



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIR's](#) | [Help](#)

07 November 2006

ETH102062.E

Ethiopia: The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP); whether the EPRP is banned from carrying out its activities; recent role and activities of the EPRP within Ethiopia, especially in the context of the 2005 elections; whether members of the EPRP are arrested or harassed by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Forces (EPRDF) (2004 - 2006)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), established in 1972 (*The Europa World Year Book 2006* 10 June 2006, 1668; National MIPT 4 Oct. 2006), began as a militant organization that fought successive Ethiopian regimes (*Political Handbook of the World 2005-2006* Dec. 2005, 382; EPRP n.d.; National MIPT 4 Oct. 2006). Following the Ethiopian military regime's [or "the Derg's"] takeover of Ethiopia in 1974, the EPRP was reportedly outlawed (*ibid.*; EPRP n.d.). According to the Ethiopian newspaper *The Reporter*, in October 2005, the group was still outlawed in Ethiopia and, like other banned parties, was based in the "Diaspora" (29 Oct. 2005; see also *The Indian Ocean Newsletter* 12 Mar. 2005 and *ibid.* 10 Sept. 2005). However, news sources report that the group is among several organizations participating in an "armed struggle" within Ethiopia (UN 17 Nov. 2004; *Addis Zena* 28 June 2005). Further information on the EPRP's armed struggle in Ethiopia could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

According to *Addis Zena*, an Ethiopian newspaper, the EPRP did not participate in the May 2005 legislative elections due to its alleged involvement in armed struggle, which, under the constitution, excludes it from the electoral process (28 June 2005; see also *The Reporter* 29 Oct. 2005). However, other news sources indicate that the EPRP is part of a coalition of opposition groups, the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) (UN 17 Nov. 2004; CNN n.d.; see also National MIPT 4 Oct. 2006), which did take part in the elections (*The Nation* 10 Jan. 2006). In the 2005 elections, the UEDF won 52 of the Ethiopian Parliament's 545 seats, while the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Forces (EPRDF) and the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) won 327 and 109 seats, respectively (NEBE n.d.; see also *The Nation* 10 Jan. 2006). In January 2006, an EPRP representative reportedly became the UEDF Chairman (*The Indian Ocean Newsletter* 21 Jan. 2006).

A 12 March 2005 article in *The Indian Ocean Newsletter* indicates that members of the UEDF claimed that security agents of the EPRDF threatened to retaliate against the families of UEDF candidates if the candidates did not withdraw from the 2005 elections. The same article notes that the EPRDF accused the UEDF of "using the election campaign to prepare the population for actions of civil disobedience" (*The Indian Ocean Newsletter* 12 Mar. 2005). The EPRDF reportedly also accused the EPRP of disseminating "propaganda in favour of protest actions" via the group's radio broadcasts from Europe (*ibid.*).

In April 2005, *The Indian Ocean Newsletter* reported that all of the opposition organizations, including organization members of the UEDF, had "built up evidence of exactions by members of the EPRDF or Ethiopian officials against their candidates or supporters" (30 Apr. 2005). The CUD claimed that that two of its members had been murdered, while thirty-nine others had been arrested and some had been tortured (*The Indian Ocean Newsletter* Apr. 2005). The UEDF made "similar declarations" (*ibid.*).

In September 2005, *The Indian Ocean Newsletter* noted that, during an interview on an Ethiopian opposition radio station broadcast from the United States (US), a former Ethiopian security services officer claimed that the security services had a special department responsible for monitoring opposition parties (10 Sept. 2005). The officer claimed that the department had a desk for the EPRP, as well as for the banned Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) (*The Indian Ocean Newsletter* 10 Sept. 2005).

According to an October 2005 report by the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) on the treatment of members and supporters of opposition parties,

[s]tarting from September 25, 2005, government security forces, members of the police force and kebele militiamen have been detaining, forcibly kidnapping, beating, torturing and inflicting other harms against members and supporters of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) and United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) (17 Oct. 2005, 1)

A 17 December 2005 article in *The Indian Ocean Newsletter* reports that the Eritrean authorities were seeking to form alliances with the EPRP, the OLF and other Ethiopian opposition groups in order to "form a larger armed group that would be more effective against the EPRDF regime." Corroborating information on the Eritrean authorities seeking to form alliances with the EPRP and other Ethiopian opposition groups could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In February 2006, the Ethiopian anti-terrorism task force reportedly issued a statement declaring that they had arrested members of a "clandestine group with the aim of carrying out armed urban terrorism" (Radio Ethiopia 19 Feb. 2006). In its statement, the task force also claimed that the underground group was linked to the CUD leadership, that it received financial support from abroad and that it was given tactical support from EPRP members currently linked to the CUD (ibid.).

No further information on the activities of the EPRP in Ethiopia and the treatment of members of the EPRP by the EPRDF could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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

Addis Zena [Addis Ababa, in Amharic]. 28 June 2005. "Western Diplomats Reportedly Devising Coalition Government in Ethiopia." (BBC Monitoring Africa/Factiva)

Cable News Network (CNN). N.d. "World/Election Watch: Ethiopia." <<http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/election.watch/africa/ethiopia2.html>> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2006]

Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO). 17 October 2005. *Urgent Call! Human Rights Violations Committed Against Members and Supporters of the Opposition Parties Should Be Stopped: Special Report No. 89.* <<http://www.ehrco.org/Reports/Special89.pdf>> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2006]

Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP). N.d. "Profile." <<http://www.eprp.com/eprp02.html>> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2006]

The Europa World Year Book 2006. 10 June 2006. Vol. 1. "Ethiopia." London: Routledge.

The Indian Ocean Newsletter [Paris]. 21 January 2006. "UEDF Goes Underground." (Factiva)

_____. 17 December 2005. "Asmara Stokes the Oven." (Factiva)

_____. 10 September 2005. "A Defector Accuses." (Factiva)

_____. 30 April 2005. "Legislative Elections Threatened?" (Factiva)

_____. 12 March 2005. "Discussion Getting Strained." (Factiva)

The Nation [Nairobi]. 10 January 2006. Ahmed Adan. "AAGM: Ethiopia on the Way to Real Recovery." (AllAfrica/Factiva)

National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT). 4 October 2006. Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB). "Group Profile: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Army." <<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=4014>> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2006]

National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE). N.d. "Election Results." <<http://www.electionsethiopia.org/Election%20Results.html>> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2006]

Political Handbook of the World: 2005-2006. December 2005. "Eritrea." Edited by Arthur Banks, Thomas Muller, and William Overstreet. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Radio Ethiopia [Addis Ababa, in Amharic]. 19 February 2006. "Ethiopian Security Forces Uncover Urban Clandestine Armed Group." (BBC Monitoring Newsfile/Factiva)

The Reporter [Addis Ababa]. 29 October 2005. "Suspended Ethiopian Opposition Leaders Says Action 'Illegal'." (BBC Monitoring Africa/Factiva)

United Nations (UN). 17 November 2004. Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN). "Ethiopian Government Urges Opposition Parties To Participate in 2005 Elections." (BBC Monitoring Africa/Factiva)

Additional Sources Consulted

Publications: *Political Parties of the World*, 6th ed.; *Revolutionary and Dissident Movements of the World*, 4th ed.

Internet sites, including: African News Agency (Afrol News), AllAfrica, Amnesty International (AI), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), European Union (EU) Election Observation Mission, Factiva, *The Guardian* [London], Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group (ICG), United Kingdom Home Office, United States Department of State.

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.