

person who was accused of murder but still at large; the person was detained on charges of murder; the person was not under detention and was leading a normal life; the person named was a lieutenant and killed in a conflict with the OLF after he had left the government; the person named was arrested in connection with the investigation of a murder; and the person named was not killed by soldiers but rather by three unidentified gunmen, and the case was still under investigation.

Freedom of opinion and expression, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/40, para. 56)

In the section on women, freedom of expression, and violence against women, the Special Rapporteur (SR) referred to the 1997 report of the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children, and a case in Ethiopia (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/10, para. 27). The SR noted that in May 1997, according to the Ethiopian Press Agency (ENA), six girls of the Woreda tribe in eastern Ethiopia had committed suicide to avoid abusuma, the traditional marriage between cousins. It was further noted that most of the girls subject to this tradition are about 15 years old and that many of them prefer death to being married off to men who are 80 years old, while others have refused this type of marriage because they consider it to be a form of "women's slavery".

Torture, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/38, paras. 96–97; E/CN.4/1998/38/Add.1, paras. 119–133)

Eight individual cases and four urgent appeals were sent to the government. The urgent appeals related to a group of approximately 200 individuals and approximately 20 members of the Oromo ethnic group. The Special Rapporteur (SR) stated that the consistency of allegations of torture, particularly with regard to persons in the custody of the army and suspected of involvement with the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), remained a concern. The SR further stated that a minimum measure that should be taken by the government, as a matter of urgency, is a thorough inquiry into the detention and interrogation practices of the army in its counter-insurgency operations, in order for those practices to conform with international standards.

The cases investigated by the SR referred to: a member of the OLF who was reportedly detained on three occasions between 1993 and 1995; one of approximately 200 persons detained from Makaballo village, Hararge, in late May 1996 by government soldiers and held in an army camp, with reports indicating that the family paid a bribe, and beatings were limited to the palms of the victim's hands; an individual who was in Djibouti as a refugee and voluntarily repatriated in 1995 and, upon return to Ethiopia, had his UNHCR papers declared "no good" and was accused of OLF membership; an individual from Chalanko, East Hararge, who was reportedly detained and tortured 10 times from 1992 to 1996 — including 8 times at a secret detention centre at Kumutu

military camp, near Chalanko; an artist, reportedly detained by plain clothes police officers in Addis Ababa in 1996, subsequently interrogated at an unknown detention centre about his criticism of the government, and tortured when he did not respond to questions relating to his ethnic origin; an individual who was reportedly abducted by unidentified security agents in May 1995 from Birka-Tirtira, on suspicion of having links with the OLF; arrest of a health worker on two occasions by security forces in Addis Ababa, in July 1992 and March 1997, on suspicion of supporting the OLF; a 65-year-old farmer from the village of Rira Dinsho in Bale province who was arrested in May 1997 on the accusation of supporting the OLF; approximately 200 students of Addis Ababa University who were said to have been arrested at a peaceful demonstration in March 1997; and approximately 20 prominent members of the Oromo ethnic group in Addis Ababa, who were reportedly arrested in the first half of November 1997 and accused of having links with the OLF and of involvement in bombings in Addis Ababa and other towns.

The government confirmed the arrest of approximately 200 Addis Ababa University students, stating that they had tried to stage a demonstration without a permit in contravention of Proclamation No. 37/1991, noting that they had been released after submitting a formal apology and denying allegations of ill treatment. With regard to the group of approximately 20 Oromo leaders, the government stated that: they had been arrested on the basis of an arrest warrant issued by the court because of their support for terrorist activities; fears of torture or ill treatment were unfounded; the detainees were accorded humane treatment and full respect for their person in accordance with the Ethiopian Constitution and other relevant laws; and four persons named in the SR's communication had been informed of the reasons for their arrest and their rights, and their case was being processed in line with due process of law. In response to a case transmitted in 1996 on behalf of a large number of persons detained in Hararge province on suspicion of supporting the OLF, the government stated that: one person had died in a conflict with the OLF; it was not possible to ascertain whether another person named, who had joined the OLF, was dead or alive; a third person was in prison in connection with murder charges; a fourth was pending arrest on a charge of murder; and a fifth person had been arrested in connection with a murder investigation but had been released when found not to be implicated. The government also stated the Regional Administration of Oromia had affirmed that there were no secret detention centres in Deder district and, while some of the detainees were members of the OLF, they were detained on charges under the Ethiopian Penal Code and not for their political affiliation.

