

2013-07-03

## Fråga-svar

### **Etiopien. OLF (Oromo Liberation Front)**

#### **Fråga**

Information önskas om OLF. Finns det rapporter som visar att OLF har använt sig av systematiska och grova övergrepp såsom tortyr, mord, avrättningar?

#### **Svar**

US Department of State (2013) uppger att den etiopiska regeringen klassat OLF som terroristorganisation:

The government used the antiterrorism proclamation to suppress criticism. Journalists feared covering five groups designated by parliament in June 2011 as terrorist organizations (Ginbot 7, the ONLF, the OLF, al-Qaida, and al-Shabaab), citing ambiguity on whether reporting on these groups might be punishable under the law.(s. 15)

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Government officials made allegations many members of legitimate Oromo opposition political parties were secretly OLF members and more broadly that members of many opposition parties had ties to Ginbot 7. (s. 22)

US Department of State (2012) om ett planerat attentat av OLF 2011:

Despite the Ethiopian government's peace agreement with the United Western Somali Liberation Front (UWSLF) and a faction of the ONLF in 2010, elements from both groups, as well as the OLF, continued their attempts to target Ethiopian government officials and infrastructure. This included a foiled attempt by OLF

elements to attack Addis Ababa during the African Union (AU) Summit in January 2011.

Uppgifter i Landinfo (2012-08-20) och Landinfo (2012-11-06) pekar på att återvändande OLF-medlemmar riskerar fängelse och/eller tortyr.

I en rapport fra 2009 viser Human Rights Watch (s. 42-44) til at flere etiopiere har blitt returnert fra Somaliland de siste årene. Dette er ifølge organisasjonen personer etiopiske myndigheter mistenker for å ha forbindelser til væpnede opposisjonsgrupper. Av rapporten fremgår det ikke hva som har skjedd med de returnerte, men Human Rights Watch (s. 44) anser det som sannsynlig at personer som mistenkes å være medlemmer av OLF eller ONLF, vil bli fengslet og/eller torturert ved retur til Etiopia.(s. 5)

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Når det gjelder spørsmålet om hvem som kan komme i myndighetenes søkelys ved retur til Etiopia, vil det trolig ha sammenheng med hva slags aktivitet den returnerte har bedrevet i eksil. Kildene trekker særlig fram prominente personer tilknyttet ulovlige opposisjonspartier. Etiopiske myndigheter skal i henhold til det opplyste følge med på aktivitetene til eksiletiopiere som arbeider for regimeendring gjennom G7, OLF og ONLF. Dette er ulovlige partier som myndighetene definerer som terrororganisasjoner. Disse gruppene har trolig betydelig oppslutning i diasporaen, også i Norge.(s. 7)

Landinfo (2012-11-06):

UN Committee Against Torture (2011) viser til gjentatte beskyldninger rettet mot blant annet fengselsansatte om at politisk opposisjonelle, studenter og personer som det hevdes er terrorister og støttespillere til OLF og ONLF<sup>9</sup> utsettes for mishandling og tortur. F hevder at dette forekommer med samtykke fra ansvarlige i politiet, i fengslene, i militærbaser eller ved uoffisielle hemmelige fangeleire og fengsler. (s. 14)

Landinfo (2012-12-18) menar att det finns oklarheter om OLF:s militära verksamhet.

Om militær aktivitet blir det ikke trukket klare konklusjoner. Det refereres på den ene siden til kilder som mener at OLF har en viss militær kapasitet inne i Etiopia, og særlig i grenseområdene mot Kenya og

Sør-Sudan. På den andre siden vises det til kilder som stiller seg tvilende til at OLF har gjennomført aksjoner i Etiopia. På denne bakgrunnen konkluderer Landinfo i notatet med at både etiopiske myndigheter og OLF nok har ”behov for at OLFs militære slagkraft skal framstå som større enn den i realiteten er” (2010, s. 15). Landinfo tar derimot ikke stilling til spørsmålet om OLF faktisk har gjennomført militære operasjoner i Etiopia.

