

# Ethiopia

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| <b>Response to Information Request Number:</b> | ETH01002.ZAR   |
| <b>Date:</b>                                   | 10 January 2001  |
| <b>Subject:</b>                                | Ethiopia: Information on the Hadiya ethnic group   |
| <b>From:</b>                                   | INS Resource Information Center, Washington, DC  |
| <b>Keywords:</b>                               | Ethiopia / Cultural heritage / Cultural identity / Ethnic minorities / Ethnicity / Minorities / Minority languages / Nationality / Religious practices |

## Query:

Please provide information on the Hadiya ethnic group of Ethiopia. Where do they live? What part of the population do they comprise? What are their political affiliations?

## Response:

The Hadiya are an Ethiopian ethnic group based south of Addis Ababa in the Gurage, Kambaata, Had[d]iya region between the Omo and Billate rivers, in and around Hosaina (also, Hossana or Hossanna) town, which is located about 100 miles south-south-west of Addis Ababa. They number around one million people (*Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 2000). The language of the Hadiya is Hadiyigna, which had 923,958 native speakers in the region, 93 percent of whom live in rural areas (*Ethiopia*, "Population size of regions . . . 1994," no date). The Hadiya were Muslim but are today predominantly Protestant (Dagmawi, "Treasures in the Family Tree," April 1998).

Politically, the Hadiya zone is part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State, one of nine ethnically based regions in Ethiopia. The Hadiya zone is one the areas of strongest opposition to the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government. Two opposition parties from the zone-the Hadiya National Democratic Organization (HNDO) led by Beyene Petros and the Hadiya People's Democratic Organization (HPDO)-each won a seat in the federal parliament (the Council of People's Representatives) and the opposition won a majority of seats from the Hadiya zone in the regional parliament (Derkson, *Elections around the World*, "Elections in Ethiopia," no date; *Voice of America*, "Ethiopian Election Information: August 2000 update, August 2000).

In the May 2000 Ethiopian elections for national and regional parliaments, voting in the Hadiya zone had to be postponed because of the high level of violence in the area. The HNDO reported that in the first three months of 2000 over 150 of its supporters and activists had been detained by government security forces (EHRCO, "EHRCO's 1<sup>st</sup> Report on the May General Election," 10 March 2000). At the time of the 14 May 2000 elections *The Associated Press* reported, "Government forces killed seven people in Hadiya zone, where opposition to the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front is very strong . . . Five people died when security forces threw a grenade into a protesting crowd. Two more were killed when police opened fire on another crowd" (*The Associated Press*, "Reports of continued heavy fighting as Ethiopians vote in general elections," 16 May 2000).

The postponed elections were rescheduled for June 2000 and the HNDO won a seat in the

federal parliament for party leader Beyene Petros (the HPDO also won a seat) and won a majority in the regional assembly. Parties under the EPRDF umbrella won 496 out of 548/550 seats in the Council of Representatives (*Voice of America*, "Ethiopian Election Information: August 2000 update, August 2000). The HNDO leader at a press conference following the election complained of the tactics of the ruling EPRDF party: "In the whole of the Hadiya Zone, EPRDF won only four seats of the regional government. And the regional council decided to pick two individuals among these four individuals whereas the twenty-one members of our party who make up 70% and hence should be representing the population was not allowed to nominate the candidates for these constitutionally provided representations" (*Ethiopiafirst.com*, "Transcript from statements made by Dr. Beyene Petros," 11 October 2000).

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RIC within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee or asylum status.

## **References**

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