

Chapter 1 : Human Rights Dilemmas in Ethiopia | Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

According to a paper by the Center for International Human Rights at Northwestern University School of Law, "The CSO law is the product of the Ethiopian government's deep suspicion of civil society" and has been frequently used to silence any organization that advocates for human rights in Ethiopia.

Human rights in Ethiopia: The Action Plan was the first document of its kind in Ethiopia. Its applicability also aimed at bringing together all the separate efforts being accomplished across different government bodies. It is not uncommon to see a police officer beating and harassing a citizen for very minor issues on the streets of Addis Ababa. By the same token, it is customary these days for the courts to hear complaints of prisoners alleging basic violations of human rights including lack of access to legal counsel. Above all, members of the security forces allegedly take disproportional measures to arrest security threats. In a state that claims to be democratic and adhere to the ideals of human and democratic rights, such violations should have been addressed a long time ago. Reports by different organs show that such incidents are aggravated in recent times. On the contrary, the government argues that the policies, the legal frameworks, the institutional arrangements, and practical measures are bringing incremental but concrete improvements in the status of the basic and fundamental human and democratic rights of citizens in the country. For the government, such incidents are unfortunate actions by irresponsible and unethical actors and as such they do not explain the character of the state. The government also contends that it has demonstrated high political commitment for the enforcement of human rights. More recently, one manifestation of such political commitment is the preparation of the First National Human Rights Action Plan. The central aim of the Plan is coordinating the activities of relevant governmental and non-governmental organs so as to improve the implementation of human and democratic rights guaranteed in the Constitution. After the First Action Plan came to an end in June, by most measures, Ethiopia remains a country where many internal and external individuals and institutions raise serious human rights concerns. To complicate matters further, in the same period, different protests, conflicts and security problems have rocked the country resulting in grave human rights violations in Oromia, Amhara, and Gambella regional states. Of course, the outcome of the report is contested. Amidst all these controversy, the government released the Second National Human Rights Action Plan draft document for public consultation in February. Discussions have been held with relevant stakeholders at the federal and regional levels since then. After getting the approval of the Council of Ministers, it is expected to pass as a law before parliament is closed for recess. However, doubts are still there if the second action plan is going to change the landscape of human rights in Ethiopia. The Action Plan as manifestation of the political commitment. The concept of National Human Rights Action Plan was first developed as part of the second world conference on Human Rights held in Vienna, in which culminated in the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action. The main reason for the preparation of the Action Plan is to ensure the full implementation of fundamental and democratic rights guaranteed under the FDRE Constitution. It brings together all the separate efforts that were planned and accomplished within the different government departments. It is hoped to enable the country to conduct human rights protection and promotion activities in a coordinated and effective manner. It will in turn serve for the better protection and promotion of human rights. The Action Plan is to be executed by government organs along with the relevant development partners, civil society associations and other stakeholders. The main objective of the Action Plan is to develop a comprehensive and structured mechanism to advance the respect, protection and fulfillment of human and democratic rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The Action Plan reviews the present human rights situation of the country, identifies potential problems, and sets feasible solutions. The Action Plan included the scope of each right within the Constitutional and international legal frameworks; the national policies and laws that have direct relation to the specific right; the major administrative and institutional actions taken by the Government to guarantee respect, to protect and to promote a specific right. It also addresses the results obtained due to such government actions; identification of problems and challenges observed in the respect, the protection and the fulfillment of each right; and finally, it determines actions to be taken to avert the problems and attend to the

challenges under each right by the implementing institutions. The Plan also sets the system of monitoring and evaluation to be applied under each right. It has also designed the system of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan. The Plan further includes the right to clean environment and the right to development. It covers 23 human and democratic rights in detailed manner. In spite of the widespread accusations and criticisms by political parties, civil societies, academics, international rights groups, and people from all walks of life for violations of human rights, the government contends that the political commitment is there from the outset and continues to grow in terms of addressing concerns in human rights protection. Their assessment of human rights implementation is different from the government. They just want to score a political point. To illustrate his point, he raises the issue of awareness creation. He mentions that the better state of awareness creation is one of the achievements of the first action plan. When respecting human rights becomes the culture of the society, it is a big guarantee for the protection of rights. Norm setting and institution building vs. Implementation Awareness creation, legal framework, norm setting, creating institutions, and building the capacity of institutions are some of the justifications offered by the government when confronted with lack of human rights implementation on the ground. The government holds that until these issues are addressed, it is inevitable to witness gaps in the implementation of human rights. Many wonder if these excuses are going to vanish soon. Getahun Kassa, a human rights lecturer and researcher at the Addis Ababa University Centre for Human Rights, explains that the situation of human rights is measured and evaluated in terms of norm setting, institution building, and implementation. While appreciating the government efforts in terms of norm setting legal framework and institution building in the last 25 years, he expresses concerns in implementation. As per the Constitution, rights are not government presents. Rather, respecting the rights is the duty of the government. Thus, the government is responsible to create a system that provides effective remedy when rights are violated. We need to make sure that anyone who works in violation of the law is held accountable. One of the most lackluster and unchanged responses to questions on the problem of implementation by the government runs this way: We have sound and appropriate policies, laws, and institutions. We just have to improve our implementation capacity. If the policy is not going to be implemented, how is it any different from the lack of one? May be it could have been a justification back in the days where severe lack of human resources and limits to institutional capacity were prevalent. As a result, we have managed to bring broad changes. However, the changes are not absolute as protecting human rights by its nature is not something to complete in a fixed period of time. It is a process that gets better through time. To this end, the First Action Plan took us additional distance. Comparatively, it can be seen that the current government has done a lot in terms of norm setting and institution building. From the perspective of norm setting, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia FDRE Constitution, which entered into force on August 21, , is considered as the grand norm of the country. As a result, discourses on human rights are mostly centered on the Constitution. Specifically, Chapter 3 of Constitution exclusively deals with human rights. The Constitution also refers to international and regional human rights instruments as for the interpretation of its human rights provisions. For Adem Kassie LLD , a human rights lawyer and distinguished researcher, the Constitution also represents a major breakthrough in terms of human rights. The civil and political rights include but not limited to the right to life, to security of the person, to liberty, protection against cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to equality and equal protection of the law, the right to privacy, the freedom of religion, belief and opinion, freedom of thought and expression, the right of assembly, demonstration and petition; the right to association, the right to access to justice, the right of arrested and accused persons, and freedom of movement. Economic, social and cultural rights ESC Rights include but not limited to the right to freely engage in economic activities; to choose ones means of livelihood, occupation and profession; equal access to publicly funded services, labor rights. It further requires the state to allocate ever-increasing resources to provide social services; provide funds for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, the aged and children without parents or guardians subject to available means; and to pursue policies aimed at expanding job opportunities for the poor through undertaking programs and public works projects. Of course, the Constitution is further elaborated through different legislations, policies, strategies and plans. To make these legislative intentions a reality, many enforcing institutions are also established by the

