university lecturers, businessmen etc., suspected of sympathizing with opposition movements.
- (iii) Senior armed forces officers under the former government and other soldiers (including members of the Derg itself) suspected of 'subversion'.
- (iv) Many Eritreans (both in Eritrea and other parts of Ethiopia) who are suspected of being in league with the Eritrean liberation movements because of their ethnic origin. This applies also to members of other ethnic groups among whom secessionist movements exist (e.g. Oromo, Afar, Somalis etc.).
- (v) Leaders of various associations with rejected reorganization and purging by the Derg students, the Ethiopian Teachers Association, the Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions, womens' associations, Ethiopian Airline workers, etc.
- (vi) Several priests and bishops, including the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, arrested on 18 February 1976 and deposed contrary to ecclesiastical procedures.
- (vii) Alleged members of the EFRP, many of whom are under the age of 18 and as young as 9 or 10 years. These are currently the largest category of detainees by far.
- (viii) People arrested by members of the 'people's militias' in the rural areas, or the <u>kebelle</u> guards or 'revolutionary defence squads' in the towns, often on the slightest pretext or at random.
- (ix) Among the political detainees are female relatives of the former Emperor, the wives, daughters, and mothers of former government ministers and other prominent people, many of whom have themselves been detained, executed or have fled the country. It is often said that they are 'hostages' against the behaviour of their male relatives. Women and girls are also often detained even though they are known by those arresting them to have no political significance, other then that their husband.

- father or brother is 'wanted' by the security forces on political grounds. This is the case for example of 25 girls aged 12 to 19 held in Akaki prison. It is common knowledge that if a person wanted by security officials is not found, a relative, even a child or a mother nursing a child, is often taken instead. Such detention is both arbitrary and contrary to any principle of legal liability as regards the alleged offences of other persons. In both cases women are arrested as if implicated in their menfolk's alleged political offences which is both arbitrary and extra-judicial. These women have not generally held any office of authority or been directly involved in political processes or activities.
- (x) Those returning to Ethiopia from abroad, or Ethiopians with contacts abroad, are liable to be suspected of having connections with foreign based opposition groups, and of being branded as 'imperialists' and 'counter-revolutionaries'.
- (xi) Arrests and political murders are committed or condoned by security officials on an increasing scale following any event which threatens the regime, such as the political killing of a government official by opposition elements, or any major expression of political opposition (whether violent or non-violent) to the regime's actions.

3. CONDITIONS OF DETENTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

The prison conditions about which Amnesty International has the most reliable and detailed information are those prevailing at Akaki prison, the Menelik Palace (now the Derg's headquarters), the Fourth Army Division Headquarters, and some police stations in Addis Ababa. This information relates to different categories of prisoners, and especially those prisoners who are best known in Ethiopia and outside. They are a small percentage of the total number of prisoners detained, and their conditions of detention are better in many respects than the conditions under which 'unknown' political prisoners are held in other prisons. Medical treatment, for example, is not availabe to the majority of political or criminal prisoners in Ethiopia, and prison conditions are generally very poor. Well-known people are less likely to be tortured, and more likely to receive a proper food supply from relatives outside the prison. The International Committee of the Ked Cross visited many political prisoners in Ethiopia in late 1974, and prison conditions then improved slightly for a time. Political prisoners were then permitted to have books, radios and newspapers, correspondence with their relatives outside, though the conditions of overcrowding, poor sanitation and health did not improve.

Conditions have deteriorated seriously since then, and the International Committee of the Red Cross has not been permitted further access, according to reports.

1. The women political prisoners held in Akaki Prison Several female relatives of former Emperor Haile Selassie and his government ministers were arrested in 1974, at first under house arrest. In September 1975 they were suddenly taken away to Akaki Prison in Addis Ababa, where they have been since, without trial or charge. On 1 March 1976 Dr Meyer-Lie* visited Akaki Prison where the women prisoners were held. This was with the written permission of the Derg and after discussions with the Director of the Ethiopian Prisons Authority and the Minister of the Interior. His visit was sponsored by a Swedish humanitarian organization concerned about political prisoners in Ethiopia.

