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EHRCO

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EHRCO stands for democracy, the rule of law and the respect of human rights.

Stop Illegal Acts Being Committed by low-level Government Officials Against Members and Supporters of Opposition Parties! 80th Special Report

19 October 2004

Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) had been issuing reports concerning the various forms of abuses being committed against members and supporters of opposition political parties. In its 19th, 20th, 21st, and 22nd Regular Reports issued previously, EHRCO documented several incidents of such violations and urged the government to take legal measures on the perpetrators. It also appealed to national and international human rights groups to do whatever they can and exert pressure on the Ethiopian government so that it would take the necessary corrective measures.

Nevertheless, these illegal acts have continued unabated particularly in the Amhara regional state where local militiamen, kebele officials, members of the defense force and other low-level government and party officials in the state commit various forms of human rights violations. These illegal acts include extra judicial killings, torture, eviction from farmlands, intimidation, denial of relief food, prohibition of public services and discrimination against participation in social forums and institutions. These abuses are being committed by taking membership in opposition political parties as an excuse. This is an utter disregard of the rights of citizens to be members of political parties of their choice enshrined under Art.38/2/ of the FDRE Constitution.

In this Special Report EHRCO documented its findings of abuses being committed against members and supporters of the Ethiopian Democratic Unity Party (EDUP) and those of the All Ethiopia Unity Party (AEUP) in East Gojam zone Awobal, Goncha Siso Enesse, Enarj Enawga, Hulet Eju Enesse, Enemay and Shebel Berenta weredas and in North Wello zone Guba Lafto and Kobo weredas of the Amhara regional state.

Human rights Abuses Committed Against Members and Supporters of Ethiopian Democratic Unity Party (EDUP) East Gojam Zone

Table 1. In Awobal Wereda

No.	Name of Victim	Address	Details
1	Tize Habtamu	Mekedes Afkera Kebele	On 30 August 2004 at about 7:00 a.m. members of the National Reserve Force and kebele armed men arrested them at their house, took them to a town called Lega Neous and beat them. As a result of the beatings Tize has now difficulty moving and urinating.
2	Abiyot Tize		

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y>IM ; qF ysBxêEm BèC ለ ሰፊ ግብርና ለሰፊ ግብርና ለሰፊ ግብርና

. EHRCO has an observers status in the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, is a member of World Organization Against Torture and is also a corresponding member of the International Federation of Human Rights.

3	Aguate Bitew	" "	On 30August 2004 at about 8:00 a.m.kebele armed men arrested him at his house, took him to a far away place and beat him. As a result of the injury he sustained he cannot stand upright and move without support
4	Wubale Tadesse	" "	On 29June 2004 at about 10:00 a.m. kebele armed men arrested him at his house, took him to Lega Neous town and beat him. He was released after two days of detention on 1July2004.
5	Dagne Abehunegnaw	" "	On 30 August 2004 at about 8:00 a.m.kebele armed men arrested him at his work place, took him to Lega Neous town and tortured him after taking his shoes off.
6	Yazachew Habte	" "	Kebele armed men arrested and beat him at his home on 18 and 19August 2004.
7	Dehnet Damte	Ed Mariam kebele	On 13August 2004 at about 6:00 a.m. wereda police and armed men arrested and beat him at his house.
8	Yigrem Ayalew	Mizan Washa Tulu kebele	On 14 August 2004 at about 4:00 a.m. Awebal wereda police arrested and beat him. He fled his home since then fearing further attacks.
9	Temo Adugna	" "	On 12August2004 at about 2:00p.m. members of the National Reserve Force arrested him at his house and beat him.
10	Anteneh Binor	Kurar Genet Kebele	On 14August 2004 at about 1:00p.m. kebele armed men arrested him at his house, took him to Ed Mariam kebele and beat him.
11	Solomon Tsehai	Lumame town	He is a representative of the EDUPoffice in Lumame town. Awabel wereda police chief and other police officers of the wereda intimidated him on 13 August 2004 while he was Ed Mariam kebele to investigate allegations of abuses being committed against members of the EDUP in the kebele. He was forced to close the EDUP office in Lumame town and fled the town.
12	Ayele Alemu	Ed Mariam kebele	He is the organizer of EDUP in Ed Mariam kebele. Kebele armed men intimidated him by coming to his home on 19 August 2004 at about 10:00 p.m.He fled his home as of 21August fearing further attacks.
13	Melse Adank	Mekdes Afkera kebele	He escaped an arrest attempted by kebele armed men on17August2004 and fled his home fearing attacks.