Constitution and the subordinate laws. In addition, the Constitution imposes a responsibility and duty to the respect and enforcement of fundamental rights and freedoms at all levels of the federal and state legislative, executive and judicial bodies. The Constitution obliges all citizens, organs of state, political organizations, other associations as well as their officials to obey and ensure its observance. Ensuring better state of affairs for human rights protection is the shared tasks of state and non-state actors. While discharging its responsibility, the state should adhere to the principle that limitations of rights are the exceptions. Similarly, any limitation that may be imposed on the rights recognized in the Ethiopian Constitution should only be accepted when it is justifiable and necessary in accordance with a law that is clear and accessible , and with due regard to the implications for its proportionality in a democratic society. Against this clear guarantee, the way the Ethiopian government limit human rights is highly criticized. For Getachew, the democratic institutions have started to be influential when it comes to the protection and implementation of human rights. However, studies show that the major democratic institutions which include the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Ombudsman are not ascertaining their independence and impartiality from the executive organ. Many people still questions their independence and impartiality. They are criticized for focusing on minor issues while neglecting their major tasks. For instance, they are accused of shying away from major national issues which have serious implications on the protection of human rights. According to the draft Action Plan, the consecutive two-digit economic growth for 12 years is helping to improve the situation of human rights in Ethiopia. Getachew points out that the country has travelled a long distance in a very short period of time to ensure social and economic rights. However, he insisted that the government works respecting the constitutional recognition of the independence, interrelatedness and indivisibility of all generations of human rights without making any hierarchy, priority or order. Probably for the same reason, Yibekal analogizes the incremental improvement in the situation of human rights with the economic growth. Our economy is much better than it was 10 years ago. But Ethiopia is not a rich country. On the other hand, to critiques dismay, the status of civil and political rights is digressing ever since the controversial election. They are highly critical of the anti-terrorism, media, political parties, and civil society laws. Furthermore, the fact that these laws resulted in the limited and restricted activities of these democratic institutions and alternative source of power is noted. To be sure, since the number of seats in parliament and the activities of political parties, the number of publications, the number of civil societies advocating for rights declined substantially while the number of journalists, human rights advocates, and politicians going to jail and fled the country increased substantially. While admitting that almost all types of rights recognized in the International Bill of Rights are granted a constitutional status, Tsegaye Regassa LLD , a constitutional lawyer and researcher, believes that serious deficits are observable in practice. Tsegaye is also of the view that such recognition is of immense significance in setting the standards and laying down the foundation for the growth of a vibrant human rights culture. It signals a collective rejection of the idea that one can defy human dignity with impunity. More positively, it states in explicit terms that we, as a country, are one that honors, and is constrained by, the humanist value that human dignity and worth is fundamental to our system of governance. Nevertheless, the task of concretizing these rights and converting the same into legally consumable commodities is yet to be done. He suggests that Ethiopia needs to take steps to move from political rhetoric centred on the constitution to legal reality centered mainly on the judiciary. Furthermore, he states that the steps of concretization need to move from constitutional guarantee-to legislative protection-to judicial application-to executive implementation. Getachew also states that even if realizing human rights is mainly conducted to discharge the accountability of the government to the public, it also serves to respond to its international obligation.

Chapter 2 : OHCHR | Ethiopia Homepage

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Adopted in December of and passed in June of by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, the document consists of articles and 11 chapters. Article 9 Supremacy of the Constitution: International agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land. Article 10 Human and Democratic Rights. Human rights and freedoms as inherent rights of man are inalienable and inviolable. The human and democratic rights of peoples and citizens shall be protected. The activities of government shall be undertaken in a manner which is open and transparent to the public. The country violates political freedoms and has far from a transparent government. Life, liberty and security of Ethiopian people are not guaranteed. Article 15 The Right to Life. No one shall be deprived of his life except by reason of his conviction in accordance with the law for a serious crime committed by him. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except in accordance with such procedures as are laid down by law. No one shall be arrested or detained without being charged or convicted of a crime except in accordance with such procedures as are laid down by law.: Ethiopia currently has 40 political prisoners under arrest and there have been more in the past. No freedom of expression. No right to vote fairly. Everyone shall have the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; trafficking in human beings, for whatever purpose it might be, is prohibited. No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour. All persons shall be entitled to equal and adequate guarantees without distinction of any kind such as race, nation, nationality, colour, sex, language, religion, political or social origin, property, birth or other status. Article 28 Crimes Against Humanity Sex trafficking.

Chapter 3 : World Report Ethiopia | Human Rights Watch

The Advocates for Human Rights is deeply concerned about continuing human rights violations in Ethiopia. The Advocates has raised concerns related to the treatment of Oromos in Ethiopia at several United Nations human rights bodies.

