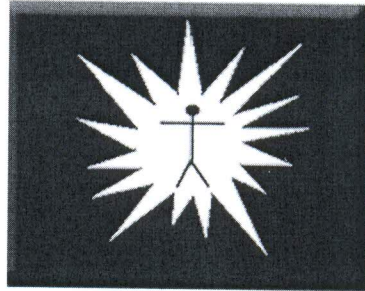


HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



HRCO

138th SPECIAL REPORT

**DISPLACING PEOPLE IN THE NAME OF
DEVELOPMENT MUST STOP IMMEDIATELY!**

Reg. No. 1146

www.ehrco.org



NOV.26, 2015

ADDIS ABABA

ETHIOPIA



HRCO

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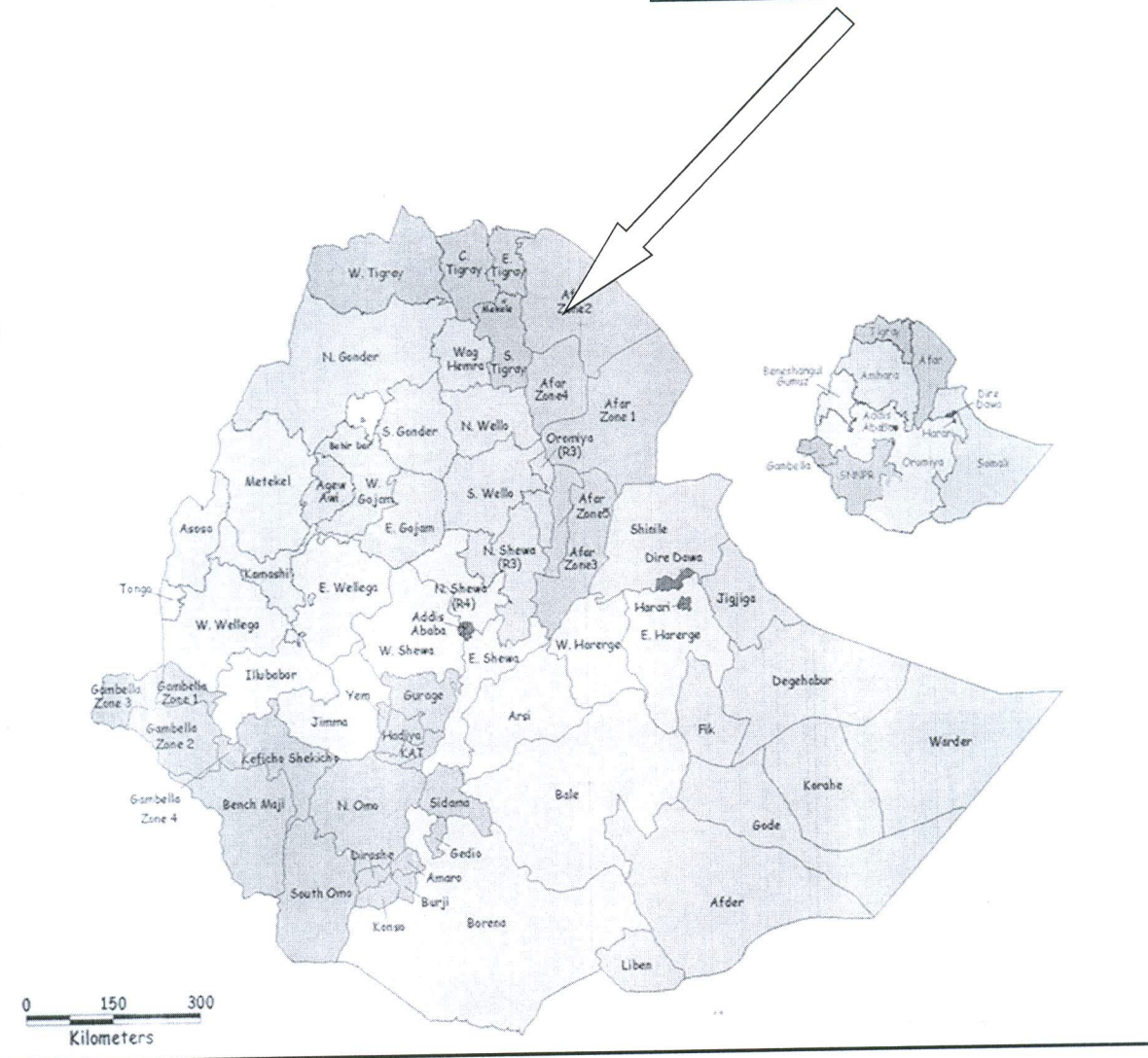
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Addis Ababa Central Ethiopia Region: Phone: (+251) 0115 51 77 04) P.O.Box 2432



