Violence Against Free Media and Knowledge Dissemination in Ethiopia: An Analysis of the Mechanisms of Restrictions on Information Flow

by

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Abstract

This article examines multiple mechanisms the Ethiopian state has been using to implement information blackout throughout the country in order to distort, misrepresent, hide and deny massive human rights infractions perpetrated by the military against citizens demanding self-government, basic rights and justice across Oromia state and Ethiopia. The data for this research were obtained through multiple research approaches, which included reviewing three relevant Ethiopian laws that justify information blackout; reviewing reports by human rights organizations; reviewing news stories on the topic in multiple languages; and reviewing audio-visual materials containing press releases from Ethiopian authorities. The study finds that the Ethiopian government has used a mixture of mechanisms to restrict the free flow of information by: introducing a slew of draconian proclamations, resorting to suppressing and removing communications applications and hardware and engaging in robust local and global misinformation and denial campaigns in times of unprecedented domestic political upheavals.

Key words: press freedom, freedom of speech, media control, social media control, information blackout, state-led violence, Oromo, Ethiopia, East Africa, Horn of Africa

Introduction

In the summer of 2014 Ethiopian government police, security forces and commando units shot live ammunitions into crowds of peaceful protesters killing at least 100 (OP, 2014). The protesters were opposed to a city planning scheme known as the Addis Ababa Integrated Development Master Plan (IDMP). By the time this plan was released, Addis Ababa's expansion had already displaced 150, 000 families of Oromo farmers and was set to displace millions more across Oromia (Legesse, 2014).[2]

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Demonstrators demanded that the IDMP be halted immediately and the Oromo people's constitutional right to self-rule be respected. The Ethiopian government did not respond to the popular demands. Instead, authorities promised massive violence against civilians in an attempt to continue the implementation of the draconian plan (Biyyaa, 2014), characterized by the Oromo as "master killer."

In a compressive study released in 2014, Amnesty International (2014) reported that between 2011 and 2015, "at least 5000 Oromos have been arrested based on their actual or suspected peaceful opposition to the government." The popular understanding of the IDRP among the Oromo is that it will continue to uproot millions of Oromo farmers from their land and lead to the eventual splitting of Oromia into two halves—the east and the west. This will separate the Oromo people who share the same language, identity and a regional state from each other. Even families would be separated as they have been in North and South Korea.

None of the perpetrators of the April and May 2014 massacres were brought to justice nor was there an independent investigation into the mass killings by government security. Instead,some government officials such as Abay Tsehaye, the former Minister of Federal Affairs, threatened to take more actions against anyone who is opposed to the plan (OMN, 2014).

Oromia-wide protests against the IDMP recurred in mid-November 2015 in small town west of the capital city "when the government transferred the ownership of a school playground and a stadium to private investors, in addition to clearing the Chilimo natural forest to also make way for investors," (AI, 2015). In just over a few weeks, the protests spread to all parts of Oromia, involving people from all walks of life. The government responded with lethal force which resulted in the death of more than 200 people, including children, women and the elderly (HRLHA, 2015). Thousands of Oromos were wholesale labeled as "terrorists", giving a blank check to government officials and commanders of the security forces to act with impunity. Hundreds were killed, thousands maimed and several thousand imprisoned. The government placed a ban on domestic and international human rights organizations, media, journalists, bloggers and citizen journalists to cover up the use of lethal force to suppress the protests and the staggering number of casualties.

Human Rights Watch noted the government's tight chokehold on information as follows: "Ethiopia's pervasive restrictions on independent civil society and media mean that very little information is coming from affected areas although social media are filled with photos and videos of the protests," (HRW, 2016). This has left the global community in the dark about the real magnitude of the crimes security forces have committed. This paper analyzes the different facets of the Ethiopian government's restrictions on information flow focusing on actions taken during the Oromo protests of 2015-16.

I contend that the government's endeavors to create an information blackout was designed to avoid responsibility for the mass killings, maiming, detentions, rape and other crimes that the federal police, the Agazi Special Forces, and other state security units have committed against unarmed Oromo civilians. The study also reveals that the government has used a number of 'legal' and coercive strategies and tactics to exercise monopolistic control over information.