The women detainees were held in a former clinic, a white stone house with cement floor and bars on the windows, the total area being 5×10 metres. The building had two rooms, the larger 5 x 6 metres containing 30 to 35 women, the other room, about 5 x 4 metres, with about 15 members of the former royal family. Neither room had beds, only mattresses (provided by prisoners' relatives) spread out on the floor, and no other furniture or heating arrangements. Each room had a primitive toilet and shower. Dr Meyer Lie was only permitted to ask a few questions in the presence of a prison official, and could not carry out any medical examinations. One woman told him that before he came people had cleaned and disinfected the room, which had taken away the terrible stench. She said the worst problem was that they were forbidden to communicate with their relatives outside the prison. (Criminal prisoners, it should be noted, are allowed weekly visits from their relatives.) The women received food each day from their relatives outside, who were paid 120 Ethiopian dollars per month, cut to 50 dollars in May 1977, in compensation for the confiscation of their property or loss of government salary to provide them with food, brought once a day by a relative who was not allowed to see the prisoner. A few books, magazines, and materials for needlework and knitting were also permitted. Visits from priests were not allowed.

when Dr Meyer Lie visited Ethiopia again in November 1976 he was not permitted to visit the prisoners. By then prison conditions had deteriorated and during 1976 no visits from relatives were allowed, though after Dr Meyer Lie's first visit, the women detainees were allowed to write a short note on a tiny slip of paper to their relatives once a week. From other sources Dr Mayer Lie learnt that the rooms in which they were held were infested with rats, lice and cockroaches and the overcrowding in the

Dr Meyer Lie, a Swedish citizen, is a former director of Ethiopia's medical services.

larger room had increased with a total of almost 100 women held there. Under those conditions sanitation and hygiene also seriously deteriorated and their personal morale too. Hore girls had been detained and a shed of wood with a zinc roof had been constructed to hold 25 girls aged between 12 and 19, arrested when their menfolk were not found by the soldiers searching for them. None of the women has had a full medical examination during detention. It is reported that there are delays in obtaining a doctor's visit and in getting medication prescribed. Their general condition of health and morale deteriorated seriously in 1976, and many suffer from nervous tension, high blood pressure and other complaints from before the time when they were detained. One 83 year old woman who is a diabetic, was taken to hospital in 1976 reportedly suffering from nervous exhaustion and Ijegayehu Asfa-Wossen, 42 year old grand-daughter of former Emperor Haile Selassie, was taken to the police hospital on 31 January 1977. She was reportedly suffering from extreme dehydration and was in a poor condition for intestinal section surgery. She died a few days later, and it appears that her poor conditions of detention contributed to her illness and subsequent death. Other detainees were very thin and their health was deteriorating. Some suffer severely from psychological ailments which are exacerbated by their conditions of detention. In this state of physical deprivation and very low morale, it is feared that many of the older and weaker women will eventually succumb to fatal illness. It is generally thought that the Derg will not release them, that they could be executed at any time - indeed there have been rumours that the Derg was considering executing them, e.g. in September 1975, February and March 1977, but that the Derg may prefer to let them die by neglect in prison. They are in a very poor state to survive their difficult conditions of detention.

2. The men prisoners at the Memelik Palace About 250 men are held in two rooms of the old wine cellar in the former Memelik Palace, in Addis Ababa. Prisoners include those arrested in 1974 (relatives of the Emperor, government ministers and their deputies, many Eritreans, members of the armed forces, etc.) and others arrested since, including students, businessmen, civil servants, more Eritreans, priests, and armed forces officers.

The cellar is very damp and cold, with virtually no ventilation or light. Prisoners are hardly able to read and study long. It is underground and prisoners are allowed outside in shifts, for 15-30 minutes each day. There is a toilet and shower for each room. The rooms are infested with lice and rats. The detainees are occasionally permitted to send a short message out to their relatives who bring in food each day. Families of prisoners are only allowed to see their relatives two or three times a year.

