

## **Regional Politics, Human Rights, and US Policy in the Horn of Africa**

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*This article addresses the mutual implications of US policy and regional politics among the Horn of Africa countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, with respect to interpretations of human rights norms. Drawing on perspectives in anthropology and political science, as well as approaches to human rights advocacy and policy, we explore contemporary human rights concerns in the Horn of Africa and highlight an inconsistency in US foreign policy in the region. Based on our analysis, we make several recommendations on how human rights may be advanced in the Horn by proceeding with greater sensitivity toward regional political dynamics and fostering critical understanding of the assumptions embedded in US foreign policy in the region.*

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### **Introduction**

This article addresses the current crisis of human rights in the Horn of Africa as a matter of broad relevance to both US policy and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for Africa.<sup>1</sup> Taking as a point of departure the recent policy recommendations made by Terrence Lyons (2006) for the promotion of peace and stability in this strategic yet explosive region, we push beyond the assertion that “movement towards resolving the border dispute [between Eritrea and Ethiopia] will provide openings for political change and human rights” (Lyons 2006, 28) to examine how such strategies might practically advance.

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While in agreement with Lyons's view that successful resolution of the volatile border issue is key, and should be a priority in the comprehensive US policy toward the Horn of Africa, we also take a critical and pragmatic view of the meaning and practice of human rights as shaped by nationalism, regional politics, and the global pressures to which those dynamics are responding. These global pressures include US policy itself. Our analysis is informed by our respective research in the fields of anthropology and political science, as well as our involvement in human rights advocacy and policy in the region.<sup>2</sup>

Given that the Horn of Africa countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia have presented an especially challenging case for both human rights advocacy and US foreign policy, we explore how and why these countries have rejected or countered critiques and/or interventions based on human rights. We also propose strategies for the advancement of both US policy and human rights that are culturally and politically informed by national specificities and regional dynamics.

Far from excusing egregious human rights abuses that authorities have perpetrated, our intention is to achieve a better understanding of how these countries' concerns about rights — particularly those related to territorial integrity, collective security, sovereignty, and relief and development assistance — might present opportunities for negotiating a common ground and establishing meaningful international dialogue. So far this common ground and dialogue has eluded state and non-state entities concerned with peace, human rights, and development in the region and therefore *precluded* their ability to press successfully for the alleviation of — let alone the implementation of genuine protections against — human rights abuses.<sup>3</sup>

We are concerned here with two interrelated problems. First is the fate of the thousands who sit in prison without charge or trial, subject to torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, as well as the tens of thousands more who remain vulnerable to arbitrary detention for imputed political dissidence or stranded as refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) seeking safety from persecution.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, we are concerned for the overall well-being of the Horn countries, which together rank among the poorest and most politically troubled in the world.

Indeed, we argue that US policy must be based on adequate and balanced attention to those concerns that are of primary importance to each polity but also fall within the realm of human rights — including, but not limited to, a resolution of the Ethiopia-Eritrean border dispute, relief and resettlement of displaced persons, and setting firm limits on interventions related to the US-led War on Terror — in order to implement effective strategies for the betterment of individual rights and freedoms.<sup>5</sup>

A clear understanding of how the Eritrean, Ethiopian, and Somali authorities and their respective populations understand human rights, how rights are both framed and denied as a result of nationalist and regional politics, as well as global political-economic pressures is therefore of vital necessity.

### **Development, Intervention, and Human Rights: A View from Eritrea**

The Millennium Development Goals, for Africa and elsewhere, “are rooted in ideas about global justice and human rights” (UNDP 2005, 51). That is, the pursuit of global economic prosperity as outlined by the MDGs suggests that, in an increasingly globalized but inequitable world, both the international community and nation-states must reaffirm

their commitment to ensuring economic, social, and cultural rights as well as collective rights within a holistic human rights framework.

These “second and third generation rights,” as they are often defined relative to “first generation” civil and political rights, are increasingly considered vital to human development, especially in poor or developing countries (Claude and Weston 2006, 9, Galtung and Wirak 1977). Moreover, because all forms of rights are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, it typically follows that enhanced economic, social, and cultural rights strengthen civil and political rights, and vice versa.

At the same time, there is often disagreement about the prioritization of these rights, the very construction of which reveals the range of concerns among nation-states with varying historical experience and political-economic and cultural foundations. It is not uncommon for some states, especially those that are poor, postcolonial, and/or culturally oriented toward more collective values, to argue that civil and political rights, or political reform more broadly, must follow economic development and security. They argue that without access to a peaceful environment, clean water, sanitation, basic health care, education, decent housing, and work, issues that preoccupy liberal imaginations such as multiparty elections, democratic reform, and civil liberties are difficult to fathom at best and meaningless at worst.