Table 2. In Goncha Siso Enesse wereda

No.	Name of Victim	Address	Details
1	Mebratu Gelaye	Amonat Mariam kebele	He was attacked by kebele armed men on 15May 2004 while he was heading to his home after participating in a meeting called by EDUP. He fled his home fearing further attacks since then.
2	Alamne Eziawdress	Sekela Ganborre kebele	Sekela wereda police and kebele armed men attacked him in Gundeweyin town on 25August 2004. The kebele social court fined him imposed on him a fine of 30.00birr for not participating in a community work. He was detained at the kebele prison as he could not pay the fine.
3	Molla Alamerew	" "	He has been detained since 2 September for failing to pay a two birr fine imposed on him by the kebele social court for not participating in a community development work.
4	Ayal Tamiru	" "	He was sentenced to a forced labor by the kebele social court for threatening, which he refused. The sentence was changed to a one-month imprisonment. As a result he was detained at the kebele prison as of 24August2004.
5	Menge Bayulegne	" "	Kebele officials refused to issue him a title deed for his land on 19August2004 because he was a member of the EDUP.He was also sentenced to fine of 60 birr for not attending a community work.As he could not pay the fine, the kebele social court decided that he be imprisoned for one month in

			the kebele prison where he has been in detention since 24 August 2004.
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Table 3. In Enarj Enawga wereda

No.	Name of Victim	Address	Details
1	Habtamu Channe	Dej Agamna	A police officer of the wereda hit him on the neck on 22 October 2003 rendering him unconscious for about three hours.
2	Yibeltal Bayile	Aba Jember kebele	On 8 February 2004, at about midnight, the chairman of the kebele along with other kebele armed men fired at his house. On the next day, the armed men went to his house and arrested him and his brother. The kebele officials detained the two for three days.
3	Tewabe Melesse	Deya Tebba	On 12 June 2004, the kebele chairman and wereda policemen assaulted him by falsely accusing him of concealing illegal arms.
4	Belete Deresse	Dej Agamna kebele	On 13 April 2004, the kebele social court fined him 60 birr for not attending a night patrol and for failing to participate in community work.
5	Ayalew Bayu	Deya Tebba	He escaped an attack by two wereda police officers on 4 September 2004 that did not like his being a member of the EDUP.

Human Rights Abuses Committed Against Members And Supporters of All Ethiopia Unity Party (AEUP)

East Gojam Zone

Table 4. In Enemay woreda

No.	Name of Victim	Address	Details
1	Workneh Mehari	Dimma kebele	Dimma kebele armed men assaulted him on 7 June 2004 while he was in a bar in Dimma town. The reason for the attack was that he was a member of the AEUP. As a result of the injury he sustained from the attack, he was taken to the Bichena town hospital where he was referred to Debre Markos hospital for further treatment.
2	Wubye Mekuria	Enshignit kebele	On 17 April 2004, at about midnight kebele armed men fired at him while he was heading to his home after staying late at a wedding party. The armed men went to his house and tried to arrest him by alleging that he was the one who fired at them the previous night.
3	Ayewew Mekuria	Weyra kebele	Kebele armed men detained him for seven days for allegedly ploughing pasture land. Also he has been evicted from his farmland since 3 September 2004.
4	Sintayehu Kebede	Banja Sherer kebele	Kebele armed men took away his eucalyptus trees on 31 July 2004 by saying that he is a member of the AEUP. His coffee crop had also been taken away on 28 July 2004.