Many of the men are suffering from these harsh conditions, especially with eye troubles due to the bad lighting, chest and breathing complaints, rheumatism, intestinal and digestive problems, including chronic diarrhoea. Several are also suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure and nervous conditions, but it is feared that some might be also suffering from more serious illnesses such as tuberculosis. They receive medical treatment. but there are often delays in receiving the doctor's visit or medicines. It now seems extremely unlikely that these prisoners will be brought to, trial and there are fears that they could all die in detention. The dangers are two-fold: those who become very ill, either because of some pre-existing ailment being exacerbated by prison conditions, or because of an ailment contracted in detention, do not stand much chance of receiving adequate medical treatment. Seven cases are known to AI of men dying in detention in a seriously ill condition. The second danger is that it is feared that if the Derg were about to be overthrown and its members killed, they would order the massacre of the remnants of the old regime before they themselves were killed. There have been a number of rumours received by Amnesty International, in 1975, 1976 and 1977, that all the well-known political prisoners were about to be killed. While rumours abound in Addis Ababa there is often some truth in them and it is likely that the notion has been discussed, or even planned by the Derg, even though so far such an atrocity has not yet been perpetrated.

- 3. Prisoners in the Fourth Army Division Headquarters in Addis Ababa From the testimony of a detainee known to AI who was arrested in April 1976 and held for four months, it appears that there were then about 200 detainees held here. He was in one room holding 56 detainees, mostly actors and theatre workers, arrested after a demonstration. They were allowed to take in their own beds, and had some books and magazines. They were only allowed to go to the toilet twice in the day, at 6pm and 6am, but at other times they had to use bottles left in the cell, which very rapidly became full and overflowed. Some of the detainees received medical treatment outside the prison. Those who made special requests or refused to obey the orders of the guards were severaly punished. By 1977 the prison was reportedly extremely overcrowded, with more than 500 detainees.
- 4. Prisoners at the Third Police Station in Addis Ababa From the testimony of London Daily Express reporter Peter Mason, who was detained for 3 days in May 1977, it is clear that conditions at this detention centre are similar to the Fourth Division. This police station is the headquarters of the Ethiopian police. Mr Mason was held in a cell measuring about $4 \frac{1}{2}$ metres x $4 \frac{1}{2}$ metres, in which there were 57prisoners. Cells were not cleaned and were consequently very dirty.

The other prisoners had been held there for periods between two and six months, and they ranged from about 17 to 80 years in age. None had been charged or tried. No visits had been allowed, though prisoners with relatives outside receive mattresses and bedding, food each day, and a change of clothing each week. Prisoners were barefoot, and could only bathe once a week. There was one hour exercise a week, but otherwise they were continuously in the cell, which was dark and poorly ventilated. They were only allowed to go outside to the lavatory at specific times of the day. Their only reading material was one bible. The total number of prisoners in this police station was estimated at about a thousand, held in two rows of eight cells, each equally overcrowded. Another detainee known to AI but whose name cannot be revealed for fear of reprisal, reported while he was detained there in 1975 that no medical treatment was given to prisoners at this police station. Prisoners were ordered to sit almost motionless for the whole day. No reading was allowed, and the only relaxation of this situation, in which prisoners became extremely anxious and fearful, was going to the toilet at the regulated time. The punishment for not behaving properly was called by the guards 'being sent to school'. Any prisoner who did not display the extreme humility and deference required by the guards was liable to be taken out at night and severely punished. Some such persons did not return to the cell, and were presumably killed. Others were tortured by being severely beaten on the soles of the foot, or were tortured by having a bottle full of water tied to the testicles. Every prisoner lay in daily fear of death or torture for apparent disobedience or on suspicion of having committed an offence. Some prisoners taken outside for 'punishment' did not return and were presumed killed. The source of this information testified that all prisoners lived under constant fear of death.

- 5. Frisons in Eritrea In Asmara, the main prisons where political detainees are held are Sembel, the Army Headquarters (in the former governor's palace), the Expo Pavilion (now a military camp), Hazhaz and Tsezerat prisons, and all police stations (especially the police headquarters). All prisons are seriously overcrowded, and detainees experience the same deprivations as in the rest of Ethiopia. In addition Eritreans also suffer deliberately humiliating treatment immediately after arrest, and interrogation reportedly always involves torture.
- 6. Other prisons Folitical detainees are held in all prisons, police stations and the military camps in Ethiopia. The conditions are probably very similar to what has already been described though the Hillitary Police Headquarters is exceptional in its reportedly decent treatment of the few prisoners held there. Hegional prisons and the main prisons in