In February, 10, people who had been arbitrarily detained were released. Reports of torture and other ill-treatment, unfair trials and violations of the rights to freedom of expression and of association continued. Background The authorities failed to implement the reforms they had promised to address grievances raised during protests in and in Amhara and Oromia. The demonstrators had been protesting against the forced eviction of farmers from their lands in Oromia in the past 20 years; arbitrary arrests and detention of opposition political party leaders; and severe restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and of association. Instead, the government declared a state of emergency in October after mobs torched farms and businesses in Oromia and Amhara following a stampede during the Oromo Thanksgiving Ceremony Irrecha in which at least 55 people were killed. The Ethiopian authorities have yet to conduct an independent and credible investigation into the cause and scale of the deaths. Torture and other ill-treatment Reports of torture and other ill-treatment of people accused of terrorism persisted. Detainees repeatedly complained to the courts that police tortured and ill-treated them during interrogations. Although, in some cases, judges ordered the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission EHRC to investigate the allegations, the investigations did not adhere to international human rights standards. The two men complained that the police suspended a water bottle from their scrotums and flogged them on the soles of their feet. Arbitrary arrests and detentions Arbitrary detention continued under the state of emergency declaration which was lifted in June. On 2 February, the government ordered the release of 10, of the 26, people arbitrarily detained and arrested, under the declaration, in Detainees were held in excess of four months, the maximum period allowed under the law for pre-trial detention. Unfair trials Hundreds of political activists, dissenters and peaceful protesters faced unfair trials on charges brought under the ATP law. The trials were marked by prolonged pre-trial detention, undue delays and persistent complaints of torture and other ill-treatment. Finally the court dismissed the terrorism charges against him. However, it ruled that his trial should proceed on charges of provocation and preparation for outrages against the Constitution or the Constitutional Order as per the Criminal Code. Freedom of expression The Federal High Court convicted journalists, bloggers and other activists on terrorism charges and handed down prison sentences. Yonatan Tesfaye was convicted of encouraging terrorism in his Facebook posts and sentenced to six-and-a-half years in prison. Most of the victims lived next to the site and supported themselves by recycling rubbish. The authorities had been aware that the landfill was full to capacity, and the residents had no option but to live and work there because the government failed to protect their right to adequate housing and decent work. More than 80 million birr around USD3 million was fundraised for rehabilitation of the victims. Although the municipal government managed the fund, the authorities had not provided rehabilitation for victims and their families by the end of the year. Among those killed were infants as young as six months. The Murle gunmen crossed the border to Ethiopia on 12 March and abducted 22 children from the Anuwa community. The authorities were not known to have taken steps to ensure the return of the abducted children to their families. Impunity The police and army continued to enjoy impunity for human rights violations committed in and During the year, the government rejected calls for independent and impartial investigations into human rights violations committed in the context of protests in various regional states. In the few cases where the EHRC conducted investigations and found that human rights violations had taken place, the government did not investigate or bring to justice suspected perpetrators.

Chapter 4 : Ethiopia / | Amnesty International

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It is recently redefined as a large scale acquisition of land through purchases or leases for commercial investment by foreign organizations⁶. Changes to land use without consultation of traditional owners of the land – mainly by forceful displacement of indigenous peoples, can, in the long-term, result in the disappearance of human communities traditionally identified with that ancestral land. Conflicts arising from land grabbing have become very complex wars disturbing the daily lives of the oppressed peoples of Ethiopia, because the peoples are undemocratically represented by the regime. The allocation of farmland to investors has been going on in Ethiopia since at least the years between 1991 and 2000 were the boom years for cut-flower exportation to Europe. Demand for land by foreign investors began to increase sharply since 2000. More than one-third of the land allocated to investors in the ten years period was given out in 2001. Year 2001 was a mad rush of investors to get access to land with many applicants requesting large tracts measuring more than 10, hectares. About one million hectares of land was transferred to foreign investors in the period between 2001 and 2005. The largest foreign holding is Karuturi Company of India, which has been given 100,000 hectares. In 2001 and 2002, about 100,000 hectares. The land transferred to investors between 2001 and 2005 was 1.5 million hectares. The land transferred to large-scale investors, without including land already allocated, has been planned to increase from 100,000 hectares. Therefore, at least 7 million hectares of agricultural land was transferred to investors between 2001 and 2005. In addition the long-term plan to expand Addis Ababa city administration at 10 kilometers radius was secretly designed by the regime until the hidden plan has made public in 2001. The impact of land grabbing in Ethiopia is manifested through five interconnected factors that the regime has designed to sustain its military, political and economic powers in order to protect its brutal and savage governance system for the next quarter or half a century. Analytical evaluation of effect of current land grabbing policy indicates destabilization of livelihood assets of rural communities of Oromia and Southern Ethiopia through the following five factors: This review focuses on the human rights violation and its political implications. Deterioration of conditions for basic human rights in Ethiopia The TPLF regime is escalating its violations of human rights through the implementation of a very dangerous policy of land grabbing in Oromia and Southern Ethiopia. The regime has killed at least 100 innocent Oromo civilians in the last two months mid November to mid January 2007, while the Oromo people peacefully protesting against the unfair land use policy. Thanks to the founders of media technologies, reports of human rights violations are daily circulated around the globe at high intensity and are known to the international communities. The regime is accustomed to kill unarmed civilians since it has illegally controlled the capital city of Oromia, Finfinne Addis Ababa, on May 28, 2005. Between 2005 and 2007, OSG the Oromo Support Group, a UK-based human rights organization has reported instances of extrajudicial killings, and disappearances of civilians suspected of supporting groups opposing the government, a majority of them from the Oromo people. Therefore, the number of civilians murdered by the regime, between 2005 and 2007, can be above 56, fifty six thousands based on a conservative estimation of the recorded extrajudicial killings in Ethiopia. The violations of civil rights during the process of land grabbing include both direct and systematic crimes against humanity. Human rights violations directly carried out by the regime include physical mistreatment like beating, raping, detaining, torturing and killing during the forced evictions of rural communities from their ancestral land. Systematic violations of human rights mainly involve limitation of accessibility to basic human needs through the destruction of livelihood assets of the people. Outcomes of violations of the legitimate rights of indigenous people to access ancestral land are as follows: The direct human rights violation practices of the regime in Oromia and Southern Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Omo regions of Ethiopia demonstrate atrocities of the land grabbers. For example, human rights violations in the lower Omo valley are characterized by arbitrary arrests and detentions, beatings and mistreatment, governing through fear and intimidation, and violations of economic, social and cultural rights. Since mid November 2007, the regime put Oromia under a martial law. The Oromo people of all age children, youth, and elderly and all classes schoolchildren, university students, peasants, teachers, medical staff,