As human rights scholars and advocates have noted, these debates about prioritization of rights are essentially inseparable from claims about global inequality and the need for fairer distribution of resources and power. The latter, in turn, are matters of national and international policy that go to the very heart of neoliberal assumptions about the inherent relationship between “free markets” and “free societies.” These assumptions,

we contend, fail to consider the ways in which concepts of freedom and rights are culturally variable and inextricably linked to regional and global political-economic conditions and inequalities.

That second- and third-generation rights, or those that relate to matters of economic development and collective security, have been prioritized by the government of Eritrea is clear. The People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) is a single-party regime that has ruled the small Horn of Africa country *de facto* since 1981 (as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, or EPLF, operating in areas liberated from Ethiopian rule) and *de jure* since 1993, when 99.8 percent of the population voted in favor of independence from Ethiopia.<sup>6</sup>

Far from being simply a reactionary stance against contemporary international pressure, the argument that development and collective security precede individual rights and freedoms emerges largely from Eritrea's experience during the thirty-year war of independence from Ethiopia.<sup>7</sup> For virtually three decades, Eritrea's claims to self-determination were summarily denied by the United Nations and other foreign governments (in particular, the USSR, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Italy), in no small part because both its colonial status and the EPLF were difficult to categorize, at best, within the Cold War environment.

Positioned neither in the Soviet camp (which backed Ethiopia, the colonial power) nor the American (which disavowed Marxist-Leninist movements), Eritrea remained isolated from foreign powers in some respects while vitally important to them in others, including housing an American listening post for the Middle East. Thus, Eritrean nationalism and ideas about independence, sovereignty, and freedom, articulated in the still vital language of

“self-determination,” were forged within an international context that revealed a concerted preference for the strategic interests and economic gains of already powerful nation-states against the impoverished, colonized, and oppressed. Moreover, this context provided Ethiopia with an enormous advantage over Eritrea politically, economically, and militarily.

As explored below, Eritrean nationalism, which structures and informs all aspects of the country’s domestic and foreign policy, has become deeply problematic from a holistic rights-based perspective. Once heralded as a leader in the erstwhile African Renaissance and a beacon for democracy and justice in Africa, the ruling (and only) party has since achieved a more ignominious stature as a highly centralized and militarized regime that routinely and arbitrarily exercises repressive and authoritarian measures. Despite being party to numerous human rights conventions, among them the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the Eritrean government since 2001 has justified the jailing, torture, and disappearance of thousands of citizens as matters of national security. National security concerns are defined largely with respect to the unresolved border with Ethiopia, as well as larger concerns about the erosion of sovereignty amid pressures toward development lending, structural adjustment, privatization, and free market interests.

Indeed, the two concerns are related; maintaining independence and genuine statehood in Eritrea is viewed in the context of both its ongoing struggle with Ethiopia and the need to protect itself from the kind of global political-economic interests that have eroded national control over political and economic institutions in other postcolonial African countries (Ferguson 2006). Lyons (2006) correctly observes that insofar as the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia remains un-demarcated despite the US-brokered

Algiers Agreement of 2000<sup>8</sup> and the monitoring of the region by the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE), both Eritrea and Ethiopia have had occasion to assert repressive measures against real and putative dissidents within their countries to maintain “unity” and control. Particularly hostile to foreign intervention and influence, Eritrea has also flatly rejected proliferating critiques by states and nongovernmental organizations alike regarding its crisis of human rights as imperialist, neocolonial, and hypocritical.

In addition to rejecting most dominant norms in diplomacy and international dialogue, which it views as inherently skewed toward the interests of wealthy and powerful nations, the Eritrean government has responded more implicitly to such critiques by posting via state-controlled media and state-run Web sites almost daily reports on development projects undertaken by the government, supported by the labor of military trainees and National Service conscripts.<sup>9</sup> By reproducing the rhetoric and practice of “self-reliance” that enabled Eritreans to not only survive the long war for independence but also to sustain and build valuable infrastructure with extremely few resources, the government today looks toward the militarization of society at large as the vehicle through which political independence and national control over economic development will largely be maintained (O’Kane and Hepner, forthcoming).

