

ETHNIC CLEANSING IN ETHIOPIA

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The objective of this article is to explore the prevalence of ethnic cleansing in Ethiopia. Through the use of qualitative research methods and empirical data such as published documents, letters, and reports compiled by human rights defenders and organizations, the article shows how the ruling class categorizes a certain group of people (Amharic language speakers) as an enemy and attempts to eliminate them from the area they inhabit. Amharic language speakers living as a minority group in other regional states are persecuted or endangered. The frequent occurrence of ethnic cleansing in Ethiopia has been attributable to the nature of the government's policy of ethnic federalism and the relentless desire of the ruling class to downgrade Amharic language speakers who are considered by the government to have been former rulers.

INTRODUCTION

Although the systematic killing of national, racial, ethnic, and religious groups has occurred throughout the history of the world, the term “genocide” was not known until 1944 when Polish legal scholar, Raphael Lemkin, coined this term.¹ Following the invention of the term, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide was passed by the UN General Assembly in December 1948 and became international law in 1951.² Accordingly, Article II of the Convention defined “genocide” as:

Acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such. [These acts include] a) killing members of the group; b) causing serious

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