Addis Ababa and Asmara provide food (but of a very poor quality) for those detainees who do not receive it from relatives. A prisoner who has no relative, or whose relative had not managed to locate him, will either receive shared food from another prisoner, or be transferred to another prison. Clothing and bedding are not provided for prisoners, who may obtain them from relatives. Obviously this discrimination against the poorer prisoners is very harsh. Medical treatment is extremely inadequate at the main prisons in the capital, and virtually non-existant elsewhere. Prison conditions as regards bodily hygiene and the cleanliness of the prison cell are appalling. Cells are frequently described as being infested with vermin - rats and cockroaches being endemic. The military camps are often the places to which students are taken when they have been arrested in large numbers after a demonstration. There they are 'punished' with various difficult and exhausting exercises, and are beaten if they fail to perform well. This happened also to a considerable number of students detained during the zemetecha rural literacy campaign of 1974-5. Schools or other places, such as the Expo pavilion in Asmara (converted to a military camp) have also from time to time been used provisionally as detention centres following large-scale arrests.

During late 1976 and early 1977 a new maximum security prison for political prisoners was constructed in the Ogaden, where it was said that all the political prisoners were about to be taken. Conditions would have been extremely harsh but the military camp at Gode, where the prison was located, was captured by the Western Somali Liberation Front later in the year, and therefore it was never used for Ethiopian political prisoners. There were also reports of a new concentration camp in Omo Valley, in the south, to be used for 'religious fanatics' as designated by the Derg's political cadres, but this has not been used, so far as is known.

4. TORTURE

The detailed information available to Amnesty International on torture in Ethiopia is scanty, compared to the numerous personal and eye-witness testimonies collected in some other countries. Yet, the cumulative evidence can leave no doubt that torture in Ethiopia and especially in Eritrea continues at the same high frequency as over the last twenty years. One place where torture reportedly takes place is the Third Police Station in Addis Ababa (which is the police headquarters) especially in cell 7 and torture is also practised in many other police stations, prisons, and military detention centres in different parts of Ethiopia.

Not all political detainees are tortured - few prominent Ethiopians have been tortured. One exception is the lawyer Shibru Seifu, reportedly tortured to death in late 1976. Those most subject to torture are alleged leaders, members or sympathisers of opposition or secessionist movements. However, a large number of young people, particularly students, are regularly subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, carried out in prisons (such as Akaki prison) or military camps. Methods of torture include:

- 1. Severe beating with rifle butts, trunchoons, sticks and clubs, and rubber hose, and kicking with heavy boots.
 - 2. The use of electric shocks.
- 3. Sexual torture, including the rape of women, torture on the male genital organs and other indignities.
 - 4. The pulling out and hammering of toe and finger nails.
 - 5. Dipping the victim in hot oil, or splashing hot oil on the face.
- 6. Various cruel and degrading 'punishments', such as being tied up in a painful position (as a result of which one detainee at the Fourth Division Headquarters was paralysed in the hands in May 1976), forcible feeding with urine and mud, being forced to lie motionless in the sun for hours, or to crawl for hours over sharp stones or to perform severe physical exercises under threat of being beaten for not being able to do them etc.
- 7. Beating with sticks on the soles of the feet, while the prisoner is bound hand and foot, gagged and fixed in a contorted position.
 - 8. Being placed in a cell flooded with cold water.

Torture has led to the death, derangement or permanent crippling of victims. Torture has also been practised by <u>kebelle</u> guards on the instruction of <u>kebelle</u> leaders, the best known case being that of torture and killing committed by Girma Kebede (see page 22). The spread of the use of torture from security officers to civilian 'militia' groups is very disturbing, and marks an extension of the government policy which evidently encourages these methods. Despite the arrest, conviction and execution of Girma kebede, it is believed that the practise of torture is still encouraged by the berg, and carried out by several <u>kebelle</u> leaders.