While this has created consternation among many and has contributed to the rise in human rights violations against individuals and certain social groups,<sup>10</sup> it is worthwhile to keep two things in mind. First, until recently, Eritrea was lauded by the international development community and multilateral lending agencies like the World Bank for its self-reliant approach to development and the combined discipline and ambition of its population. Second, the strategy for “development and defense” adopted by Eritrea today

closely resembles that of Israel in its early years especially (Ben-Eliezer 1995), which was (and continues to be) strongly supported by the United States.<sup>11</sup> Whatever else may be said about Eritrea's current isolationist stance vis-à-vis the United States, these two factors merit attention because they underpin at least some of the government's charges that the United States maintains differential and inherently unfair standards for foreign policy and human rights depending on the degree to which a country is strategically or economically useful and compliant. Eritrea is not alone in adopting such a view of current US foreign policy.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the argument advanced repeatedly by the Eritrean government in response to international (and especially American) critiques of its undeniably appalling human rights record is that democratization and observance of individual political and civil rights will proceed only when national security is assured and measurable gains in economic development (largely under the national control of the government itself and not multilateral agencies or foreign interests) have occurred.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the government has pointed out that human rights critiques can be wielded by powerful countries against others not out of genuine humanitarian concern but out of specific (and self-serving) political interests (Government of Eritrea 2006).

The government is not incorrect in pointing out this darker dimension of international human rights. Indeed, following this logic, if the support of holistic human rights was the genuine aim of such critiques, one may ask whether the grossly inequitable distribution of resources and power globally, which is responsible for coercing the decisions of many poor countries to undergo structural adjustment and accept foreign loans for development, should also be addressed. In this respect, Eritrea's rejection of critiques about its abuses of individual civil and political rights is simultaneously a critique of the United

States and other Western governments for failing to acknowledge and uphold the economic and collective security rights of poor countries like Eritrea.

But the government of Eritrea also falls prey to its own logic when using the “human rights as imperialism” ploy, to which countries accused of violations often resort. For, in rejecting human rights as imperialist by nature and linked mainly to the interests of powerful nations and neoliberal economics, the Eritrean government also delegitimizes its own claims to second- and third-generation rights (economic, social, cultural, and collective) that it wishes to prioritize vis-à-vis the international community. When looking to make positive movements toward the implementation of holistic human rights in Eritrea, then, it seems most prudent to first seriously address Eritrea’s central concerns for collective security and development and, second, to remain honest and vigilant in the ways in which all governments, the United States included, deploy human rights critiques and foreign policies to serve specific interests.

### **National Security and Development as Human Rights Claims**

Scholars and savvy policy makers have long acknowledged that the protection of human rights entails a profoundly complex mix of cultural, political, economic, and legal dynamics operating with respect to several temporal and spatial scales at once. This recognition does not, however, preclude the advancement of human rights agendas in particular contexts, nor transnationally. Indeed, scholars across the disciplines have devoted considerable attention to the ways that human rights may realistically advance (and become more reflexive) amidst both economic inequalities and cultural, political, and legal diversity.<sup>14</sup> Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im (2002b), for example, argues that human rights objectives, in order to be truly universal, must also lend themselves to cultural, legal, and political

specificity and internal legitimacy. By this, he means that those committed to upholding and implementing human rights in a given context must work at identifying areas of common ground and interest among the inter- and transnational actors and bodies involved.

Beginning with a respect for critical differences and fostering cross-cultural dialogue allows similarities and shared objectives to subsequently emerge. Methodologically, this approach not only puts into practice the abstract notion of universal and unequivocal human dignity regardless of political, cultural, and legal context, but also proceeds with genuine respect for the contexts themselves. Admittedly, the task is a challenging, but a necessary, prerequisite for advancing human rights internationally.

In the case of Eritrea, finding such common ground must begin, we believe, by recognizing the Eritrean government's primary concerns over collective security and the right to an international environment favorable to both economic development and national sovereignty. The key ingredients here include a resolution to the border stalemate with Ethiopia via immediate demarcation; relief assistance to IDPs at the border; resettlement assistance for IDPs and refugees; and, more generally, serious consideration to the right of national governments to control their own development policies while still remaining eligible for international funding and support.

