



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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13 March 2007

### ETH102458.E

Ethiopia: Evidence of surveillance by government officials of demonstrations against Ethiopia in Europe and North America (2006 - February 2007)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Evidence of surveillance by government officials of demonstrations against Ethiopia in Europe and North America could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

However, 2006 articles published on Ethiopian news Web sites based in the United States (US) claim that the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), one of the parties in the ruling coalition Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government of Ethiopia (BBC 13 May 2005; *PHW 2007* Oct. 2006, 396-397), has posted "secret spy agents" at embassies overseas to monitor Ethiopians abroad (Ethiomeia 17 June 2006; Nazret 30 Aug. 2006). A 17 June 2006 Ethiomeia news article alleges that many of the aforementioned "spy agents" pose as refugees and asylum seekers and are supported by recently assigned TPLF-affiliated diplomats at embassies in Washington, New York and Brussels (17 June 2006).

An article published on the Nazret Web site claims that the government of Ethiopia reportedly issued a 52-page "strategic plan" in 2006 to its foreign embassies to "target" Ethiopians perceived to be against the government in Ethiopia, including opposition leaders (30 Aug. 2006). The plan, according to Ethiomeia, apparently contains numerous action items designed to "weaken the ... opposition camp of the diaspora," for example, by filing lawsuits accusing expatriate Ethiopians of "crimes of genocide, treason, corruption and embezzlement" (Ethiomeia 13 June 2006; see also Nazret 30 Aug. 2006). Nazret also alleges that in 2006, over 50 officials and other staff from various Ethiopian embassies left their posts for refusing to implement the "strategic plan" against members of the opposition diaspora (ibid.). Likewise, Ethiomeia reported in June 2006 that more than 70 embassy diplomats had been "recently recalled and suspended" and then reportedly replaced by loyal TPLF staffers (17 June 2006).

According to its own Web site, Ethiomeia, based in Everett, Washington, was established in 2002 and, declares that one of its goals is to "oppose the current regime's political philosophy and economic policies" (Nov. 2002). The Nazret Web site, based in College Park, Maryland, which has been online since 1994, describes itself as a "leader in Ethiopian news and information," but acknowledges that it is primarily a Web site portal and that the content on the Web site comes from "visitors and contributors" (n.d.).

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

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). 13 May 2005. Q&A: Ethiopia Votes.  
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Ethiomeia [Everett, Washington]. 17 June 2006. "TPLF Spies Being Sent to US, Europe as Refugees, Asylum Seekers." <[http://www.ethiomeia.com/carepress/embassy\\_crackdown.html](http://www.ethiomeia.com/carepress/embassy_crackdown.html)> [Accessed 13 Feb. 2007]

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\_\_\_\_\_. N.d. "About Nazret.com." <<http://www.nazret.com/about/>> [Accessed 6 Mar. 2007]

*Political Handbook of the World (PHW) 2007*. October 2006. "Ethiopia," pp. 396-397. Edited by Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller and William R. Overstreet. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** Debteraw, Embassy of Ethiopia in Ottawa, Embassy of Ethiopia in Washington, DC, ethiogermany.de, Ethiopian Review, European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme (FIDH), Freedom House, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Kinijit Ethiopia, Kinijit North America, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners, United Kingdom Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), United States Department of State, Voice of America, World News Connection (WNC)/Dialog.

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