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Ethiopia: Treatment of Eritreans by Ethiopian government authorities (2005 - 2006)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the treatment of Eritreans by Ethiopian government authorities was limited among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

As part of the United Nations (UN) Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) monitors the treatment of Eritreans in Ethiopia (as well as of Ethiopians in Eritrea) (UN Mar. 2005, 17). The OHCHR, reporting on the period between August 2004 and February 2005, expressed alarm over the rise in Eritrean nationals seeking asylum in Ethiopia (ibid., 18; see also US 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2.d). The OHCHR indicates that on average, 200 new Eritreans are registered in Ethiopia each month (UN Mar. 2005, 18). According to the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) in the year 2005, 5,000 Eritrean nationals sought asylum in Ethiopia (2006). The total number of Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia was estimated at 18,700, though it is unclear whether or not this figure includes the 5,000 new arrivals (USCRI 2006). In USCRI's assessment, no refoulement took place in 2005 (ibid.).

The OHCHR notes that in October 2005, the Ethiopian government expressed interest in forcibly repatriating unaccompanied Eritrean minors entering the country through the Ethiopian state of Tigray (UN Mar. 2005, 18). The UN Secretary-General, in his August 2005 report to the UN Security Council on Ethiopia and Eritrea, refers to reports of discrimination against Eritreans in Ethiopia on the basis of nationality, and of "difficulties in accessing public social services ..." (UN 30 Aug. 2005, para. 19). He also indicates that Ethiopian nationals in Eritrea were subject to the same treatment (ibid.). *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005* reports anecdotal evidence that "local government officials denied indigent Eritreans the right to free medical services" (US 8 Mar. 2006 Sec. 1.d).

USCRI indicates that nearly all Eritrean refugees (as well as those from Sudan and Somalia) are required to live in camps in Ethiopia, and that they need travel permits to exit the camps (2006). In 2005, those who left without a permit were arrested and brought back to the camp, but they were not charged nor returned to their country of origin (USCRI 2006). According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005*, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) visited Eritreans who had been arrested in relation to "alleged" national security concerns, including Eritrean citizens present in Ethiopia and Ethiopian citizens of Eritrean origin (US 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 1.c).

In 2004, the Ethiopian government set out a "Directive Issued to Determine the Residence Status of Eritrean Nationals Residing in Ethiopia" (WriteNet May 2006, Sec. 6.5; Ethiopia n.d.). For analysis of this Directive and other information relevant to the status and treatment of Eritreans in Ethiopia, consult Sections 5.6.4 to 6.7 and Section 7.1.3 of the May 2006 WriteNet report entitled *Ethiopia: A Sociopolitical Assessment*.

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.

References

Ethiopia. N.d. Embassy of Ethiopia in Washington, D.C. "Directive Issued to Determine the Residence Status of Eritrean Nationals Residing in Ethiopia." <<http://www.ethiopianembassy.org/RstatusEr.shtml>> [Accessed 22 Dec. 2006]

United Nations (UN). 30 August 2005. Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea*. (S/2005/553) <<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/474/62/PDF/N0547462.pdf?OpenElement>> [Accessed 21 Dec. 2006]

_____. March 2005. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). *Africa Region: Quarterly Reports of Field Offices*. <<http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/field/docs/africa-mar05.doc>> [Accessed 21 Dec. 2006]

United States (US). 8 March 2006. Department of State. "Ethiopia." *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005*. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61569.htm>> [Accessed 28 Dec. 2006]

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI). 2006. "Ethiopia." *World Refugee Survey 2006*. <<http://www.refugees.org/countryreports.aspx?id1583>> [Accessed 16 Nov. 2006]

WriteNet. May 2006. Cedric Barnes. *Ethiopia: A Sociopolitical Assessment*. <<http://www.unhcr.org/home/RSDCOI/44f29d704.pdf>> [Accessed 21 Dec. 2006]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet Sites, including: Amnesty International (AI); British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC); *Deki-Alula Ethiopian Online Newsletter*; Eritrea Ministry of Information (Shabait.com); European Country of Origin Information Networks (ecoi.net); Human Rights Watch (HRW); International Crisis Group (ICG); Security, Immigration and Refugee Affairs Authority (Ethiopia); United Nations (UN) Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN); UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

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