I motsetning til disse oppfatningene hevdet Etiopia-eksperten Günther Schröder i møte i Landinfo 21. november 2012 at OLF både har et politisk og et militært nærvær i Etiopia (Schröder 2012a). I ettertid har Landinfo henvendt seg til Schröder med spørsmål om han kunne gjøre nærmere rede for kildegrunnlaget for sin påstand. I e-post 6. desember 2012 medgir Schröder at det er vanskelig å få sikker informasjon om spørsmålet da det er svært sensitivt. (s. 1)

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Til støtte for Schröders syn kan det også refereres til Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism. I rapporten Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) fra 12. november 2012 refereres det til ulike hendelser fra 2007 og fram til annet halvår 2012. Det vises blant annet til flere væpnete sammenstøt mellom OLF-styrker og regjeringsstyrker i 2010 og fram til ut på nyåret 2011, som man mener å ha dokumentasjon for. I annet halvår 2011 annonserte OLF at de sto bak flere angrep på etiopiske militærforlegninger i Oromia-provinsen. Disse har imidlertid ikke Jane's vært i stand til å verifisere. I rapporten blir det videre opplyst at ingen militære operasjoner har vært tillagt eller påberopt av OLF første halvår 2012. Rapporten fra Jane's sier ikke noe konkret om politisk virksomhet eller hemmelig politisk organisering fra OLF i Etiopia, men peker på at OLF lider under mangel av enhet og koordinering og at de konkurrerer med andre grupperinger i oromo-befolkningen i Etiopia (Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism 2012).(s. 2)

#### Home Office (2012):

Case owners should note that members of the OLF and ONLF have been responsible for serious human rights abuses, some of which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. If it is accepted that a claimant was an active operational member or combatant for the OLF or ONLF and the evidence suggests

he/she has been involved in such actions, then case owners should consider whether one of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Case owners should refer all such cases within this category of claim to a Senior Caseworker in the first instance.

Amnesty International (2011) skriver om godtyckliga arresteringar av personer med misstänkt samröre med OLF.

The government continues to suppress dissent in the Oromia region of the country. Between 2006 and early 2011 it has arbitrarily detained thousands of individuals on allegations of being a member of, or supporting, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) throughout the region.(s. 8)

I rapporten från Country of Origin Research and Information (CORI) (2009) finns uppgifter om att OLF bemöter anklagelserna om att ha attackerat civila.

According to the OLF, their armed resistance is “an act of self-defense exercised by the Oromo people against successive Ethiopian governments, including the current one, who forcibly deny their right to self-determination”<sup>16</sup>. Although the OLF officially states that its armed resistance targets the government machinery and not individuals and civilians<sup>17</sup>, it has been accused of several attacks on the civilian population.<sup>18</sup> (s. 3)

Sudan Tribune (2012) rapporterar att OLF hävdar att de inte längre kämpar för ett självständigt Oromia.

Ethiopian rebel group, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which has been fighting to gain autonomy for the Oromia region said it is no longer demanding independence from the Horn of Africa’s nation.

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The move by OLF is seen as a major step forward in journey to national reconciliation but some are questioning its authenticity.

There has been no official reaction from the Ethiopian government toward OLF’s decision. However, it is unlikely that Addis Ababa will readily change its stance towards the rebel movement.

Ethiopia has accused neighbouring Eritrea of arming and financing rebels such as the OLF and ONLF, an allegation that Asmara denies.

Sudan Tribune (2011):

The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), the armed wing of the OLF rebel group has claimed it has killed the head of a government intelligence group in the country's Oromoya region.

According to the group's news agency, the OLF News, the intelligence official was killed by armed special units of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in Eastern Oromia, Western Hararge zone.

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The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) along with its armed wing, the OLA is labeled as a terrorist organization by the Ethiopian government.

Ethiopian authorities say the Oromo rebels have been defeated and are no longer a threat. However, the rebels stress that still active.

BBC News (2002-10-02):

Police say that they have arrested five men from the armed secessionist movement, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and have evidence that the OLF was planning a series of bombings in the capital.

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The OLF, which has been in exile for the past seven years, denied responsibility for the latest bombing.

BBC News (2002-06-29):

On 18 June, the OLF stepped up its military offensive and intense fighting took place in Akobo, Gambella, in western Ethiopia.

The OLF claimed that they had "put out of operation" about 675 Ethiopian soldiers - killing 425 and wounding 250.

Ethiopia says it killed 20 OLF fighters and wounded another 227. 'Arms seized'

General Debele, however, scoffed at the OLF claims.

"The OLF are always lying. There is no way that they could have killed so many of our soldiers. They simply do not have the means and capabilities to destroy so many members of our army," he said.

IRIN News (2005):

The Ethiopian government maintained that unrest in Oromiya has been quelled, despite claims by two rebel groups that dozens of people had been killed in renewed post-election violence.

The information ministry criticised the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and accused the separatist group of trying to foment unrest in Oromiya, home to the Oromo community, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group.

IRIN News (2003):

The rebel Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) has denied any involvement in a bomb blast in Ethiopia which killed two people and injured nine last week.