5. THE USE OF THE DEATH FENALTY

The earlier section on the legal situation listed various political and other offences for which the death penalty is mandatory or the maximum punishment. It is not known how many people have been judicially executed under these decrees since the Lerg came to power. The only sources of information are Ethiopia government press and radio announcements. The

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proceedings and judgements of military tribunals are not published, and only the briefest mention of the judicial process is made when executions are announced. Few details were publicly given on the execution of 50 people in November 1976 (one of whom was allegedly under 18 years), who had been reported by the government as charged with various offences including murder, bombings, and 'counter-revolutionary activities'. This was the largest group-execution of alleged EPRP members, but in smaller group-executions, e.g. of 4 EDU members in Addis Ababa on 10 August 1977 (including three former governors and one former parliamentarian), and 8 EPRP members on 23 October 1977, the charges were listed only in the briefest form. The paucity of information hinders any investigation of the judicial process they received, and in view of other allegations and circumstances, it is probable that they received either summary trial, or no trial at all. There is no reliable evidence that military tribunals function regularly. The section on the legal situation also documents the extension of judicial powers to kebelle tribunals, which include the power to impose death penalty. Though information is difficult to obtain on the practise of this decree, it is probable that allegations that death penalties are imposed in summary trials and executed immediately are correct, though it is impossible to discover the extent of this practise. Again the case of Girma Kebede is illustrative of how kebelle leaders may operate.

One disturbing new step in April 1977 was the resumption of public execution in Addis Ababa. The executions of Girma Kebede and five other kebelle leaders from Arat Kilo were the first public executions in Ethiopia since those carried out under Emperor Haile Selassie's rule. The executions were carried out in front of a large crowd, which included the relatives of the condemned prisoners, their associates, and the relatives of their victims.

6. POLITICAL KILLINGS

The most serious human rights matter in Ethiopia under the Derg is the frequent practise of killing for political reasons carried out by government officers without any legal process. It is evident that it is government policy in several situations to order alleged political opponents to be killed, either by government security officers, or by civilian militia-members or guards attached to peasant kebelle associations. Speeches by Derg leaders commonly parade the slogan of 'revolutionary motherland and death', and since early 1977, encourage their armed supporters to administer 'revolutionary justice' to 'counter-revolutionaries'.

Recently it was announced that 'a revolutionary measure' had been taken against the vice-chairman of the berg, Colonel Atnafu Abate, on 11 November 1977. This phrase means that he was killed on the orders of Derg leaders, for political reasons and that no trial took place. He was later accused of various 'counter-revolutionary'activities and opinions, and this was likewise the case with Brigadier General Teferi Bante, the chairman of the Derg until his 'execution' was announced on 4 February 1977. After the 'revolutionary measure' of November 1977, the Derg urged its armed supporters not to hold demonstrations but to take actions - 'spreading red revolutionary terror'. The extent of the killings which then took place is not yet known, but according to diplomatic sources, it surpassed the mass killings of over 1000 students and others in April-May 1977 (Times, 3 December 1977). The killing was directed probably at supporters of Colonel Atnafu, supporters of Fei'son, and alleged EFRF or EDU members.

There have also been assassinations of Derg members, kebelle officials, Mei'son members, government administrators, government association leaders etc., by EPRP death squads. The number of such assassinations is relatively small compared to the political killings committed by government officials. There have also been armed clashes between different progovernment groups (e.g. by Seded members against Mei'son members), there have been murders committed under cover of the political situation but directed at personal enemies, there have been armed robberies involving killings by bandits, and there has been armed conflict among different opposition factions. The military government is facing serious threats on all sides, and blames all disturbances on counter-revolutionaries. An example of the reaction of the Derg to attacks on its supporters may be noted from the speech of a Derg leader at the funeral of the slain chairman of the pro-Derg All-Ethiopia Labour Union on 26 February 1977. He promised revenge by 'liquidating one thousand reactionaries' by means of 'revolutionary defence squads'. Al believes that the government reaction by mass arrests and killings cannot be justified by the level of opposition.

The pattern of killing without trial included the following:-

- (i) Officially-announced executions where there has been no trial:

 59 political detainees were executed in 23 November 1974, including relatives of the deposed Emperor, many senior officials and military officers under the former government, some Derg members, prominent Eritreans, and others. Brigadier General Aman Andom, the Ethiopian head of state, was 'executed' at the same time;
- At least 20 top military officers have been 'executed' on political grounds, such as Major Sissay Habte (10 July 1976);

- the next Ethiopian head of state, Brigadier General Teferi Bante, was 'executed' on 3 February 1977, though this took place in a gun battle within the Derg headquarters where six leading members, in pro- and anti-Mengistu factions were also killed;

(ii) Secret_killings of detainees in custody: - Emperor Haile Selassie was almost certainly killed in custody, despite the Derg's announcement that he died on 27 August 1975 as a result of complications following surgery;

