

ETHIOPIA

*Arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment and torture of university students, particularly of Oromo ethnicity, were documented, as were surveillance and intimidation of teacher trade unionists.*⁷⁰⁵

CONTEXT

Since the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of ethnic-based parties, came to power in 1991, students – particularly Oromo students who are actual or perceived supporters of the insurgent Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) or of registered Oromo political parties – have frequently been the targets of excessive use of force by state security, as well as arbitrary arrests and mistreatment in detention.⁷⁰⁶

Since disputed elections in 2005, the government has increasingly curtailed all forms of freedom of expression, association and assembly, and arrested members of the opposition.⁷⁰⁷

In 2008, the Ethiopian Teachers' Association was replaced by a pro-government union following the killing of its deputy secretary-general, the imprisonment of other officials, and the detention and torture of activists.⁷⁰⁸

Net primary school enrolment was estimated at 78 per cent, while gross secondary enrolment was 36 per cent and gross tertiary enrolment was 8 per cent (2011). Approximately 39 per cent of adults were literate (2007).⁷⁰⁹

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

One primary school was reportedly attacked in Badme in June 2012 by the Eritrean army –

seemingly in response to Ethiopian military attacks in Eritrea.⁷¹⁰

Attacks on school students, teachers and other education personnel

In February 2009, police shot and killed one student, wounded another in the chest and arrested two more during protests at Gedo Secondary School in West Shoa zone, Oromia.⁷¹¹

Teacher trade unionists were subjected to surveillance and harassment by government security agents as part of an attempt to discourage them from trying to register an independent National Teachers' Association (NTA). Previously, the government had seized the assets of the former Ethiopian Teachers' Association and given the name to a government-appointed entity. As of the end of 2012, NTA members had not received notification of any decision by the Charities and Societies Agency on whether they would be permitted to register the NTA.⁷¹²

There were reports of teachers who were fired, arrested or otherwise harassed by security officials because they refused to become EPRDF members, were outspoken about political activities, or refused to monitor the activities of their students for security officials.⁷¹³

In 2011, during the implementation of the Gambella Region's 'villagization' programme, students were forced to go to neighbouring villages and build tukuls (huts) for the new villagers. Students who refused were not permitted to sit their year-end examinations. Teachers who refused to organize students for this activity were suspended or arrested.⁷¹⁴

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS

During the Ethiopian military's response to an attack by unknown gunmen on a commercial farm in the Gambella region in April 2012, soldiers used a school in Chobo-Mender as a prison.⁷¹⁵

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, in its April 2009 Universal Periodic Review submission on Ethiopia, alleged that more than 80 Oromo students from Bahir Dar University were arrested and others were beaten in March 2009 during peaceful protests.⁷¹⁶ The Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa (HRLHA)⁷¹⁷ reported that a law student at Addis Ababa University, who had been active in the Union of Oromo Students, was arrested without a court warrant in front of the main campus by security agents in July 2009.⁷¹⁸ Amnesty International reported arrests of students accused of supporting the OLF at the universities of Jimma, Haromaya and Nekemte in April 2011.⁷¹⁹ Human Rights Watch documented arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment of a number of Oromo students at Addis Ababa's Federal Police Crime Investigation Sector, a detention centre also known as Maekelawji, between 2011 and 2013.⁷²⁰

Throughout Ethiopia, students were detained by security officials for organizing student associations, being politically outspoken or organizing cultural movements. The monitoring of students was one of the key methods through which rural Ethiopians, particularly Oromos, were targeted because of involvement in lawful political movements. There were anecdotal reports of Oromo students being released from detention and not being allowed to complete their schooling.⁷²¹

In January 2010, Oromia police shot two unarmed students, one fatally, during a disturbance at Ardayta College; one policeman was found guilty of murder and imprisoned.⁷²²

In June 2012, according to the HRLHA, security forces stormed dormitories and arrested engineering students at Haromaya University in Oromia to break up a demonstration; they were held outside without food for two days.⁷²³

ATTACKS ON EDUCATION IN 2013

Arrests of university students continued in 2013, with at least three incidents reported.⁷²⁴ Security agents reportedly arrested and detained some 100 Addis Ababa University students, a majority of whom were Oromo, after a violent clash erupted between two groups of students on the Arat Kilo University Campus (College of Natural Science) on 2 January.⁷²⁵ It was reported that a number of these students were injured and several had to be hospitalized.⁷²⁶ The clash was said to have been triggered when Tigrean students put up posters with insulting messages about Oromo students.⁷²⁷ Police reportedly surrounded the campus and detained at least 100 more students of Arba Minch University in May who were said to have been responsible for organizing a protest over education-related grievances.⁷²⁸ One Addis Ababa University student was also arrested on campus in March after expressing concern via Facebook about alleged corruption among Arba Minch University officials and city administrators; he was subsequently charged with criminal defamation.⁷²⁹

ENDNOTES ETHIOPIA

⁷⁰⁵ This profile covers attacks in the period 2009-2012, with an additional section on 2013.