Creating comprehensive policies that foster the conditions for significant and mutually acceptable advances in these areas is in the interest of both Eritrea and the United States for several reasons. First, and most generally, it legitimizes and empowers holistic human rights frameworks by acknowledging a commitment to the indivisibility of civil and political rights from economic, social, cultural, and collective rights. Second, by working to alleviate the initial obstacles the Eritrean government perceives to security and development,

it provides greater leverage for insisting on the observance of civil and political rights in Eritrea. Finally, a policy environment that begins by recognizing the perspectives and interests of the Eritrean government, rather than insisting only on those of the United States and other Western governments, helps strengthen bilateral dialogue and enhances security in the region as whole. It is when countries like Eritrea receive only criticism and little consideration for the exigencies of the regional and global political-economic pressure they cope with daily that intransigence, isolation, and ongoing human rights abuses flourish.<sup>15</sup>

US policy toward Eritrea at this time should therefore begin with a renewed commitment to implementing both the terms of the Algiers Agreement and the Boundary Commission's decisions to ensure speedy demarcation of the Ethiopian-Eritrea border, as Lyons (2006) has already recommended. It should also include a comprehensive effort to provide immediate relief and resettlement assistance to displaced persons in the border region without linking these to political or economic concessions. Finally, it should understand and respect Eritrea's reasons for rejecting most multilateral intervention, which are based on both the country's historical and political experiences with Ethiopia and vis-à-vis powerful countries of the North and West. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, US policy makers themselves must recognize that for many countries, including Eritrea, the commitment to a more just and equitable distribution of resources and power is increasingly a prerequisite to effective international dialogue and global security, as well as the advancement of human rights. Treating Eritrean society as a whole with dignity and respect, despite the government's record of abuses, is necessary for advancing specific US interests, human rights broadly construed, and the Millennium Development Goals for Africa.

## **Relief, Military Cooperation, and Human Rights in Ethiopia**

If the primary dilemma in relation to human rights protections in Eritrea is the international community's unwillingness or incapacity to establish constructive dialogue with Eritrea based on common ground, a virtually opposite dilemma confronts us in Ethiopia as the US and other Western powers give that government practically free rein to perpetrate equally egregious human rights violations with no political or economic consequences.

Not only is the government of Ethiopia responsible for obstructing implementation of the Boundary Commission ruling, which could finally settle this costly long-standing dispute and ease threats of military response from Eritrea, but Ethiopia has also and more recently intervened — with US backing — to determine the outcome of a domestic conflict between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC, formerly the Islamic Courts Union) in Somalia by carrying out a full-scale military incursion. Perhaps even more disturbing from an international human rights perspective, more than one-hundred human rights defenders — from elected parliamentarians to journalists, students, and opposition party leaders — are still facing unjustified charges in several concurrent trials dragging on in Addis Ababa.<sup>16</sup>

In early 2005, leading up to the 15 May elections, Ethiopia appeared to be turning a corner in its respect for codified international human rights norms. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi sat on UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's Commission for Africa, which considered an array of issues related to political transparency and accountability, economic development, anticorruption measures, human capacity building, and the enhancement of human rights in Africa. The government of Ethiopia was allowing some — albeit limited — international press access and space for political opposition rallies, particularly in Addis. Yet since the

disputed elections, around which accusations of electoral fraud emerged alongside mass demonstrations in protest, political repression greatly increased.<sup>17</sup>

While there are notable parallels and coordinated synchronicity between the ascension of Eritrea's EPLF and the consolidation of the PFDJ in relation to the Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the paths taken by the new governments in Ethiopia and Eritrea have significantly diverged. Eritrea largely spurned Western assistance for reasons discussed above; at the same time Ethiopia developed close ties by way of relief and development assistance, military cooperation,<sup>18</sup> and growing US-led counterterrorist operations in the region.

Consecutive US administrations preferred to conduct foreign policy with a cooperative and stable regime in Addis, despite clear signs of disturbing trends toward political centralization, repression, shrinking political space for civil society, and an incapacity or unwillingness to resolve ongoing conflicts with politically marginalized groups — particularly in the Oromo and Somali regions — which have resorted to armed violence around the country. The US government has consistently and unquestioningly provided a range of assistance to the government of Ethiopia beyond critical economic support funds, child survival and health, and transition initiatives funding, including foreign military financing and international military education and training.

In regard to Ethiopia's domestic human rights concerns, the elephant in any room remains the unresolved border dispute with Eritrea and Ethiopian involvement since mid-2006 in Somalia's crisis of governance. It is impossible to overestimate the impact of Ethiopia's actions across the Horn.



living conditions for ethnic and religious minorities, and share state resources more equitably” (Shinn 2005, 96).