- the practise of killing detainess suspected of belonging to the EPRP has become extremely common, during 1977 particularly. For example 44 students are said to have been killed on the outskirts of Addis Ababa on 26 February 1977 after they had been held at the Third Police Station. Abebech Bekelle, an Ethiopian Womens Coordinating Committee leader, was reportedly murdered in custody around the same time. Killings take place in several prisons (gunfire, for example, is frequently heard inside Akaki prison), and there is no doubt that 'executions' of this nature take place on a large scale outside. It is alleged that mass graves are dug with tractors and prisoners are shot and buried in them by other prisoners. There are many cases of prisoners' families being given back their relative's clothes, or being told not to bring food again - a sure sign that he has been killed. In no cases are the bodies of detainees returned to their relatives for burial.

- In Eritrea, Harrar and other areas there have been several reports that the killings of detainees is a common occurence:

(iii) Killings by security officers and kebelle guards during house-to-house searches:

There have been extensive killings by the security forces and militias during these searches for 'illegal' weapons (many Ethiopians own old weapons which are unregistered), illegal publications and wanted persons. Searches also proceed with lists of names of persons suspected of antiberg opinions or activities, based on informers' confidentially supplied information and other sources. Accounts have been received by Amnesty International of persons shot dead during these searches without being asked their identity, for not fully complying with orders, or even shot as substitute for a wanted family member who was absent. After each search operation (such as the searches of September 1976, of 23-27 March 1977 or 7-9 May 1977 - when all traffic was prohibited without special permit and other regulations forced people to stay at home at night), radio reports stated the number of weapons seized, and that persons were 'shot resisting arrest' and 'counter-revolutionaries' liquidated. The

Addis Ababa, the last remaining hideout of reactionaries, of anti-people, anti-revolutionaries and anti-Ethiopian forces'. People in these categories were said to have been 'liquidated by speedy and determined revolutionary measures' (Radio Addis Ababa 27 March 1977). It is not known how many people have been killed in these searches. Rumours continually spread in Addis Ababa that a new 'final' sweep is about to be conducted to 'liquidate' all 'enemies' of the regime;

(iv) Killings of people demonstrating against the government's policies: Soldiers have shot to kill in Addis Ababa at May Day demonstrations in 1975 and 1976, in July 1976 and on 22 September 1976, where anti-government feeling was expressed. In December 1976 at least 30 persons were shot dead during a rally at Gondar and five died in hospital. Killings of persons circulating or possessing illegal publications also took place during the Adowa Day rally in Addis Ababa on 2 March 1977. The worst such incident took place just before the May Day rally of May 1977, when soldiers and militias in Addis Ababa launched a massive attack on a demonstration of student opponents on the night of 29 April. Estimates of those killed are around 500. The Derg totally denied this massacre and dismissed reports of it as 'imperialist propaganda'. ** Amnesty International is satisfied that the reports of several western journalists and diplomats, based partly on the count of recently shot bodies in hospital morgues and seen on the streets, are not exaggerated. Killings also took place for some days following the massacre. The Secretary General of the Swedish Save the Children Fund stated on 16 Hay 1977 that '1000 children have been massacred in Addis Ababa and their bodies, lying in the streets, are ravaged by roving hyenas... The bodies of murdered children, mostly aged 11-13 years, can be seen heaped at the roadside when one leaves Addis Ababa'. He claimed that around 100-150 were being slaughtered nightly, according to official Swedish sources (reports in London Daily Telegraph, and Times 16 May 1977). Some killings also took place at Nazareth and Debre Zeit, and nightly killings continue in Addis Ababa, centering on youths and students.

On 27 October 1977 soldiers fired on demonstrations of women and children who asked for the release of their children from detention, and two girls and a boy were killed at Menen Comprehensive School.

*Un 13 September 1977 the Ethiopian representation in London reportedly blamed the killings on Hei'son cadres (London Telegraph)

(v) Other killings by soldiers, militia members and kebelle guards:
These too are conducted with an apparent license to kill, especially in
the case of the 755 'wanted persons' whose names and photographs were
published by the Derg in April 1977. The common use of material supplied
confidentially (even by telephone) by informers is patently arbitrary and
open to corrupt use for personal gain. Twelve Ethiopian Airline workers
were arrested in this way and feared killed after evidence from a 'denunciation committee', (Agence France Presse, 14 April 1977). Later that month
Tadelech Isayas Gebre-Selassie, a mother of two, was executed with others
accused of unspecified 'anti-revolutionary acts' and membership of two
alien organizations (Reuters, 27 April 1977).