engineers and other civilians are indiscriminately targeted by the brutal and savage governance of the regime. The special military Agazi and the federal police forces of the regime have wantonly killed hundreds of Oromo civilians since April. The regime has declared war on the Oromo people in order to maintain its illegal occupation of Oromia. However, the institutionalization of corruptions will effectively limit the distribution of investment benefits to the poor people of Ethiopia. Even though the peoples of Ethiopia try, by any means, to fight poverty, the possibility to defeat evil system is full of challenges. The global shadow financial system happily absorbs money that corrupt public officials, tax evaders and abusive multinational corporations siphon away from the peoples of Ethiopia 8. The right to feed households and family is realized in rural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa with the right to access agricultural land to produce sufficient food through crop and animal productions. Agricultural investment policy of the TPLF regime encourages export oriented crop production. Agricultural companies mainly focus on production of commercial crops, because investment on agriculture in remote areas is profit oriented. Therefore, the investment on the production of local staple food crop is very marginal. Therefore, the land grabbing policy of the TPLF regime will increase food insecurity. The right of rural communities to access agricultural land is the most important factor to achieve primary standard of living, because agriculture is the foundation of the livelihood assets of rural communities. Access to land is an essential element of the right to an adequate standard of living and the realization of the right to work art. Land grabbing leads to forced displacements and refugees. The right to adequate housing is the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity 3. The right to housing is directly linked to the right to be protected from forced evictions. For example, the forced displacement of , indigenous peoples from the western Gambella and Omo regions to new villages by the government of Ethiopia details the involuntary nature of the transfers, loss of livelihoods, deteriorating food situations, and ongoing abuses by the armed forces against the affected people: Despite some instances of income improvement by export opportunities, the expansion of world agricultural trade has failed to translate into better living conditions for most of workers on farm in the developing world. Governments and private investors assume rural community accessibility to the job market compensates for the loss of land and livelihoods. However, income derived from daily wages never replaces livelihood assets of rural community, which are constantly and directly derived from land use. Large shares of commercial agriculture jobs are characterized with very poor working conditions mainly very low payment, low-skilled daily work, seasonal fluctuation, without health insurance, very high risk of accidental death without insurance, violence, harassment, and employment of underage children. Children attending primary school are significantly decreased in areas of land grabbing. Deputy Head of a school Tigaba Tekle , near the Karuturi farm said that only 5 out of 60 students are sometimes attending a class, because most of them are working at agricultural fields of Karuturi. Therefore, unsustainable and unsafe employment conditions can not compensate loss of livelihoods of rural communities forcefully evicted from ancestral land. Political function of land grabbing policy of the TPLF regime Governance authorities of imperial, military, and TPLF regimes are highly centralized with absolute land ownership right to sustain rule of dictatorship through chains of colonial agents at regional, provincial, and local levels of Ethiopia. Gebar land tenure system in the South as well as the Rist tenure system of North Ethiopia during imperial regime shows some resemblance to the current land tenure system and with some reservations also it resembles that of the military regime, with the exceptions that the communal Rist system is replaced by the organs of state, i. Land grabbing is the major source of military, political, and economic powers of successive regimes of Ethiopia. Though ethnic equality is now legally recognized, in practice, emergent regions are still politically marginalized and permitted less autonomy, partly due to the federal development strategy, which requires central control of local land resources and changes in livelihoods. Centralization of land governance politics of successive regime of Ethiopia is manifested through the following five levels of land use rights: Land tenure politics of both imperial and military or TPLF regimes are generally sharing similar political goal, i. The commercialization of land has served as a political advantage for the state, because it enhances greater concentration of authority in the hands of the governors. A woreda district or an urban administration shall have the power to expropriate rural or urban landholdings for public purpose where it believes that it should be used for a better development project to be carried out by public entities, private investors, cooperative

societies or other organs, or where such expropriation is decided by the appropriate higher regional or federal government organ for the same purpose Proclamation No. The regime has already institutionalized practices of human right violations through manipulation of constitution. It formulated politically motivated proclamations to limit humanitarian activities of Non Governmental Organizations NGOs using charities proclamation and to crash political opponents through manipulation of anti-terrorism law in order to protect its monopolistic ownership of military, political, and economic powers The regime is not hesitated to practice arbitrary arrest, long detention, or extrajudicial killings of tens of thousands, and torturing peoples suspected to be supporters of opposition political organizations to sustain fears in civil societies. The regime is systematically escalating the level of insecurity by aggravating poverty, expanding borders of food insecurity, manipulating conflicts, degrading safety of ecosystem, and escalation of violations of human rights in order to produce the poorest of poor peoples mainly in colonized regions of Ethiopia. Thus it is intended to use victims of poverty as political animal through manipulation of land use right. The rural communities are directly controlled by the regime and they cannot freely vote opposition political parties during election, because they will be deprived of land use right if they do so. The very existence of governance powers of the regime is possible only with external aids. Foreign aid was essential for birth of the TPLF regime and it is also very essential for growth and expansion of the regime, as oxygen is essential for lung. The aids were resulted in increase of peasant-based supports, legitimacy expansion among the civilian population, use of aid resources to support organizational structures, and quantitative capability in feeding the armies Since , the regime received very huge sum of financial aids. However, majority of peoples in Ethiopia remained in the most wretched poverty, despite decades of development aids. The regime is manipulating foreign military and development aids as instrument to suppress peaceful transfer of governance powers since through marginalization of legitimate opposition political parties or fronts. The government of Ethiopia used donor-supported programs, salaries, and training opportunities as political weapons to control the population, punish dissent, and undermine political opponentsâ€”both real and perceived, that the local officials deny these people i. Policies of aggravating poverty through destruction of livelihoods of rural communities are systematically implemented by the regime to sustain political manipulation of aids, because either emergency or development aids are political instrument of the regime to enforce political support. Therefore, increasing level of poverty is tactical increase of enforcement of peoples electing the regime. The regime is frequently manipulating food aid distribution to crash supporters of political opponents. It uses food aid as an instrument to achieve political objectives, and to protect its governance powers. Land grabbing policy of the regime is systematically intended to increase size of people dependent on food aids in order to secure political support using food aids. Lying on the floor, too exhausted to stand, and flanked by her three-year-old son whose stomach is bloated by malnutrition, one woman described how her family had not eaten for four days. The grandmother said, we are just waiting on the crop, if we have one meal a day we will survive until the harvest, beyond that there is no hope for us 2. The regime intentionally increases climate of insecurity and fear in society that for those depend on food aids they must support the ruling party in order to survive threat of systematic assassination. Conclusion The review indicates the genocidal plan systematically designed by the TPLF regime using the unfair land use policy as a tool in Oromia and Southern Ethiopia to achieve the political goal of complete ownership of the land through silent eradication of the indigenous communities in the long-term. The people of Oromia in particular, and all oppressed peoples of Ethiopia in general, are struggling to reverse this policy of systematic genocide waged on them by successive regimes of Ethiopia. International and local human rights organizations have frequently produced reports of violations of constitutional rights of peoples of Ethiopiaâ€” However, the defenders of successive regimes of Ethiopia have not paid attention to any of the independent reports. The effort of human rights organizations to defend victims of the evil policy of land grabbing in particular, and the politically motivated human rights violations in general, are full of challenges, because the transformation of the global business into unfair economic development is mostly to the advantage of the strongest. However, the international communities and defenders of successive regimes of Ethiopia have not been paid attention to any of the independent reports. The United Nations in particular, and the international community in general, should actively engage in establishing independent commissions of justice both at