1. Map of Ethiopian Administrative regions and zones¹

The Place where the Human Rights violation occurred



¹ "Ethiopia" [Map]. <<http://www.h2empower.org/aboutus/factsethiopia.html>>. (May 18, 2011)



2. THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (HRCO)

The Human Rights Council, formerly known as the “Ethiopian Human Rights Council” (EHRCO) was established on oct.9 1991. It is the first independent, membership based, non political, and not for profit human rights group in Ethiopia. The human rights council stands for democracy, the rule of law and the respect of human rights. HRCO’s most outstanding or flag ship program activity is monitoring, investigating and reporting of human rights violations in Ethiopia. The larger violations of HRs violations in Ethiopia are committed by government officials, law enforcement officers and security personnel mostly at local levels. Over the past two decades HRCO has issued 139 special reports, 36 regular reports and a large number of press releases.

HRCO presents all of its reports first and foremost to the Ethiopian government and to the Ethiopian public. In our reports, we also urge all concerned parties to put pressure on the Ethiopian government to take remedial measures.

3. INTRODUCTION

The FDRE constitution article 40(4&7) states that every Ethiopian citizen has the right to the ownership of private property and is entitled to get commensurate compensation. The INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON ECONOMIC SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ICESCR) which Ethiopia is a member state demands every person and his families to be entitled to the right to food, the right to shelter, and the right to clothing. It also requires the signing states to guaranty these rights.

4. HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE REGIONAL STATE OF AFAR; ASITA PROVINCE, WAMULE DISTRICT

The pastoralist and semi pastoralist people of Afar have lived on animal husbandry and growing Date trees for centuries. Besides being a major source of food, Date tree for the Afar people is income generating cash crop, a raw material for house construction and making mattress. Because of the plant’s drought resisting nature date serves the people of 32 neighboring provinces as the only means survival during dry seasons.



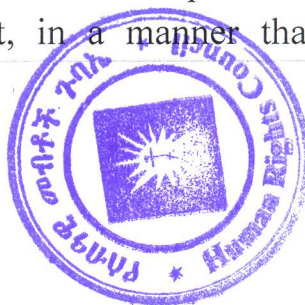
The evicted inhabitants of Asaita and Afambo districts are facing a plethora of problems. Before the eviction the inhabitants were approached by the regional state's officials and told to leave their land. But the victims didn't accept the demand and tried to remind the officials what had become of other semi pastoralists who lost their land in the name of development. However, the regional state and the sugar corporation without taking into consideration the fate of the people destroyed Date tree farm lands by deploying bulldozers. The two government bodies did this backed by the federal police. According to the victims the regional state and the sugar corporation have blocked the flow of Awash River in an attempt to force them leave the area. According to the Afar traditional law the estimated compensation for cutting a single Date is worth seven cattle.

The victims complained to HRCO that their cry for justice at the regional and federal level fell on deaf ears. After this, a total of 135 inhabitants of Afar regional state; zone 1, Asaita province, wamule district, kusurale and wariaito localities signed a petition which asked HRCO to investigate and disclose the degree of their suffering. Accepting their complaint HRCO sent its experts to the area and conducted a fact finding mission. In different ways, from different sources it has compiled the following evidences.



PICTURE1 Afar region zone 1Asyata woreda Wamulee kebele, Warayitu area 2015

The lively hood of the inhabitants of Dubti area depended up on the Awash River. According to the victims' complaint, in a manner that endangers their very



existence the “TENDAHO SUGAR CORPORATION” changed the course of the flow of the river. The victims claim that though they filed complaints after complaints at regional and federal level they never found someone who is willing to solve their problems.

The HRCO’s experts have witnessed the degree of the damage sustained by the petitioners. The fact that the destruction of date tree farm lands causes a great amount of economic loss on the inhabitants of the aforementioned areas is understandable.



PICTURE 2 some of the semi pastoralists who lost their properties, Afar region zone I Asyata woreda Wamulee kebele, Warayitu area 2015

The total number of destroyed date trees is 8,527 (eight thousand five hundred twenty seven) as it is mentioned elsewhere in this report, according to the afar traditional law the estimated compensation for cutting a single Date is worth seven cattle.

The minimum estimated market price of an ox is ten thousand birr. Therefore, a single date tree is worth seventy thousand birr. By this calculation the total amount of the destruction in Asita province alone is worth



596,890,000.00(five hundred ninety six million eight hundred ninety thousand) birr.



PICTURE 3 Sample of the date trees which were illegally chopped down , Afar region zone 1Asyata woreda Wamulee kebele, Warayitu area 2015



PICTURE4 Sample of the date trees which were illegally chopped down , Afar region zone 1Asyata woreda Wamulee kebele, Warayitu area 2015



HRCO believes the destruction of date tree farm lands in the Afar regional state; zone 1, Asaita province, wamule district, kusurale and wariato localities without any discussion with the people, without giving prior notification and without paying commensurate compensation is an illegal act. HRCO after investigating the case came to a conclusion that the sugar corporation which is located in the vicinity of Asita town is the main cause for the human rights violations.