Ethiopia’s concerns over its domestic and border security have received more attention from the international community than its concerns over the sustainable provision of food aid, medical care, education, and other critical services for its population (ranked among the poorest in the world)<sup>19</sup> or the institutionalization of its own capacity to care for its citizens. This is a choice made not in Addis Ababa but in powerful northern capitals, while the consequences reverberate throughout Ethiopian society.

US policy toward Ethiopia should make the protection of all human rights, including the first-generation rights of physical integrity, expression, assembly, and fair trial, central to US relations with the government of Ethiopia and Ethiopian civil society. It should also take great care before offering further support to a dangerous policy of unilateral military engagement in the Horn, as has recently been exercised in Somalia. (It is important to note that the CIC voluntarily disbanded in Mogadishu as the weak TFG forces advanced with powerful Ethiopian forces right behind them.<sup>20</sup>) US policy should also use all available diplomatic means to support the implementation of both the terms of the Algiers Agreement and the Boundary Commission’s decisions to ensure speedy demarcation of the Ethiopian-Eritrea border. Finally, it should recognize — even if the government in Addis Ababa currently does not — that in order to achieve Ethiopia’s goal of domestic and border security, both the government of Ethiopia and the international community must listen to and respect the rights of minority groups and opposition parties — and in particular leading human rights defenders — whose perspectives on national priorities and the nature of their own rights have been too long ignored.



extremist elements of the CIC in Mogadishu, while Ethiopian troops, backed by the United States, propped up the TFG in Baidoa, Somalia. But in late December 2006 the TFG ousted the CIC from Mogadishu in a surprising turn of events in which the CIC chose to disband and disperse rather than fight for the capital. Since that time, two air strikes launched by US gunships on 8 and 24 January 2007 reportedly killed dozens of Somalis, among them several alleged members of al-Qaeda. This provoked stern warnings by the Eritrean government that US involvement would “incur dangerous consequences” (MSNBC 2007, Reuters 2007). Indeed, relations between the Eritrean and American governments have never been worse. Conflict and instability in Somalia, as Lyons (2006) and Somalia specialist Ken Menkhaus (2005) so clearly point out, have the potential to draw in the whole Horn and East Africa, as well as provoke new strife around US-led efforts to avert terrorism in the region. In fact, the current situation is markedly deteriorating. The United Nations estimates those newly displaced at twenty-thousand, as violence is perpetrated by clan militias, warlord militias, and remnants of the CIC. Human rights organizations are reporting violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including abductions, rape, and unlawful killings of civilians by armed groups. Amnesty International has also reported incommunicado detentions of members of armed groups and other individuals by the Ethiopian armed forces in Somalia as well as threats to media workers.

If the central dilemma in relation to human rights protections in Eritrea is the international community’s unwillingness or incapacity to establish constructive dialogue with Asmara (the Eritrean capital) based on common ground, and if the central dilemma in Ethiopia is US unwillingness to clarify common ground and use existing dialogue to protect human rights, the central dilemma in Somalia is most challenging of all: how to ensure respect for holistic human rights from the very beginning of renewed governance in a highly



strive to better understand the various roles and norms of Islamic leaders and clan elders, the Somali business community, women, and other leaders of civil society, and the latticework of clans from the South to Puntland.

Serious attention must be paid to funding, codifying, institutionalizing, and building the capacity to support rights of assembly, expression, and fair trial, as well as the crucial extended rights to food, housing, education, and health care, and the more nuanced rights of groups in relation to individuals. The latter must also lead the international community to a long overdue consideration of the claim to self-determination first made by the people of a de facto independent Somaliland more than sixteen years ago.

US officials made a serious blunder in early 2006 when they decided to back a group of warlords that called itself “antiterrorist,” despite growing public support for the Council of Islamic Courts in Mogadishu, which had provided basic security for women and children for the first time in fifteen years. It would be hard to find a clearer indication of the priorities of the people than the groundswell of support the CIC initially enjoyed. In fact, it would be wise for US and other Western policy makers to build on this phenomenon (rather than dismissing it for its earlier support for the CIC) and consider the wider implications for the establishment of holistic human rights protections by including a wide swath of civil society representatives in its own discussions on aid, trade, security, and democratization during what can still be considered a new morning in Somalia. Somali clan, religious, women, and business leaders are also coming together in the diaspora to discuss their human rights concerns and to forge a common vision for their country. Listening to these citizens whom the TFG must come to represent in order to garner credibility is also crucial to stability and security in Somalia. As Menkhaus has noted, “the prolonged collapse of central



building, and security and judicial capacity building, which includes fair trials for former CIC members and all prisoners. The final issue is long-term political and financial support for general reconstruction, focusing on essential infrastructure development. As Ruth Iyob and Edmond Keller have said, “Both the United States and other countries of the Horn must come to see the problems of political insecurity and human security in the region as being critically intertwined” (Iyob and Keller 2006, 114).