United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (2001):

The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) was formed in 1973 and engaged in armed struggle against the Marxist-Leninist regime of Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam—the Dergue—that overthrew Haile Selassie in 1974. According to analyst Marina Ottoway, the OLF was "faction-ridden, poorly led, and chronically unable to decide whether its ultimate goal was an independent Oromia or a federal Ethiopia," and was "an ineffective participant in the war against Mengistu, doing little fighting" (Ottoway 1999, 68).

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The formal political positions of the OLF and OPDO regarding Oromo rights and interests have much in common, but the strategies and activities undertaken by the two organizations are fundamentally different. Each claims to have as its objective self-determination for the Oromo people and advancement of the political, economic, social, and cultural interests of the Oromo. However, the OLF, seeing no space to work openly and without repression to achieve its objective of an independent Oromia or a loose federation with other nationalities through the current Ethiopian political system, is waging an armed struggle to attain its objectives. The OPDO works within the EPRDF coalition to represent the interests of Oromos within Ethiopia's decentralized (but controlled) system of "ethnic federalism" (BBC 8 May 1990; OLF n.d.).

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Since its foundation in 1973, the OLF has waged a continuous low-level armed struggle for self-determination except for a short period following the overthrow of the Mengistu regime in 1991 when the OLF collaborated with the EPRDF in the Transitional Government.

Vidare sammanställning av information om OLF:

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF), *Texthandbuch Äthiopien*, 2012-03-01, Lifos 27457 samt Refugee Documentation Centre, *Whether persons of Oromo ethnicity are subjected to harm, ill-treatment and/or discrimination by the authorities in Ethiopia. Whether persons of Oromo ethnicity are perceived by the Ethiopian authorities as being members and/or supporters of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)*, 2011-03-25, Lifos 24922

### **Urval av information som Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada sammanställt om OLF**

IRB Canada (1990-05-01):

The Oromo Liberation Front was formed in 1973 with the objective of fighting for a separate state for the Oromo people, one of the largest ethnic groups in Ethiopia. [ "Oromo Rebels Say They Killed 13 Ethiopian Troops", Reuters, 19 September 1989.] Africa Confidential reported that OLF's activities in the remote provinces of Hararge, Bale and Sidamo were poorly documented prior to 1979. [ "Ethiopia: The Oromo Factor", Africa Confidential, London: Miramoor Publications, 18 July 1984, p.1.] It's guerrilla base was weakened by a decision to carry out "semi-clandestine political action" both inside and outside the government. Consequently, the Oromo lost "thousands of lives during the Dergue's Red Terror Campaign to rid the bureaucracy of OLF members and alleged sympathizers. [ Ibid.] In 1979 the OLF began to reform its organization and to wage guerrilla warfare. [ Ibid.]

IRB Canada (1990-07-01):

In 1977, the OLF claimed its forces had killed 1,500 Ethiopian soldiers in Bale province. ["Addis Ababa, Ethiopia", The Associated Press, 12 September 1977, p. 88] In 1984, OLF units in Wollega were reported to comprise 500 guerrillas. The OLF launched offensive action in Asosa, an administrative area in western Ethiopia and claimed to have killed 65 enemy soldiers in

February 1990.["Ethiopia Oromo Rebels Claim "heavy losses" Inflicted on Government Forces", The British Broadcasting Corporation, 3 March 1990].

IRB of Canada (1993-05-01):

#### 3.4 Human Rights Violations by the OLF

The OLF itself has also committed human rights violations. In December 1991, OLF leaders set fire to villages in Arga Guugu and Harerge, killing some 144 Christians, most of them Amharas (Human Rights Watch 1993, 11). In April 1992, the OLF reportedly attacked and killed 150 civilians in Bedeno (Harerge region), again, most of them Amharas (ibid.). Apparently, many of the victims were forced to jump off cliffs (ibid.). According to a May 1992 national radio bulletin, political violence instituted by the OLF had at that time escalated in the Bale, southern Shewa and Sidamo regions (AFP 11 May 1992).

The EPRDF and the OLF signed a ceasefire agreement in April 1992 under the auspices of the United States and the Eritrean interim government. The agreement specified that both sides' forces were to be confined to their respective bases (The Indian Ocean Newsletter 18 Apr. 1992, 3). The armed struggle between the OLF and the EPRDF nevertheless continued, for example in the Bale region, where fighting between the two forces was fierce at the end of June 1992 (Marchés Tropicaux 10 July 1992, 1851). Once again, in November 1992, fighting broke out in the Bale, Walega, Kefa and Gojjam provinces and in Begemder; the security situation remains precarious in these regions (The Indian Ocean Newsletter 28 Nov. 1992).