⁷⁰⁶ See HRW, *Suppressing Dissent: Human Rights Abuses and Political Repression in Ethiopia's Oromia Region Report* (New York: HRW, 10 May 2005), 8,22-5; Lea-Lisa Westerhoff and Abraham Fisseha, "Ethiopian Police Raid Colleges as Student Election Protests Spread," AFP, 7 June 2005; US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, over the last five years; Daandii Qajeelaa, "Revisiting Oromian Students' Resistance Against Tyranny: 2006-2010," Gadaa.com, 11 November 2010; Committee Against Torture, *Concluding Observations of the Committee Against Torture – Ethiopia*, CAT/C/ETH/CO/1, 1-19 November 2010, para 10; and American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), "Government Kills 41 Students during Student Academic Freedom Protests," AAAS Human Rights Action Network alert, 22 May 2001.

⁷⁰⁷ HRW, *World Report 2013: Ethiopia* (New York: HRW, 2013); and HRW, *One Hundred Ways of Putting Pressure: Violations of Freedom of Expression and Association in Ethiopia* (New York: HRW, 2010); "Government Kills 41 Students during Student Academic Freedom Protests," AAAS Human Rights Action Network alert, 22 May 2001; and AAAS, "Professors Arrested in Crackdown after Demonstrations in Ethiopia," AAAS Human Rights Action Network alert, 14 December 2005.

⁷⁰⁸ Fred van Leeuwen, "Refusal to Register EI's Member Organisation in Ethiopia," *Education International Urgent Action Appeal*, 27 May 2009; HRW, *One Hundred Ways of Putting Pressure* (New York: HRW, 24 March 2010), 43-4; and School World TV, *Persecuted Teachers*, 2008.

⁷⁰⁹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), "Education (all levels) Profile - Ethiopia," *UIS Statistics in Brief* (2011).

⁷¹⁰ Yemane Nagish, "Eritrean army attacks school, bus in Badme," *Tigrai Online*, 18 June 2012.

⁷¹¹ US Department of State, *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Ethiopia* (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 11 March 2010).

⁷¹² International Trade Union Confederation, *2012 Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights – Ethiopia*, 6 June 2012; and US Department of State, *2012 Country Reports on Human Rights*

Practices – Ethiopia (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 19 April 2013).

⁷¹³ HRW, *Development Without Freedom: How Aid Underwrites Repression in Ethiopia* (New York: HRW, October 2010), 55-7; and additional information provided by Human Rights Watch on 4 November 2013.

⁷¹⁴ HRW, "Waiting Here for Death": Displacement and "Villagization" in Ethiopia's Gambella Region (New York: HRW, January 2012), 49; and additional information provided by Human Rights Watch on 4 November 2013.

⁷¹⁵ HRW, "Ethiopia: Army Commits Torture, Rape," 28 August 2012.

⁷¹⁶ Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, *Submission to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - Universal Periodic Review: Ethiopia*, April 2009.

⁷¹⁷ Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa (HRLHA) is a non-political organization (with UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Consultative Status) which attempts to challenge abuses of human rights of the people of various nations and nationalities in the Horn of Africa.

⁷¹⁸ HRLHA, "Ethiopia: Mass Arrests of Oromos in Addis Ababa/Finfinne – Press Release No. 18," 4 August 2009.

⁷¹⁹ Amnesty International, *State of the World's Human Rights Annual Report 2012 – Ethiopia* (Amnesty International, 2013).

⁷²⁰ HRW, "They Want a Confession": Torture and Ill-Treatment in Maekelawi's Police Station (New York: HRW, October 2013), 14, 16, 21, 24, 29.

⁷²¹ Information provided by Human Rights Watch on 4 November 2013.

⁷²² US Department of State, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Ethiopia* (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 8 April 2011); and "Ethiopia: College riot claims life," *The Reporter*, 10 January 2010.

⁷²³ HRLHA, "Peaceful Demonstration Needs Democratic Solution, Not Violence," 5 June 2012.

⁷²⁴ HRLHA, "Ethiopia: Beatings, Arrests and Detentions at Addis Ababa University," HRLHA Urgent Action, 5 January 2013; Salem, "Ethnic Clash Among AAU 4 Kilo Students Causes Damages," *De Birhan*, 3 January 2013; *Scholars at Risk, Academic Freedom*

Monitor, 28 March 2013; and “Police detains over 100 students of Arba Minch University,” ESAT News, 17 May 2013.

⁷²⁵ HRLHA, “Ethiopia: Beatings, Arrests and Detentions at Addis Ababa University,” HRLHA Urgent Action, 5 January 2013; and Salem, “Ethnic Clash Among AAU 4 Kilo Students Causes Damages,” De Birhan, 3 January 2013.

⁷²⁶ HRLHA, “Ethiopia: Beatings, Arrests and Detentions at Addis Ababa University,” HRLHA Urgent Action, 5 January 2013.

⁷²⁷ HRLHA, “Ethiopia: Beatings, Arrests and Detentions at Addis Ababa University,” HRLHA Urgent Action, 5 January 2013; and Salem, “Ethnic Clash Among AAU 4 Kilo Students Causes Damages,” De Birhan, 3 January 2013.

⁷²⁸ “Police detains over 100 students of Arba Minch University,” ESAT News, 17 May 2013.

⁷²⁹ Scholars at Risk, Academic Freedom Monitor, 28 March 2013.