Disinformation

One of the ways in which the government uses to conceal its atrocities is the state-controlled media and crackdown on alternative media. With near monopoly on media outlets in the country, top government officials appear on state-controlled television (formerly ETV) and make statements that cannot stand to simply scrutiny. On December 15, 2015, for instance, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn threatened to take "merciless actions" against Oromo protestors whom he labeled "terrorists," "anti-peace forces" and "destabilizing "forces". He indicated that the government's Anti-Terror Task Force will take swift measures to restore order. While the security forces have indeed carried out the orders, the purpose of the threats was to cow people into submission. In other words, the media is used to carry out disinformation battles that parallel the real actions.

The disinformation battle was mostly conducted by Getachew Reda, Ethiopia's Communication Minister and government spokesperson. He doubled down on the threat narrative initially issued by the prime minster and categorized the Oromo people in its entirety in non-human terms. He labeled the Oromo people as devils. "Oromo are forces of darkness invited by devil. These are demons requiring organized government actions to exterminate them. Since these devils are beyond the control of the witches that invited/charmed them, the only way we can *"liki masgebat"*[3] them is through organized government"

Coercive Strategies of Restrictions on Information Flow

Over the last quarter century, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has monopolized control over the media and telecommunications in Ethiopia. The ruling party also created a number of methods of restricting the flow of information. To restrict the free flow of information, the government has deployed major strategies and tactics, including passing a slew of draconian laws, killing, arresting and jailing journalists, bloggers, singers and artists, jamming diaspora-based satellite television stations, blocking diaspora-based online news outlets, limiting the penetration of the internet, violently cracking down on dissidents, and using foreign journalists unfamiliar with the local realities to misrepresent domestic conflicts and politics.[4] These are the general patterns of strategies and tactics the Ethiopian government employs to put stringent restrictions on the free flow of information. Unpacking these types of information control can help clarify why locals, the diaspora and the wider world are experiencing information blackout when it comes to massive atrocities committed by the Ethiopian government.

The Strategic Laws

This sub-section examines a slew of draconian laws that the Ethiopian government passed in order to restrict the free flow of information. What is referred to as "strategic laws" include the Mass Media and Freedom of Information Proclamation of 2008, the Anti-terrorism Proclamation of 2009, and the Charities and Societies Proclamation of 2009. These laws are some of the manifestations of the ruling EPRDF party's aggressive pursuit of power consolidation and authoritarian rule after potent challenge to the party at the polls in 2005. Arriola and Lyons (2016:77) succinctly describe the political context that gave rise to these legislations: "After the shock of the 2005 elections, in which opposition parties won nearly a third of parliamentary seats, the regime stepped up its efforts to harass opponents, using both legal and extralegal means." All the legislations discussed in this paper were born out of the ruling party's desire to stamp out criticism and opposition in order to dominate political power by preventing democratic transition (Dugo, 2012).

The government has a stranglehold on information flow using three recent laws. One of the earliest laws restricting citizens' right to impart and receive information was Ethiopia's "Mass Media and Freedom of Information Proclamation", which was conceived in the early 1990s and enacted as a legislation in July 2008 (Dugo, 2008; Ross 2010). This law has been used to silence criticism by incriminating journalists and media workers when they simply do their jobs. Watchdog groups and commentators agree that the media law violates international norms such as article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Ross (2010:1066) writes that this law put restrictions on freedom of speech and expression by allowing the government to criminally prosecute journalists and media workers.

To further restrict the media space and control information flow, the Ethiopian parliament passed the Anti-terrorism Proclamation (ATP) in August 2009. Since its passage, the law has been used it to criminalize journalists and media workers. Article 6 of the ATP equates journalism with 'terrorism' and journalists with 'terrorists': "Whosoever publishes or causes the publication of a statement that is likely to be understood by some or all of the members of the public to whom it is published as a direct or indirect encouragement or other inducement to them to the commission or preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism stipulated under Article 3 of this Proclamation is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from10 to 20 years." This article has further contributed to the restriction of information flow as many journalists, bloggers and media workers have been swept up and jailed or were exiled because of fear of being prosecuted under this law as "terrorists."

Blogger Eskinder Nega and Zone9 bloggers are living exhibits of the destructive consequences of the application of the ATP. Recently, two additional journalists who were detained in connection with Oromo demonstrations. They are waiting to be charged under this law, according a CPJ alert (CPJ: December 27, 2015). The ATP was never used to control terrorists, although it was misrepresented to the global community as anti-terror. Instead it has been used to terrorize the civilian population and silence dissent across Oromia and other dissenting regions of Ethiopia.