Conflict between the Oromos, who are large in number, and certain other ethnic groups is not limited to the Amharas, the group that formerly dominated the Oromos, and the Tigrayans, who have a strong representation in the new transitional government. Other inter-ethnic battles, particularly those in Dire Dawa in July 1991, killed some 20 persons during confrontations between Issa (Somali) and Oromo armed forces (BBC Summary 12 July 1991).

IRB Canada (1993-09-01):

While there have been disagreements among the Oromo groups, the only reported cases of fighting or open



hostility have been between the OLF and the OPDO (Gilkes July 1992, 18). The hostility has mostly taken the form of propaganda statements, but there have also been attempts to solve the differences between the two (Ibid.). However, these agreements did not last and soon the EPRDF was closing down OLF offices and the OLF was also blowing up bridges and attacking the OPDO and government forces and trucks (Ibid.). There was speculation that these attacks might have been the work of another Oromo group, the IFLO (Ibid.). The same source states that the IFLO has been critical of the OLF and has clashed with the OLF for control of Oromo areas (Ibid., 19). However, relations between the two have reportedly improved since the OLF has moderated its radical views and the two groups have realized that their common enemy is the EPRDF/OPDO alliance (Ibid., 20)

#### Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (1994-08-01):

According to The Indian Ocean Newsletter of 12 March 1994, Gelasa Dilbi is the leader of the OLF while Sheikh Abdulkarim Ibrahim Hamid is the leader of the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO). At the beginning of March, leaders of the two groups reportedly held secret discussions in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. Another article from the same source states that Oromos of Ambo, another OLF faction, carried out several attacks on government units at Ambo killing four members of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and capturing a lorry carrying members of the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), an Oromo group which supports the EPRDF (19 Mar. 1994, 3).

#### IRB Canada (1996-04-01):

Country Reports 1994 reports that throughout 1994, the "military continued low-level operations to counter the actions of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) ... especially in the Oromo and Somali regions where periodic clashes with insurgent and bandit groups occurred" (1995, 79). The same report adds that "... rebel groups occasionally clashed with government forces resulting in deaths on both sides. Militants of the Oromo Liberation Front engaged TGE forces sporadically during the year," (ibid., 83). However, the source does specifically refer to Dire Dawa.

IRB Canada (1999-11-16):

August 1999. ONLF together with the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Sidama Liberation Front issued a press release in which they reported that they had killed 473 Ethiopian soldiers and wound 361 others during fighting in southern Ethiopia (AP 19 Aug. 1999; IRIN News Briefs, 20 Aug. 1999).

In October 1999, a joint committee of the OLF, the ONLF and the Sidama Liberation Front (SLF) reportedly issued a statement in which they accused the current government of atrocities against their people.

IRB Canada (2001-04-09):

Explosions by landmines laid by the OLF and the ONLF were estimated to have killed 2 to 5 persons per month during the year. The OLF has claimed responsibility for several landmine explosions along the railroad line from Addis Ababa to Djibouti, which resulted in between 5 and 15 civilian deaths; OLF responsibility could not be confirmed. For example, during the summer, a freight train was derailed by a landmine explosion near Nazareth; two persons died and several were injured. Observers believe the landmines were laid by the OLF (2001).

IRB Canada (2003-02-27):

Amnesty International reports that in 1992, over 20,000 Oromos suspected to be members of the OLF were arrested throughout the Oromo region and in Addis Ababa, where "many Oromos live" (AI Apr. 1995. 15). Although the majority of them were released in mid-1994, 280 remained in custody (ibid., 16). These 280 were "charged with genocide, armed rebellion and homicide" in early 1995 for their alleged implication in the killings of more than 150 people in April 1992 in Bedeno town in eastern Ethiopia (ibid.). An inquiry into the incident conducted by a Council of Representatives attributed the killings to OLF militias although its report was never published (ibid., 17). OLF militias who reportedly controlled the area at the time "reportedly detained or abducted more than 150 people, killed them and threw their bodies over a cliff and into a ravine" (ibid.).

Information on whether the OLF was involved in setting fire to a village could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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Denna sammanställning av information/länkar är baserad på informationssökningar gjorda under en begränsad tid. Den är sammanställd utifrån noggrant utvalda och allmänt tillgängliga informationskällor. Alla använda källor refereras. All information som presenteras, med undantag av obestridda/uppenbara fakta, har dubbelkontrollerats om inget annat anges. Sammanställningen gör inte anspråk på att vara uttömmande och bör inte tillmätas exklusivt bevisvärde i samband med avgörandet av ett enskilt ärende. Informationen i sammanställningen återspeglar inte nödvändigtvis Migrationsverkets officiella ståndpunkt i en viss fråga och det finns ingen avsikt att genom sammanställningen göra politiska ställningstaganden. Refererade dokument bör läsas i sitt sammanhang.

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