Table 5. In Shebel Berenta Wereda

No.	Name of Victim	Address	Details
1	Haimanot Getto	Ed Wuha town	He is an 18-year-old student at Belay Zeleke Secondary School. His father is secretary of the Shebel Berenta wereda AEUP office. On 21 August 2004 at about midnight kebele armed men forced their way into his house and attacked him by taking him out of the house. The attackers were asking him to show them the place where his father concealed his gun and money. Finally they left him by warning him not to tell anybody about what happened to him.

2	Fanta Liyew	Ed Wuha town	He is the guard of the AEUP office in Shebel Berenta wereda. On 22 August 2004, at about midnight Shebel Berenta wereda policemen forced their way into the office and attacked him with a muzzle of a gun.
3	Corporal Debasu Yalew	Ed Wuha	He is deputy chairman of the AEUP office in Shebel Berenta wereda. He told EHRCO that a dozen policemen entered his house and took away his radio, 5000 birr and documents of the Party.
4 5	Mamaru Abi Abezaw Geremew	Enishkna Zuchir, Tana kebele	They are both members of the AEUP. They have been detained from 19 March to 17 July 2004 suspected of vagrancy. The Shebel Berenta wereda court however acquitted them of the charges. Since then, they have been the subject of intimidation from the wereda officials and militiamen.

Table 6. In Hulet Eju Ensse wereda

No.	Name of Victim	Address	Details
1	Asmare Jemberu	Beza Bezuhan kebele	A wereda militia member attacked him with a stick on 7 November 2003.
2	Admass Tegegne	Beza Bezuhan kebele	On 31 May 2004, kebele armed men demolished the house he built for the small business he was running.

North Wello Zone

Table 7. In Guba Lafto wereda

No	Name of Victim	Address	Details
1 2 3 4 5	Temere Teferra Mekonnen Tebeje Berhanu Agashen Belay Aregaw Bisetegne Tsegaw	013 kebele peasant association	They were charged and sentenced by the kebele social court to a one-month imprisonment or to pay a fine of 150 birr for not participating in a community work. They wanted to appeal against this decision but they were denied the necessary documents and stated in detention for ten days. Temere stayed in detention for additional 20 days, as he could not pay the fine. Mekonnen, Berhanu and Belay appealed to the wereda court, which acquitted them of the charges. The wereda court also reduced the fine against Bisetegn to 50 birr. The families of these individuals have been subjected to harassment and intimidation by kebele officials for reporting the situation to EHRCO.
6	Ayalew Sisay	025 kebele peasant association	Kebele officials arrested him on 30 March and detained him for one day for refusing to quit membership to AEUP despite promises of a post in the kebele administration have been offered to him.
7	Gebre Meskal Tessema	018 kebele peasant association	He was denied the loan facility the kebele provides for peasants on account of his membership to the AEUP.
8 9	W/t Amarech Meknnoen Misge Fantaw	018 kebele peasant association	The two are father and daughter. Kebele officials denied Amarech the support letter that she is required to present in order to get employment after she completed her vocational training just because her father Misge is a member of the AEUP.
10	Bihonegne Fantaw	020 kebele peasant association	He is deputy chairman of the Guba Lafto wereda AEUP office. He was detained from 24 December 2003 to 7 January 2004 for allegedly inciting the public against participation in community work and paying of taxes
11	Belayneh Tarekew	027 kebele peasant association	He was expelled from membership of a traditional self-help association by the order the kebele chairman issued at a gathering that members of the AEUP should be expelled from membership in such associations. Kebele officials also dismissed Belayneh from his food for work employment.

Table 8. In Kobo wereda

No	Name of Victim	Address	Details
1	Gizaw Melaku	018 kebele peasant association	He and his wife were denied their three months wage for the services they rendered in the food for work program while payment was effected to other co-workers.
2	Abebe Aberra	" "	He was denied the grant of a substitute farmland for part of his land allotted to planting tree seedlings, because of his membership to the AEUP. Other peasants in a similar situation were given substitute lands.
3	Yebirgual Ambaw	" "	She was denied her twenty days wage for the service she rendered in the food for work program because her husband is a member of the AEUP.