Fikadu Mirkana, a news anchor for the state-run broadcaster Oromia Radio and TV, was arrested amid ongoing Oromo protests after authorities alleged that he helped cover the protests. The government has grown more distrustful of every Oromo journalist, including journalists who work for the state media. Conflating *journalism* with *"terrorism"* has had real consequences on information flow.

The media space was severely restricted by the ATP to a point where journalistic reporting was equated to political subversion. Singers and artists stepped in to fill the void created by the near total control of the media space. The ATP, once more, was deployed to justify the arrests and torture of Oromo singers who voiced criticisms of the EPDRF regime. Endalk Chala reported for Global Voices about the patterns of crackdown against Oromo musicians, including a famous Oromo singer Hawi Tezerra who released a song criticizing the authorities over land grabbing policies in 2015. Over the last decades, the Ethiopia government murdered many leading Oromo singers such as Ebissa Adugna, Yosef Gemechu and many others. It exiled the rest. The ATP is used to give legal cover for silencing dissent.

Another law that further curtailed information flow is the Charities and Societies Proclamation of 2009. The CSP's impact ranges from decimating domestic human rights NGOs by limiting their foreign funding and by coercing them into changing their core activities into non-human rights areas (AI, 2012). For instance, Amnesty International was banned from operating inside Ethiopia after Claire Beston, AI Ethiopia director, came into contact with Oromo opposition leaders Bekele Gerba and Olbana Lelisa. The politicians were jailed for being seen with the Amnesty International worker and the amnesty international worker was expelled because of the same. According to the CPJ, Ethiopia is "the third worst jailer of journalists on the African continent, with at least 10 behind bars" as of December 1, 2015. This is a poignant tyranny that the government engages in pervasive information-control.

Technical Tactics of Restricting the Flow of Information

When it is unable to physically reach journalists and media organizations, jamming broadcasts and blocking websites have been among the regime's methods of restricting the flow information on ongoing peaceful Oromo demonstrations. Diaspora broadcasters, Oromia Media Network (OMN) and Ethiopia Satellite Television (ESAT) complain that their transmissions to Ethiopia are jammed frequently.

Oromia Media Network was established in Minnesota on February 3, 2014 with the goal of reaching Oromo audiences in Oromia, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East with its cultural, political, community and development programming (Gammadaa, 2014). Similarly, ESAT[5], was established in Northern Virginia in 2010 with the principal purpose of broadcasting content on human rights, press freedom, and Ethiopian politics, among others. Both diaspora-based satellite television networks are considered threats by the Ethiopian government because they provide the public with content/information that involves heavy criticism of the policies of the government.

For instance, during 2014-2015 Oromo mass demonstrations in Oromia, OMN proved itself to be a key conveyor of information on the protests and government crackdown. It reported on human rights abuses and a number of other issues the government finds sensitive. It carried images of people who had fallen victim to the atrocities by state security forces. Because of the content of the broadcasts, the government has targeted them with jamming and harassing their audiences in Oromia, Ethiopia. Citizen Lab, a Toronto-based information technology research group that monitors the hacking of websites and computer networks, confirms that these broadcasters have been jammed frequently in Ethiopia.

Human Rights Watch documents that the OMN was jammed 15 times since it started operation in 2014 mainly because it has been reporting in *Afaan Oromo* language on the protests in Oromia. The disruption of OMN broadcast included a number tactics of information control and disruption by the government, including directly blocking satellite signals, going house to house destroying satellite dishes that received OMN transmission, arresting students for allegedly sending pictures and soundbites to OMN, jailing and intimidating audiences found watching the broadcast (HRW, 2016).

In the past the government was also known for jamming VOA *Afaan Oromoo* and Amharic services to Ethiopia embroiling it in controversy with the US government occasionally. The jamming of the VOA in the period leading up to the elections in March 2010 marks Ethiopia government's determination to prevent people from imparting and receiving information from a free press. Meles Zenawi, the late Ethiopian dictator, even went as far as incorrectly comparing VOA-Amharic broadcast to Ethiopia to Rwanda's Radio Mille Collines, which broadcast genocide hatred in Rwanda prior to and during the genocide. Voice of America Director Danforth Austin issued a statement saying, "…any comparison of VOA programming to the genocidal broadcasts of Rwanda's Radio Mille Collines is incorrect and unfortunate…. The VOA deplores jamming as a form of media censorship wherever it may occur." The State Department also pointed out that the government has been violating "the fundamental right of freedom and expression." If the Ethiopian government could jam and defame VOA, a resource-rich official international broadcaster of the US government, then it is not surprising that Ethiopia is jamming and defaming resource-poor broadcasters such as OMN and ESAT targeted at two largest population groups in Ethiopia. The current EPRDF government has continued the legacy of Meles Zenawi in restricting the work of independent news outlets—foreign or local.