regional and global levels to investigate negative effects of unfair land grabs that threaten the existence of indigenous human communities in order to enable victims of land grabbing to access fair justice. I would like to close with a song of King David. How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless, maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

Chapter 5 : Human Rights in Ethiopia - An Update | Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Ethiopia is a member of both the UN Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council. Despite these roles, Ethiopia has a history of non-cooperation with UN special mechanisms.

The Ogaden Somali ethnic group and other minorities, such as the Benishangul and Amhara, have during the same timeframe also experienced continued Government suppression. Local and federal police and militia have been indiscriminately killing civilians and pillaging whole communities where people refused to make way for government-backed investment projects. This page report describes the relentless and systematic pattern of abuse in the Ogaden region, where victims are imprisoned often never facing charges or trials and must face abuse, torture, rape and humiliation. Often their family members or lawyers are not aware of their condition. PM Abiy Ahmed makes startling admission in Ethiopian Parliament regarding state-sponsored terrorism and torture. The Ethiopian parliament lifted the State of Emergency two months early, originally scheduled to end in August. Bashir Makhtal was finally reunited with his family on 21 April in Toronto, Canada after 11 years of incarceration in an Ethiopian prison. In Makhtal was sentenced to life imprisonment after being unlawfully deported from the Kenya-Somalia border during a business trip. Ethiopian authorities re-arrested several politicians and journalists who had recently been freed near the capital city of Addis Ababa. This unrest is a direct consequence of the State of Emergency and lawyer Amha Mekonnen explained that the arrests occurred because they were accused of displaying a prohibited national flag as well as gathering en masse, both violations of the state of emergency rule. However, civilian testimonies argue that they have been shot at close range. This carnage terrified the civilians and over 8, Ethiopians fled to Kenyan Moyale town in search for safety. Kenyan schools have closed to host the refugees, including many injured, yet the city is struggling to contain the influx due to a lack of humanitarian assistance. Taye Dendea, Head of Public Relations and Communications for the Oromia Justice Bureau, condemned the Moyale killings as a planned operation which resulted in his arrest on 15 March and detention in Maekelawi Prison. Yonatan Tesfaye was released from Zeway prison in Oromia state after more than 2 years incarcerated. Gerba and his colleague Merera Gudina were touring the region in order to address their supporters, before being stopped by Ethiopian forces near the city of Nekemte. Eventually they were released from custody in Nekemte, but were forced to stop their tour and to return to Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian government declares a six-month nationwide state of emergency, invoking a grave threat to the constitutional order. The state of emergency, the second in less than a year, was announced a day after the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, in what he described as a bid to "smooth the path for political reform". This declaration gives the government the power to suspend basic human rights and freedoms, such as freedom of assembly, in the name of restoring constitutional order. Ethiopian officials freed Oromo opposition leader Bekele Gerba and six of his colleagues of Oromo Federalist Congress OFC from prison after all charges against the Oromian protesters were dropped. This move is a response to a three-day social boycott that had been going on in the region. Gerba had been detained following the start of protests in November. Government security forces opened fire on protesting participants and killed 7 people in a religious ceremony taking place in Woldiya, a small city situated in the Amhara region in northern Ethiopia. The victims were allegedly chanting anti-government songs 17 January. In response to increased tensions on the border between the Ogaden and the Oromo region and uprising protests against the Ethiopian government that is said to sponsor violence between various ethnic groups, all social media channels have been shut down. Citizen Lab reports that the Ethiopian government is continuing to use targeted malware attacks in over 20 countries and includes the ISP addresses of the government of Eritrea and the Oromia Media Network. The sentence of Oromo activist Yonatan Tesfaye was reduced by three years after the Supreme Court decided to charge him under criminal charges instead of terrorism charges for online activism on Facebook. Following an appeal by state prosecutors, the bail granted to Bekele Gerba was reversed before his release. Bekele Gerba was granted bail by a federal supreme court after months of detention. Oromo activists, however, continue to demand that the politically-motivated charges be dropped. According to a report from the Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa, 10 people were killed and more