PICTURE5 some of the elderly female victims, Afar region zone 1Asyata worda Wamulee kebele, Warayitu area 2015

5. DEMOLISHED DATE TREE FARM LAND IN AFAMBO PROVINCE, ALESABOLO AND HUMEDUYTA DISTRICTS

After HRCO's investigators have returned from Asaita, and during the course of preparing this report we have received the names of thirty additional people and the amount of loss they have suffered. In a fax message these victims claimed 7,950(seven thousand nine hundred fifty) date trees had been chopped down without their consent.



5.1 NAME LIST OF PEOPLE WHOSE DATE TREE FARM LANDS WERE DESTROYED IN AFAMBO PROVINCE, ALESABOLO AND HUMEDUYTA DISTRICTS

TABLE5.1

CONCLUSION

Ethiopia has ratified and made part and parcel to its national laws the UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR) and AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHT (ACHPR). The FDRE constitution article 40(4&7) states that every Ethiopian citizen has the right to the ownership of private property and is entitled to get commensurate compensation. In addition to this article 25 of the UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR) demands the government to respect and protect any people's right to use their natural resources.

However, there are serious problems on the side of the Ethiopian government regarding respecting, protecting, and fulfilling rights in accordance with international conventions and constitutional declarations. So, by taking into consideration the displacement and the human rights violations that are committed in the name of development HRC strongly demands the government to compensate the ones who lost their properties, to create conducive living condition for semi pastoralists, and especially to bring the ones who demolished illegally the date tree farm lands to justice immediately.

7.RECOMENDATION

HRCO calls up on citizens, national and international organizations standing for the respect of human rights, by writing and calling in the following addresses to put pressure on the government to respect, protect and fulfill human rights and also compensate the Afar victims.

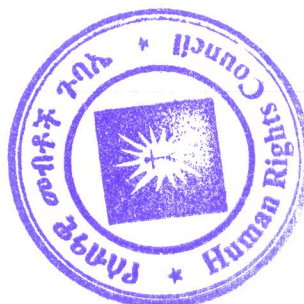
- **To the office of the Speaker of the House of Peoples Representatives:**

P.O. Box: 80001 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Tel: (+251) 011 124-1000; Fax: (+251) 011

155-0400; Email: national.parliament@ethionet.et



- **To the office of the Speaker of the House of Federation:** P.O. Box: 20122 / 1000
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Tel: (+251) 011 122-3322; Fax: (+251) 011 124-1208 / 011 124-2308; Email: kumashih@gmail.com
- **To the Office of the President:** P.O. Box: 23698 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;
Tel: (+251) 011 551-8186; Fax: (+251) 011 551-8656
- **To the office of the Prime Minister:** P.O. Box: 1031 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;
Tel: (+251) 011 124-1155; Fax: (+251) 011 122-6292
- **To the Office of Ministry of Justice:** P.O. Box: 1370 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;
Tel: (+251) 011 551-3620; Fax: (+251) 011 551-7775; Email: justabr@ethionet.et
- **To the office of the Commissioner of the Federal Police Commission of the F.D.R.E:** P.O. Box: 199 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Tel: (+251) 011 551-2744
- **To the Institution of the Ombudsman:** P.O. Box: 2459 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Tel: (+251) 011 554-3336; Fax: (+251) 011 553-2073;
Email: ombudsmaneth@ethionet.et
- **To the Human Rights Commission of the F.D.R.E.:** P.O. Box: 1165 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Tel: (+251) 011 550-4031; Fax: (+251) 011 550-4125;
Email: hrcm@ethionet.et
- **To the Ministry of Federal Affairs of the F.D.R.E.:** P. O. Box: 5608 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;
Tel: (+251) 011 515-3204; Fax: (+251) 011 551-1200; Email: mofatr1@yahoo.com
- **To the Federal Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission of the F.D.R.E.:** P.O. Box: 34798/34799; Tel: (+251) 011 553-6991; Fax: (+251) 011 552-9100
Email: feacedum@ethionet.et



- **To the office of the Speaker of the Council of Oromia Regional State:** P.O. Box: 101769 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Tel: (+251) 011 552-4247; Fax: (+251) 011 551-3642 / (+251) 011 551-9633; Email: oromiawiev@ethionet.et
- **To the office of the Speaker of the Council of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State:** P.O. Box: 1546 Hawassa, Ethiopia; Tel: (+251) 046 221-4778 / 046 220-5848; Fax: (+251) 046 220-2408



HRCO stands for democracy, the rule of law *and* the respect of human rights.

HRCO has an observer status with the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, is a member of World Organization Against Torture and is also a corresponding member of the International Federation of Human Rights.