Citizen Lab (2014) indicates that the Ethiopian government installs malwares/spywares onto computers of Ethiopian journalists based in the Washington DC metropolitan area. These complaints have been verified by third party investigators such as Citizen Lab and the CPJ. Neamin Zeleke, the managing director of ESAT, and his unidentified colleague's computers were targeted by Internet spying tools sold to the Ethiopian government by a spyware vendor based in Italy, Hacking Team (Peterson, 2015). According to the *Washington Post* article, Zeleke forwarded an attachment with malware to Citizen Lab, which ran tests and determined the Ethiopian government used the surveillance technology to spy on Ethiopian journalists in the Washington DC metropolitan area. Neamin Zeleke alleged that the spyware was used to extract the contact information of ESAT sources based in Ethiopia putting their personal safety at risk.

This transnational espionage also means that Ethiopia was conducting surveillance outside of its jurisdiction in the United States. Nate Cardoso, a US lawyer, told *The Washington Post (2015) that* "attempting to hack someone located in the United States is illegal." Cardoso added, "It's absolutely a violation of US law, probably both the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act and the Wiretap Act."

Henok Gabisa, a visiting international law fellow based at Washington and Lee University in Virginia, also corroborates that Ethiopia's acts of installing spyware on journalists' computers violates US laws such as Foreign State Immunity Act and the Wiretap Act. According to Gabisa, "this statute (FSI) gives U.S. courts jurisdiction over the Ethiopian government." Gabisa states these acts not only violate the rights of individual journalists, but also the sovereignty and national security interests of the United States as follows:

> Even though the Ethiopian regime most probably relies on immunity clause in its attempt to evade justice, the United States courts have full jurisdiction over the defendant. To the extent that Ethiopia's action seriously threatens U.S. Citizens' privacy protection not only in a cyber-world but also in actual form, the matter shouldn't be seen as any lesser than North Korea's cyber-attack against Sony Company in the past year. In fact, what is at stake is not only individual's interest, but mainly US sovereignty and national security interest. Unless one is willing to trade off its own national security interest, these kinds of foreign acts shouldn't go unpunished.

Physical Tactics of Restricting the Flow of Information

As methods of restricting and disrupting information flow, the regime resorted to numerous coercive tactics, including confiscating private cell phones, turning off power to towns in Oromia, and destroying some cell phone towers (OVR, 2015). Human Rights Watch (2015) documents that where there have been military deployments, the government "cut mobile phone coverage" to curtail the capability of eye witnesses and citizen journalists.

By cutting off mobile phone coverage and by confiscating the cell phones from Oromo citizens, government security forces have been attempting to ensure that information about the heavy military presence and gunfire are not leaked to the outside world.

Reflecting on the challenges of doing human rights research in Oromia and Ethiopia, Human Rights Watch's Felix Horne, spoke at the summer 2015 Oromo Studies Association conference in Washington DC. In his comments, he stated:

"…I have some of the most difficult challenges getting information on my two countries, Ethiopia and Eritrea. First of all the country is largely closed to international human rights organizations. It's very difficult for Amnesty, for Human Rights Watch and CPJ to go in and do research. When we do go in, we are harassed, we are followed, and there are huge concerns over our own personal safety. More importantly the individuals that we speak with, there are huge concerns over their safety. In many cases we documented individuals were arrested for allegedly speaking to Human Rights Watch and other organizations….Similarly we documented that individuals who spoke to reputable media outlets such the Voice of America, Deutsche Welle and the BBC were arrested shortly after speaking with them. The government has been very successful at casting Human Rights Watch and Amnesty as groups that are trying to overthrow the government, that are trying to destabilize the country, that are trying to stop Ethiopia from developing none of which is of course true…The Oromo protests kind of encapsulate just the control the Ethiopian state has on the flow of information and how it is very difficult to get information out."