than 16 injured by the Agazi forces - federal and special forces tied to the TPLF - in Ambo, Oromia, in the midst of protests triggered by recent shortages of sugar in the country. The Ethiopian Parliament voted in favor of lifting the state of emergency imposed in October. The court will give its verdict on 7 July. Dr Merera Gudina, who is charged with alleged terrorism and other criminal offences, has presented preliminary objections to the federal court where he is standing trial, which postponed the case to 4 May in order to give prosecutors the time to respond. According to Dr Gudina, his trip to Brussels and his speech at the European Parliament should not constitute grounds for his continued detention as he never meant to trespass the state of emergency by travelling to Belgium and never granted interviews to anti-government media outlets. This decision signifies the continuation of state-sponsored violence in heavily policed areas such as Oromia, impunity for authorities and the abuse of martial law to target marginalised communities. The Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa called upon Western powers to condemn the systematic repression and human rights violations happening in Oromia. UNPO released a report on human rights in Ethiopia, shedding light on the worrying situation of the Oromo and Ogadeni peoples. With the support of major international donors such as the European Union, Addis Ababa increasingly places economic development and enforced political stability above human rights and civil liberties. Over the course of three days, more than people died from cholera in Ogaden. Scores more are at high risk of death due to the lack of medical support. It is estimated that since November, more than have died in rural areas and villages in Ogaden. The ongoing drought and the inaccessibility of food and water puts most of the population at risk. Human Rights Watch published a scathing report on the events that took place in Ethiopia. The organization identified a string of human rights abuses including the killing of protesters and others carried out by security forces and the regime in Addis Ababa. Its report highlights violations of the freedom of assembly and the freedom of expression and association, as well as the use of torture and arbitrary detention. Mr Merera Gudina, a high-level Oromo opposition politician, was arrested shortly after his return to Ethiopia after speaking out against the plight of the Oromo people in front of the European Parliament. In his speech from 9 November, he roundly condemned the arrest of thousands of people under the government-imposed, 6-month state of emergency. Those measures include a 6pm to 6am curfew; the right to stop and search suspects; to search private residences without prior court order and forbidding diplomats to travel further than a 40 km radius around the capital. Since then, the Ethiopian authorities have detained more than 1, people, mainly from the Oromia and Amhara regions. The High Representative highlights the slippery slope that a state of emergency brings about for the compliance with civil liberties and urges the Prime Minister to comply with human rights standards as provided for by the Ethiopian constitution. During the meeting, Members of the European Parliament, human rights experts and representatives of the Ethiopian Government had a chance to express their concerns and points of view. Although several MEPs call for the EU to review its strategic partnership with Addis Ababa, denouncing its appalling human rights record, the EU Commission and its External Action Service insist on a dialogue and collaboration with the incumbent government. Ms Barbara Lochbihler MEP extended the debate to the precarious situation of the Ogaden people, who have been subjected to the same kind of rights abuses as the Oromo over the past years. UN human rights experts call for an independent investigation of the ongoing government-directed violence in Ethiopia. The experts would like to see an international commission of inquiry established in order to bring to justice those responsible for the severe human rights violations. The human rights experts, further, highlight a few choice words on the current Ethiopian anti-terrorism legislation, which they describe as conducive to acts leading to extrajudicial executions. The Ethiopian Government declares a six-month state of emergency. In response to ongoing protests after the Irrecha massacre, the Prime Minister decries the peaceful Oromo protests as a danger to the Ethiopian people and institutes the state of emergency. This is proposed to be achieved by a concerted effort to draw up a transitional mechanism for a peaceful shift in power towards an inclusive government for all people of Ethiopia. The Irrecha Festival Massacre. The deployment of armoured vehicles and a combat helicopter, moreover, triggered a stampede on top of the already appalling tragedy. The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization UNPO welcomes the clear stand the EU is taking on the protection of human rights but remarks the scarcity of reliable sources on Oromia used in the report. The locals of the town of Gizan in

Benishangul-Gumuz refused to leave their land after it had been sold for gold prospecting to government and army officials from Tigray; over a dozen of them are claimed to have died in detention. The European Commission assures in an emailed statement that no money from its Emergency Trust Fund is being channelled through the Ethiopian Government or any of its agencies. Despite government statements calling him an Ethiopian hero, Lilesa fears to be killed if he were to return home. The OHCHR demands that human rights experts be allowed to transparently assess the most recent state-sponsored violations of the freedom to peaceful assembly that have verberated especially the Oromo region since late , so far, culminating in the August indiscriminate killing of one hundred unarmed protesters. Approximately people have been killed when security forces used excessive force against Oromo and Amhara protesters. All across Oromia and in several parts of Amhara people went out on the streets to demand political reform, respect for the rule of law and an end to the persecution of people with dissenting opinions from that of the government. During a roundtable discussion, the PAFD explained their agenda, which covers topics such as the potential for peaceful dialogue and cooperation between all oppressed ethnic groups. UNPO General Secretary Marino Busdachin, further, stresses the importance to ensure that EU development funds reach the affected people and are not being embezzled by Government officials. The second side-event on June 23 saw the presentation of the latest Human Rights Watch report on the situation of Oromo in Ethiopia, published on June 16 see below , and an in-depth analysis of the background to the Oromo protests expounded by Mr Garoma Wakessa, Director of the Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa. The founder of the Semayawi Party, Samuel Aweke , is found dead after openly criticizing the government. He reportedly received ominous threats from security officials following the publication of a critical article on the behaviour of Ethiopian security forces during the national elections. Since his murder, an alleged perpetrator has been convicted of the crime, notwithstanding trial observers calling the proceedings a sham. The visit to the Palais des Nations in Geneva has been facilitated by UNPO and is designed to increase pressure on the Ethiopian Government to grant unlimited access to humanitarian agencies to the country and to allow for an independent investigation of the ongoing severe human rights violations, as previous appeals by the international community have gone unheeded. The Obama administration calls on the Ethiopian Government to cease using its anti-terrorism legislation to prosecute journalists, politicians and human rights defenders. After being held incommunicado, without access to legal counsel and under deplorable hygienic conditions for four days, the 22 human rights activists and opposition politicians charged on April 22 under the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation see below have been presented to their judges. They are being accused of inciting violence and being members of the outlawed Oromo Liberation Front; among the detained is the globally respected Oromo Federalist Congress politician Bekele Gerba, who had just been released from prison earlier in . The protesters are trying to raise awareness for the long wait for their applications to be processed and for the high number of rejected claims for asylum. For the implementation of the recently agreed natural gas deal, UNPO calls, particularly, on the European Parliament to make sure that the local Ogaden population will be involved in the decision making process connected to all environmental and land rights side effects that are to be expected. Judging from earlier experiences “ particularly forced displacements of whole communities without adequate compensation, extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances ” the PAFD fears that the people of Ogaden will come out at the short end of the deal. Two foreign journalists and their interpreter have been arbitrarily detained for 24 hours. A government spokesperson claimed the two journalists, who had reported on the most recent Oromo protests, were in violation of their press accreditation “ in other words, reporting on events they were not supposed to report on. Their translator was detained, according to the spokesperson, because of his affiliation with an opposition group. The social media sites have remained inaccessible for months to come. The government-enforced social media blackout , enabled by Ethio Telecom, who is the only telecommunications provider in Ethiopia, has been denied to be intentional by the government and has not been commented on by Ethio Telecom. The ban on social media does, however, match known patterns of practices by the Ethiopian regime to undermine the free flow of information on people trying to make their grievances heard. The Ethiopian Government de facto declares martial law over Oromia. By removing all civil administrators of Oromia from office and replacing them with members of the federal intelligence and military officers, the government de facto