Table 9. Names Of EDUP Members Whom The Party Alleged to Have Been Assaulted By Members of Police, the National Reserve Unit and Kebele Armed men In Awobal Wereda

No	Name of Victim	Address	Date
1	Wubale Alemu	Mizan Washa Tulu kebele	12August 2004
2	Belay Yitayew	" "	" "
3	Gela Wudneh	" "	" "
4	Aboneh Mengistu	" "	" "
5	Yirga Zegeye	" "	" "
6	Minene Aboneh	Addis Amba kebele	14August2004
7	Asmare Aboneh	" "	" "
8	Temesgen Kebede	" "	13August 2004
9	Getu Gessesse	" "	14August 2004
10	Gashu Kefale	" "	" "
11	Atinkut Alabaw	" "	" "
12	Talema Ayenew	" "	" "
13	Kebede Nakew	Dima Melisse kebele	12August 2004
14	Getu Tadesse	" "	" "
15	Mitikua Mamo	" "	" "
16	Abewa Molla	" "	" "
17	Andualem Diresse	" "	" "
18	Habtamu Damte(with his wife and children)	" "	" "
19	Enewa Tibebu (with her child)	" "	" "
20	Worku Teshager	" "	" "
21	Bayu Gashaw	" "	" "
22	Abi Abone	" "	" "
23	Andualem Deresse	" "	" "
24	Emewa Tiffa	" "	" "
25	Zebenay Negeyew	" "	" "
26	Gardew Binor	Kurar Genet kebele	14August 2004
27	Mosu Mesfenu	Mekdes Afkera kebele	18August 2004
28	Tena Admassie	" "	" "
29	Mose Mihrete	" "	" "
30	Yirga Zegeye	" "	12August 2004

Conclusion

As has been stated above, the various abuses being committed against members and supporters of opposition political parties are perpetrated by giving different false excuses in an attempt to justify them. Among such excuses are;

- Failure to participate in land terracing
- Absence in meetings
- Ploughing land allotted to pasture
- Failure to carry out night shift patrol duties and
- Concealing illegal arms

Despite these excuses, evidence documented by EHRCO reveal that the abuses are mainly committed because the victims are found to be members or supporters of opposition political parties. It is EHRCO's belief that legal duties should be imposed and applied equally for all. Any infractions of duty that entail any form of liability should be presented to the pertinent judicial bodies and be decided upon. The illegal state of affairs where ruling party officials and militiamen are acting as both accusers and judges should immediately stop as it is a clear disregard for the principle of the rule of law. If this state affair continues unabated, the freedom of activity of political parties, which is a key yardstick for the freedom and fairness of the upcoming national elections will be lacking.

Thus, EHRCO urges the government to realize that it is its duty to ensure that these abuses being committed by low-level party and government officials have stopped and to bring those responsible to justice.

EHRCO also calls on citizens, national and international human rights groups, government envoys, and representatives of international organizations, who stand for the respect of human rights and the rule of law, to exert pressure on the Ethiopian government so that it would stop the human rights abuses being committed against members and supporters of opposition political parties and bring the perpetrators to justice, by writing to the government bodies and officials listed below and by using every other possible means.

Council of People's Representatives

P.O.Box 80001, Fax (251-1) 550900 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Council of Federation

P.O.Box 80001, Fax (251-1) 550722 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

H.E. Ato Girma Wolde Giorgis, President, FDRE

P.O.Box 1031, Fax (251-1) 552020, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

H.E. Ato Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister, FDRE

P.O.Box 1031, Fax (251-1) 552020 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

H.E. Ato Harka Haroye, Minister of Justice, FDRE

P.O.Box 1370 Fax (251-1) 520874 Addis Ababa

Amhara Regional State Council

P.O.Box 312 Fax (251-08) 20 10 68