During the 2015-2016 crackdowns on Oromo demonstrators, it was highly risky for individuals to answer even phone calls from relatives overseas who are concerned about their welfare. Testifying at the annual Oromo community gathering in Washington DC on January 2, 2016, an individual who is now among us and who wishes to remain anonymous for the safety of his family, told us that his nephew was beaten up for answering his mobile phone near on-looking security forces and the nephew was picked up in Sululta town near Finfinne and transported to the city of Finfinne/Addis. The nephew's phone was confiscated after authorities demanded that he reveal who called him. These are not isolated instances, but a systematic attempt at blocking citizen journalists from reporting the crackdown via social media—primarily Twitter and Facebook.

An old but important tactic the government used was to restrict the flow information was to use its security forces resorted to perpetrate direct violence on people with skills and resources to document atrocities. The regime uses a number of strategies and tactics to restrict the flow of information, including jailing and killing political leaders, information workers, eye-witnesses and citizen journalists.

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The government arrested and jailed leading Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) leader Bekele Gerba and junior OFC officers such as Dejene Tafa and Addisu Bulala who helped compile statistics on killings and other forms of human rights infractions. The Secretary of OFC Bekele Nega was beaten up and confined to house arrest after receiving stern warning that he would be killed if he spoke to reputable foreign media (Nega, 2015).

These OFC leaders are dissidents who are members of a legally registered opposition party in Ethiopia. They were reporting the events in Oromia to diaspora media. Bekele Nega was on the VOA reporting daily about abuses suffered by the Oromo demonstrators. Dereje Tafa and Bekele Gerba were regular sources for OMN before their arrest. In an attempt to silence these critics, the regime charged Bekele Gerba with "terrorism" for merely speaking to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International (AI, 2011." Many authors have written about Ethiopia's misuse of the anti-terrorism law to silence critics and opposition (Dugo, 2012, The Oakland Institute, 2016). The use of anti-terrorism as a justification to arrest, jail and intimidate Oromo opposition leaders named above should be seen in light of the application of the law to exact structural violence against real and perceived opponents of the regime. Most importantly, the imprisonment of these information producers in connection with the Oromo protests represents the regime's aggressive policies of chocking information flow at it is very source.

Yonatan Tesfaye Regassa, a former public relations head of the Blue Party and social media activist, imprisoned for his favorable comments on Oromo protests and for his ability to provide information for conventional and social media (Cimdeesa, 2015). Yonatan was actively tweeting and sharing information on the protests on Facebook. It is impossible to exhaust the list of coercively silenced individuals, but the common pattern is that the Ethiopian government inflicts deadly physical harm on people capable of imparting information to the press and human rights organizations. Well educated and outspoken individuals such as Bekele Gerba and his colleagues at OFC have routinely been targeted by the government as a way quelling the popular uprising in Oromia.

Ethiopian government's use of excessive lethal violence goes hand in hand with stringent measures to restrict the free flow of information outward and inward on the violence. It controls information because it is strongly interested in preventing locals and the international community from waking up to the crimes against humanity it is committing in Oromia and other regions in times of popular uprisings. The regime is very afraid of being exposed because of possible international legal actions against its campaigns of mass murder.

Social Media as Alterative Means of Sharing Information

Social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook have become alternative ways of sharing information for people in Oromia despite the problems associated with Ethiopia's being a laggard when it comes to the penetration of the internet. That is, less than 2.0 percent of the country's population has access to the internet (IWS, 2015). Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, countries which have made it to Africa's top ten Internet countries, are far ahead of Ethiopia with 31.9 percent, 8.5 percent, and 7.6 percent respectively in internet penetration rates (IWS, 2015). For a country hailed as a model for Africa's development, it is interesting to note that Ethiopia does just slightly better than stateless Somalia, which has 0.2 percent internet penetration rate (IWS, 2015).The problem of low internet penetration is coupled with severe violations on internet freedoms, including blocking websites, and arresting bloggers and journalists.

The telecommunications sector is closed to private investors. The largest investor in telecommunications sector is China's ZTE Corp that the government has granted exclusive rights to lay infrastructure for its state-controlled telecommunications (AllAfrica, 2016; Dalton, 2014). The cell phone infrastructure technology is Chinese, which is amenable to controlling the flow of information. The administration of the infrastructure is under the full authority of the regime. Getachew Reda Kahsay, the person in charge of telecommunications, mass media and the general flow of information in general, is a former security person and the current member of Central Committee of the ruling Tigirean People's Liberation Front. All these show the regime's determination to control the flow information.