declares martial law over the Ethiopian heartland. Ethiopian forces carry out a gruesome mass killing of villagers in Ogaden. The whole community of Labarbar village near Shilaabo in Ogaden is reported to have been completely destroyed by the Ethiopian army, supported by the infamous Liyu Police militia, apparently due to its vicinity to the Jeexdin Calub natural gas field. Seven inmates have been tortured for hours at an Addis Ababa prison. Overnight, seven inmates at Kalitti prison in Addis Ababa have been severely beaten by prison officials, reportedly receiving broken limbs, cuts and open wounds, leaving their naked bodies smeared in blood. They were, subsequently, subjected to an unknown period of dark solitary confinement. One prisoner, who was separated from the others and whose injuries are reported to have been exceptionally severe, is feared dead. Security forces hit protesters with batons and iron rods to the head and legs in a police operation to crackdown on a peaceful demonstration in Addis Ababa. The EP calls for an independent investigation of the latest crackdowns on peaceful Oromo protesters by government-sponsored militias.

Chapter 6 : Human Rights Violations in Ethiopia

In " Obama's Ethiopia stop irks human rights leaders " [news, July 23], Girma Birru, Ethiopia's ambassador to the United States, claimed that journalists imprisoned under the country's.

Oromo Ethiopia made little progress in on much-needed human rights reforms. Instead, it used a prolonged state of emergency, security force abuses, and repressive laws to continue suppressing basic rights and freedoms. The month state of emergency, first declared in October , brought mass arrests, mistreatment in detention, and unreasonable limitations on freedom of assembly, expression, and association. While abusive and overly broad, the state of emergency gave the government a period of relative calm that it could have used to address grievances raised repeatedly by protesters. However, the government did not address the human rights concerns that protesters raised, including the closing of political space, brutality of security forces, and forced displacement. The ruling coalition has percent of federal and regional parliamentary seats. Broad restrictions on civil society and independent media, decimation of independent political parties, harassment and arbitrary detention of those who do not actively support the government, severely limited space for dissenting voices. Despite repeated promises to investigate abuses, the government has not credibly done so, underscoring the need for international investigations. The government-affiliated Human Rights Commission is not sufficiently independent and its investigations consistently lack credibility. September 18, Video Video: State of Emergency Ethiopia spent much of under a state of emergency first imposed in October following a year of popular protests, renewed for four months in March, and lifted on August 4. Security forces responded to the protests with lethal force, killing over 1,000 protesters and detaining tens of thousands more. He was taken to Tolay military camp, forced to do strenuous exercise, and was whipped with a rubber whip when he could not do it anymore. He and hundreds of others were indoctrinated daily in government policies by security and government officials. Most other detainees had been released after several weeks, but Gameda was taken to an underground room, stripped naked, tied to a chair, and beaten with wooden sticks before federal security officials electrocuted him in various parts of his body, including on his testicles. It was the fourth time he had been arrested since the protests began. He was beaten during each of these occasions and never appeared in court or faced any charges. While the state of emergency was lifted in August, thousands still remain in detention in horrible conditions, and underlying grievances that led to protests have not been addressed by the government in Detainees reported harsh physical punishment and indoctrination in government policies. Places of detention included prisons, military camps, and other makeshift facilities. Artists, politicians, and journalists were tried on politically motivated charges. He joins many other major OFC members on trial on politically motivated charges, including deputy chairman Bekele Gerba. At time of writing, at least 8, people arrested during the state of emergency remain in detention, according to government figures. Freedom of Expression and Association The state tightly controls the media landscape, a reality exacerbated during the state of emergency, making it challenging for Ethiopians to access information that is independent of government perspectives. Many journalists are forced to choose between self-censorship, harassment and arrest, or exile. At least 85 journalists have fled into exile since , including at least six in In addition to threats against journalists, tactics used to restrict independent media include harassing advertisers, printing presses, and distributors. Absent a vibrant independent domestic media, social media and diaspora television stations continue to play key roles in disseminating information. The government increased its efforts to restrict access to social media and diaspora media in , banning the watching of diaspora television under the state of emergency, jamming radio and television broadcasts, targeting sources and family members of diaspora journalists. The Charities and Societies Proclamation CSO law continues to severely curtail the ability of independent nongovernmental organizations. The law bars work on human rights, governance, conflict resolution and advocacy on the rights of women, children, and people with disabilities by organizations that receive more than 10 percent of their funds from foreign sources. Torture and Arbitrary Detention Arbitrary detention and torture continue to be major problems in Ethiopia. Ethiopian security personnel, including plainclothes security and intelligence officials, federal police, special police, and military,

