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16 March 2006

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Ethiopia: Treatment of relatives of Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) members or relatives of other opposition party members (2005 - 2006)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the treatment of relatives of Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) members and of relatives of other opposition party members was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In June and November 2005, demonstrations erupted in protest of general election results and led to the arrests of thousands of people in Ethiopia (FIDH 3 Jan. 2006; HRW 18 Jan. 2006), including members of the CUD and other opposition parties (AI 22 Feb. 2006; see also FIDH 3 Jan. 2006). The Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme (FIDH) reported that children were among those who had been killed during the protests, and that two teenaged boys were among those arrested and charged for crimes including conspiracy, armed uprising, subversion, treason and genocide (ibid.).

On 1 November 2005, Amnesty International (AI) stated that "[I]arge numbers of suspected members of the CUD are reportedly being taken from their homes by police." According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005*, although by law, police are required to obtain a judicial warrant before searching private property, officers nevertheless forcibly entered homes during and after the June and November 2005 demonstrations, rounded up "thousands" of people and, in some cases, detained their family members (8 Mar. 2006, Sec.1f). Opposition parties such as the CUD, the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) and the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM), alleged that, over the course of 2005, their members were the subject of intimidation and violence by local government officials, including the burning of their homes (*Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 1, 3).

The chairman of the CUD and leader of the opposition, Hailu Shawel, informed the press that he and his family had been placed under house arrest following the election protests in June 2005 (Reuters 11 June 2005). The spouse of one top CUD leader who was detained by police told the Virginia-based *Ethiopian Review* that she was receiving death threats on a daily basis (15 Nov. 2005). The *Ethiopian Review* did not elaborate, and corroborating information on the death threats and on the house arrest could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Family members, along with workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), were permitted to visit detainees held by authorities after the June election protests (AFP 18 June 2005; AI 22 Feb. 2006), although according to AI, this access was "restricted" (ibid.). Following the November 2005 demonstrations, groups of people waited outside the ICRC office, hoping to obtain information on the whereabouts of their family members (AFP 15 Nov. 2005). By November 2005, estimates of the total number of people detained in connection with the election protests ranged from 11,000 to 14,000 (ibid.; *Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 3). Close to 8,000 of those detainees have been released, according to Agence France-Presse (AFP) (15 Nov. 2005). Among those who remained in detention and were charged with high treason, organizing armed uprising and genocide (AI 22 Feb. 2006) were top CUD leaders, including the chairman and the vice-chairman (ibid. 1 Nov. 2005; *Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 3). The CUD is comprised of the All-Ethiopia Unity Party (AEUP), the Ethiopian Democratic Union Party (EDUP), the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) and Rainbow Ethiopia (RE:MDSJ) (*Political Handbook of the World 2005-2006* 2006, 379).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Political Parties of the World 2005

Internet sites, including: *Addis Tribune*, The Carter Center, Ethiopian News Agency (ENA), Voice of America (VOA).

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