The case of Girma Kebede, chairman of an Arat Kile kebelle, is very instructive. He was publicly executed on 2 April 1977 'after a court martial' (as mentioned above) and the Ethiopian Herald published a list of the crimes he was accused of committing over the previous two months or more - personally murdering 24 persons in his capacity as kebelle chairman, who included a priest, students, government printing press workers (who had eight months before been denounced to him), other kebelle judicial tribunal members, women and some strangers. He also subjected several of them and others to tortures such as flogging, electric shocks, gouging out of eyes and 'all sorts of other tortures' (Ethiopian Herald, 3 April 1977). While Girma Kebede was eventually brought to trial, such activities are said be not untypical of several kebelle leaders, and demonstrate the power they enjoy without legal or other safeguards. Shooting during the nightly curfew is regularly heard in Addis Ababa, and shot bodies are seen in the street, mutilated by hyenas. Relatives are forced to purchase back the bodies of slain relatives, for sums between 50 and 250 Ethiopian dollars (US \$ 25-125).**

(vi) <u>Killing of soldiers who allegedly mutinied, or who performed unsuccessfully in action:</u>
Such information is difficult to obtain, but there have been frequent reports of disaffection within the armed forces. Colonel Atnafu, for example was reportedly arrested by troops in Eritrea and then released, shortly before he was killed in Addis Ababa. 120 soldiers including officers were reportedly killed after the loss of Jijiga to the Western Somali Liberation Front in late 1977.

(vii) <u>Killings in the rural areas</u>:

It is not clear whether the frequent reports on Ethiopia radio of the 'liquidation' of 'bandits', 'outlaws', 'infiltrators' and other 'anti-revolutionaries', refer to activities of the kind just described, or military-type operations. For example, a count of reported deaths of this kind during the first half of May 1977 totalled 1,713 deaths of which 968 were in Gondar Region, 282 and a further 93 in Sidamo, 70 in Wollo, 31 in Bale, more than 200 in Harar, and 69 elsewhere. If these reports are accurate, they indicate a grave state of rural unrest and a severe scale of both extra-judicial killings and actual conflict.

Estimates of the numbers of persons killed by Ethiopian security forces and armed civilian supporters in these various ways (excluding actual armed conflict with guerrilla forces), cannot be made with any accuracy. Reuters News Agency estimated that 2,000 were killed between the Derg killings of 3 February 1977 and early March. (Meuters, 7 March 1977). The wave of killings of students from 29 April to early March is known to have claimed around 1,000 lives. There has been a continuing high level of political conflict in Addis Ababa since then, centering on the purge of Mei'son (which had extensive support among the peasants militia, and kebelle leaders), the killing of Colonel Atnafu (with many supporters in the 4th army division, among Amhara of Gondar Region, and among the People's militia, who came under his direct control), further repression of supposed EPRF and EDU supporters, and continuing reprisals against alleged supporters of liberation movements. It is very probable that at least 10,000 have been killed for political reasons during 1977 (up to early December). The former secretary general of the banned Ethiopian Teachers Association, who fled Ethiopia in 1977, claimed that around 30,000 had been killed by the Derg for political reasons since 1974.

6. OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

within the overall situation of gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, other rights as detailed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are also absent in Ethiopia. For example:

- the press is totally controlled by the government and used as an instrument of government propaganda. On 25 April 1977 the most important foreign correspondents were expelled from Ethiopia. One journalist, reter hason of the London Daily Express, was detained for two days and then expelled for sending out the first report of the massacre of 29 April 1977. The typical response of the authorities is to deny all unfavourable reports such as this and brand them as 'imperialist propaganda'. On 12 March 1977

Cf London Guardian, 4 May 1977

Radio Voice of the Gospel was taken over by the military authorities. There are also heavy controls on artistic expression, as witnessed by the consequences of protest of some theatre workers in April 1976.