### **Conclusion: Reassessing Human Rights and Human Rights Protections in the Horn**

Throughout this article, we have attempted to demonstrate how political dynamics in the Horn of Africa are not only intimately linked with one another, but are also complex responses to international policy preferences. These policies, moreover, consistently favor the political-economic interests and perspectives of powerful countries like the United States and lead to the creation of regional alliances that are understood to further those interests, often exacerbating conflicts or precipitating new ones.

We have argued that any successful US policy toward the Horn that will promote peace, stability, and human rights not only regionally but also globally must begin with a serious and genuine consideration of regional dynamics, local perspectives on human rights, and the way in which US policies impact these factors. Related, US policy makers must effectively address the ways that previous or existing policies have contributed to tensions and diplomatic impasse, including the implicit or explicit valorization of powerful foreign interests over and above the well-being and needs of local populations and governments. Developing and incorporating into policy a more consistent ethic with respect to holistic but politically and culturally variable human rights concerns, we believe, must be at the center of any comprehensive US policy in the Horn.



*Implementing U.S. Human Rights Policy* (2004, 456). Unless the United States develops a comprehensive and principled strategy that is more sensitive to regional complexities and fairer to the rights perspectives and political and humanitarian needs of the Horn populations and their governments, greater strife and suffering are likely to result. Such strife and suffering are not only unacceptable from a holistic human rights perspective, but also are contrary to US interests in the long run, as increasing political-economic instability in the Horn will only contribute to the growth of anti-American sentiment and the proliferation of terrorist ideologies that represent, more than anything else, weapons of the weak, desperate, and disenfranchised.

Drawing upon insights from anthropology, political science, human rights advocacy, and policy analysis, we have insisted that successful US policies in the Horn should proceed from a sensitive comprehension of how and why instability and human rights abuses have flourished in relationship to both regional dynamics and the impact of US and other international foreign policy on the region. We firmly believe, first and foremost, a resolution to the border stalemate between Eritrea and Ethiopia, with immediate humanitarian relief and resettlement assistance to IDPs and refugees, is a prerequisite to developing a more productive dialogue with Eritrea and reining in Ethiopian impunity in abuses committed against its own population and incursions into the territory of other countries in the region, actions which are likely to produce only greater instability in the short and long term. Recognizing the full range of human rights concerns in Ethiopia and understanding Eritrea's prioritization of collective security as a genuine human rights concern are important starting points.



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However, it is our contention that the latter will only be possible when the recommendations made here are heeded.

<sup>16</sup> See footnote 4 regarding a recent court order for the release of a limited number (twenty-five) of detainees. Amnesty International considers charges against all of these individuals — including treason and other capital offenses — to be without merit and calls for the release of all of these individuals, whom the organization has designated prisoners of conscience.

<sup>17</sup> As reported by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the US Department of State, these violations included mass arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, extrajudicial killings, repression of ethnic minorities, intimidation of students and teachers, suppression of press freedom, and the less reported practice of targeting peaceful political opposition in the countryside.

<sup>18</sup> By way of example, Ethiopia contributed troops to the so-called Coalition of the Willing during the 1991 US-led Gulf War with Iraq, and the US maintains military bases in eastern Ethiopia.

<sup>19</sup> Among other institutions, the World Bank continues to track Ethiopia's poverty-stricken economy.

<sup>20</sup> Clan, business, religious, and women leaders in the capital, and moderate elements of the CIC, not the TFG nor the government of Ethiopia, deserve the credit for avoiding what could have easily been a terrible battle at the cost of untold civilian lives in Mogadishu. Violent attacks against Ethiopian and TFG forces increased in March and April 2007 as have resultant civilian casualties, now estimated in the hundreds.

<sup>21</sup> On 6 December 2006, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 1725 supporting an African Union-Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) "protection and training mission" in Somalia. On 20 February 2007, the UNSC passed Resolution 1744 authorizing African Union (AU) member states to form a stabilization mission in Somalia (AMISOM) under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, but this mission lacks a civilian protection mandate. To date, only Uganda has supplied some 1,500 troops on the ground in Somalia, although Burundi, Malawi, Nigeria, and Mali have pledged troops, with other AU countries offering some logistical support.