frequently tortured and otherwise ill-treated political detainees held in official and secret detention centers, to coerce confessions or the provision of information. Several women alleged that security forces raped or sexually assaulted them while they were in detention. There is little indication that security personnel are being investigated or punished for any serious abuses. Former security personnel, including military, have described using torture as a technique to extract information. There are serious due process concerns and concerns about the independence of the judiciary on politically sensitive cases. Outside Addis Ababa, many detainees are not charged and are rarely taken to court. Individuals peacefully expressing dissent are often charged under the repressive anti-terrorism law and accused of belonging to one of three domestic groups that the government has designated as terrorist organizations. The charges carry punishments up to life in prison. Acquittals are rare, and courts frequently ignore complaints of torture by detainees. Hundreds of individuals, including opposition politicians, protesters, journalists and artists, are presently on trial under the anti-terrorism law. Residents reported killings, assaults, looting of property, and displacement. Several Somali communities reported reprisal attacks carried out by unknown Oromo individuals. Human Rights Watch is not aware of any efforts by the federal government to stop these incursions. Several hundred thousand people have been internally displaced as a result of the ongoing conflict. No meaningful investigations have been undertaken into any of these alleged abuses in the Somali Regional State. Family members of diaspora have been arbitrarily detained, harassed, and had their property confiscated after their relatives in the diaspora attended protests or were critical of Abdi Illey in social media posts. Key International Actors Despite its deteriorating human rights record, Ethiopia continues to enjoy strong support from foreign donors and most of its regional neighbors, due to its role as host of the African Union and as a strategic regional player, its contributions to UN peacekeeping, regional counterterrorism efforts, its migration partnerships with Western countries, and its stated progress on development indicators. Ethiopia is also a country of origin, transit, and host for large numbers of migrants and refugees. The European Parliament urged the establishment of a UN-led mechanism to investigate the killings of protesters since and to release all political prisoners. Other donors, including the World Bank, have continued business as usual without publicly raising concerns. Despite these roles, Ethiopia has a history of non-cooperation with UN special mechanisms. Other than the UN special rapporteur on Eritrea, no special rapporteur has been permitted to visit since. The rapporteurs on torture, freedom of opinion and expression, and peaceful assembly, among others, all have outstanding requests to visit the country.

Chapter 7 : UNPO: Timeline: Human Rights Situation in Ethiopia

Announcement. Please join the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission for a briefing on the current human rights situation in Ethiopia.. Home to the Oromo, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, the region of Oromia was witness to mostly peaceful student protests in November of against the Ethiopian Government's plan to take over territory to expand the nation's capital.

The sheer numbers involved in this wave of arrests represents the most far-reaching crackdown on freedom of expression seen in many years in Ethiopia. The detainees had been charged with crimes under the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation and the Criminal Code. Many arrests in came in the days immediately after individuals publicly criticised the government, were involved in public calls for reform, applied for permission to hold demonstrations, or attempted to conduct investigative journalism in a region of Ethiopia to which the government severely restricts access. Many of the detainees complained that they experienced torture and were forced to sign confessions or incriminating evidence. Almost all were denied access to lawyers and family at start of detention. The Prime Minister has publicly threatened to carry out further arrests. In the first week of December people were reported to be arrested in Oromia. Conduct systematic monitoring of the ongoing terrorism trials and the trials of members of the Oromo people political opposition arrested during and make findings public. They were accused of involvement with the Ginbot 7 group, a banned political party. There was political violence: One candidate and several activists were killed. Registration as candidates was reportedly prevented by armed forces. Opposition parties said that their members were harassed, beaten and detained by the EPRDF in the build-up to the elections. Hundreds of people were allegedly arrested arbitrarily in the Oromia region , often on the grounds of supporting the Oromo Liberation Front OLF , an armed group. Detention without trial, torture and killings of Oromos were reported. According to Human Rights Watch the polls were preceded by months of intimidation of opposition party supporters. According to European election observers the election fell short of international standards. The government had a five-year strategy to systematically close down space for political dissent and independent criticism. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. According to Reporters Without Borders Ethiopia was out of in its latest worldwide index in January He was charged under the anti-terrorism law. Before his arrest, he was the deputy editor of the Awramba Times. In prison [13] in , Reeyot Alemu Gobebo, a journalist for Feteah, was convicted on three counts under the terrorism law and initially sentenced to 14 years in prison. This sentence was reduced to 5 years on appeal. The definition of "foreign" NGO was broadened to include local NGOs that receive more than ten percent of their funding from foreign sources. However, the government of Ethiopia itself receives 50 to 60 percent of its national budget from foreign governments, which according to its own definition would clearly make it a foreign entity as well. Internet in Ethiopia In , Ethiopia passed a law that criminalizes providing Internet voice communication VoIP and requiring inspection of any imported voice communications equipment. State security forces threatened, assaulted, and arbitrarily arrested villagers who resisted the transfers. From through January , Ethiopia leased out at least 3. In Gambella, 42 percent of the land is marketed for investors. Its richly fertile soil has attracted foreign and domestic investors who have leased large tracts of land at favourable prices. In this, it was claimed that the Ethiopian police massacred almost opposition protesters, who were protesting in response to the May General Elections. During this, live gunfire from government forces was directed at protesters and bystanders. According to a report released by Human Rights Watch HRW in June , the Ethiopian army has committed widespread executions , torture and rape in Ogaden , as part of a counterinsurgency campaign. A rating of 1 is "free"; 7, "not free".

Chapter 8 : OHCHR | What are Human Rights

Ethiopia Human Rights Human Rights Concerns. In November of , Ethiopian police killed 6 and wounded as many as 24

civilians in a march protesting the recently released election results.

Chapter 9 : Genocide Watch: Land Grabbing and Violations of Human Rights in Ethiopia | OromianEconomy

The police and army continued to enjoy impunity for human rights violations committed in and During the year, the government rejected calls for independent and impartial investigations into human rights violations committed in the context of protests in various regional states.