The military authorities detained the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and three bishops on 18 February 1976. The Patriarch was deposed in contravention of ecclesiastical procedures. The Dean of Holy Trinity Cathedral was detained earlier, and it is thought another bishop was arrested in mid-1977. There are reports that the peasant militia has interfered with religious worship and religious procedures in some parts of the country. Public funeral ceremonies were banned in Addis Ababa in mid-1977.

- All political or other associations which are suspected of opposition to the military regime have been banned and their leaders arrested. Trade unions, students organizations, women's organizations, and ethnic welfare associations have all suffered repression and closure. Persons have also been compelled to join new organizations created by the Derg in place of those prohibited, as in the case of trade unions, for example.

- Exit from the country is strongly controlled, and suspected opponents of the regime, or relatives to detainees, are not allowed to leave Ethiopia. Movement within the country (and in Addis Ababa at night) is also restricted. There have been attempts by the Ethipian authorities to obtain the involuntary refoulement of students belonging to the banned World Wide Federation of Ethiopian Students and other opponents of the Derg. Refoulement in such cases is likely to lead to arrest, detention and possible killing.

CONCLUSION

Amnesty International considers that the evidence presented here demonstrates clearly that since the Derg came to power in 1974, there have been persistent and gross violation of fundamental human rights. Some of these rights were also denied under the government of Emperor Haile Selassie, and AI took several actions to seek to improve the human rights situation then, which was not at all satisfactory. However, the extent of human rights violations, especially in the deaths inflicted for political reasons, is far greater now than under the previous government.

AI does not believe that this can be justified either by claims by the Derg to have improved economic rights of the masses or by the level of opposition to the military regime. AI's opinion is moreover based primarily on incidents outside areas of conflict between Ethiopian armed forces and guerrilla movements. A detailed report on the direct areas of armed conflict would include incidents of largescale atrocities committed against prisoners of war, and against civilians in the area of conflict, both of which circumstances violate article 3 which is common to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 on the protection of victims of war.

The most important human rights that are systematically and frequently violated are as follows:-

- (i) The right to life (Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)): the use of the death penalty, particularly for political offences, denies this fundamental right. However much more serious, in terms of incidents where the right to life is completely overthrown, is the officially encouraged and condoned practise of political killing by government officials. Political killings by anti-government groups similarly violate this basic right, though their extent is not nearly so large.
- (ii) The use of torture violates the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Funishment (1975).
- (iii) The conditions of political detainees fall very short of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (which includes political detainees), in respect of inadequate medical treatment, overcrowding and unhygienic conditions, prohibition of family visits, lack of exercise and recreation, etc.
- (iv) The lack of freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention without trial, and the absence of legal safeguards concerning arrest and detention, violates article 12 of the UDHR. It is possible that the singling out of Eritreans for harassment, arrest, detention or killing, violates article 2 concerning distinction by national or social origin.
- (v) The right to freedom of opinion and expression is denied (ref. Uilbit article 19) as is also the right to freedom of association and assembly for this purpose (ref. article 20 and article 23 (4) in respect of trade union organization).
- (vi) Freedom of movement within Ethiopia and out of Ethiopia is obstructed (ref. article 13), and the Ethiopian government has attempted to obtain the involuntary refoulement to Ethiopia of Ethiopians who are

The repression of Trade Unions evoked the censure of the International

An AI document on this issue is available on request from AI's Inter-

actual or potential refugees, which is contrary to article 31 of the United Nations Convention on Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967)

(vii) The practice of the security forces in taking hostages and committing murder against civilians in the areas of armed conflict is contrary to article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949.

- END -

NOTES:

(1) This report is not a full historical or chronological account of Ethiopia under military rule. The focus is on human rights issues of particular concern to Amnesty International, and other issues are only discussed if they are directly relevant to these matters. (2) Sources of information are not described, and names are not generally mentioned in this report, for fear of reprisals against relatives of informants. Information about the legal and political situation often derives from official Ethiopian reports (e.g. on Addis Ababa radio). Extensive effort has been made to check details of information, though this is difficult, in the current period of political upheaval and denial of basic human rights. Al would welcome any comments in correction of any facts described in this report. (3) AI has been accused by the Derg of being a 'counter-revolutionary organization' making baseless imperialist propaganda against the Ethiopian government. For AI's response, see 'Amnesty International's Reply to Unfounded Allegations by the Ethiopian Government', August 1977 (AI Index AFR 25/13/77).