When the government feels that the three laws are not enough to control information, the government engages in direct physical assault on information producers, including killing, torturing and disappearing. EPRDF/TPLF party and government exercise a totalitarian control over information as much as they also exercise totalitarian control of the state, the economy, and other key infrastructures such the army, police and security forces. This totalitarian control over information, the media and telecommunications has made it difficult for information to come out of Oromia and Ethiopia on the ongoing protests and the crackdown. Because of this, for instance, it is very difficult to accurately assess the number of people killed during the demonstrations. The ongoing tragic events have not been well documented as a result of the multiple restrictions imposed on researchers, human rights workers, journalists and citizen journalists, as detailed in this paper.

Conclusions

This paper examined the multi-faceted restrictions the Ethiopian government has placed on information flow in order to prevent the rest of the world from knowing about the widespread atrocities its security forces are committing in Oromia and the rest of the country.

The article presented legal strategies and violent tactics that the government uses to control, disrupt and misrepresent information during the major crisis of the ongoing peaceful demonstrations for democratic and human rights in Oromia and Ethiopia. Tactics such as disrupting information flow by confiscating cell phones, cutting cell phone services, dismantling cell phone towers and removing satellite dishes from private homes are very complex dynamics that traditional theories of media control, such as the propaganda model, are barely able to explain. The study shows that the main aim of the government has been to prevent the local and international public from getting significant access to information on the extent of the violent suppression of ongoing protests.

Despite restrictions on information, the youth in Oromia have with limited access to mobile phones and the Internet, managed to share images, sound and videos of gruesome killings, maiming and other forms of abuses by the state security forces. The youths' use of social media and cell phones, at great risk to their personal safety, is the media that helped many news organizations and human rights groups report on the popular protests and the massive crackdown across Oromia region.

The behaviors of the Ethiopian government to control the free flow information contravenes universal human rights of citizens to "hold opinions without interference, and to seek receive and impart information and ideas through and regardless of frontiers."[6] The regime's behavior on information control is also a direct assault on Article 29 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) that provides for the protection of "democratic rights," including the freedom of expression and speech. However, it is an irony that the regime has utter disregard for its own constitution as it embarks on numerous unconstitutional and illegal acts of information control. The FDRE provision mirrors Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This calls for key international actors to urge the Ethiopian government to loosen its totalitarian control over information and the means of information production and dissemination. The state propaganda makes it appear that the rulers have little regard for the intelligence of the international.

Notes

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[2] Ermias Legesse, "How More than 150,000 Oromo Farmers Were Evicted from 29 Oromia counties surrounding Addis Ababa [Finfinnee]. 2014 ESAT television interview. Retrieved May 2014 from, http://youtu.be/W0T5ajOk3l4. The interview was translated from the Amharic original into English by the current author. Ermias' estimates are the most conservative as he was involved with the regime and he might not have wished to reveal the whole truth. After the official implementation that followed the unwritten implementation many years before, it's projected that 8-10 million Oromo farmers and residents in neighboring rural counties and small towns will be affected by the seismic activities of the Tigirean government policy of removing the Oromo people from their ancestral land calculated to subject them to life conditions that will bring about their slow-motion demise.

[3] Information Minister Getachew Reda's Press Conference and his characterization of the Oromo as "devils, witches and terrorists" Retrieved from, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QBuXkWWc2E
Likimasgebat is the Amharic euphemism for killing or taking military action against a person or a group in the context of a government official using the word.

[4] For instance, despite the great content in the body of the news article, The Washington Post headline negatively depicts the Oromo demonstrations as, "Ethiopia Confronts its Worst Ethnic Violence in Years." (See https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/ethiopia-is-facing-its-worst-ethnic-violence-in-years/2016/01/13/9dbf9448-b56f-11e5-8abc-d09392edc612_story.html). A Bloomberg news article authored by William Davison also mischaracterized the Oromo demonstrations as inter-ethnic clashes between Oromo and Amhara. Initially the reporter ran the story with the headline, "Ethiopia Oromo Protests Spark Fatal Ethnic Clash, Group Says," After social media activists pointed out the inaccuracy of the article, the author retracted the first headline and replaced it with, "Ethiopia Sees Fatal Ethnic Clash in Oromia, Group Says." (See http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-12-14/ethiopia-oromo-protests-trigger-fatal-ethnic-clashes-group-says).

[5] ESAT is an acronym for the U.S. diaspora-based Ethiopian Satellite Television, which broadcast its largely political programs to Ethiopia mainly in the Amharic language.

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