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During the dark days of the 1984-1985 famine, Ethiopia made plans to relocate virtually its entire rural population - somewhere between 33 and 37 million people - by the 1990s. As part of the Dergue's 10-year development plan, these relocations are labeled as two distinct but related programs: resettlement and villagization. Together they constitute one of the largest mass movements of people anywhere in the world./P>

The resettlement program was launched in late 1984. By March 1986, about 800,000 people had been moved, the majority from the northern highlands to distant areas in the southwest. The government contends that these relocations are necessary for ecological reasons - to rescue those "who were affected by drought again and again and could not be rehabilitated in their own area due to its uselessness" (Radio Addis Ababa 9 February 1985).

After widely publicized accusations of human rights abuses during its implementation, the program was suspended and then reinitiated one year later in March 1987, with plans to resettle peasants at approximately half the rate as before. Taking a "mistakes were made" approach, the Ethiopian government has assured the international community that previous abuses - purportedly caused by "overzealous" party officials working under emergency conditions - will not be repeated under the new directive. Recently, President Mengistu has stated that up to seven million peasants may ultimately be removed from the highlands through the resettlement program, which will continue indefinitely "until such time as we are able to bring about a balanced settlement pattern".

Villagization, on the other hand, began in 1984 on a relatively small scale in selected regions of Ethiopia. It was inaugurated as a national campaign one year later, and the pace of its implementation has accelerated ever since. By February 1987, 5.7 million people (15 percent of the rural population) had been moved into 11,000 new villages. By the end of this year, 10 million rural inhabitants (25 percent of the population) are expected to be villagized in 12 of Ethiopia's 13 provinces. The stated purpose of villagization is twofold: to create the necessary "preconditions" for agrarian socialism, and to facilitate the provision of human social services by concentrating scattered homesteaders into central communities. Like resettlement, villagization is justified with ecological arguments; according to President Mengistu, the villagization program will "make the distribution of people compatible with that of the natural resources".

If the implementation of these two programs continues according to plan, virtually everyone in Ethiopia except urban dwellers will be living in newly created communities by the next decade. The communities created by both villagization and resettlement consist of several hundred families living in centralized locations and farming some distance away from their dwelling sites. Because the Ethiopian government is relying on Western donor agencies to contribute funds, food and technical assistance for establishing and maintaining of these communities, the use of villagization and resettlement as a means of development has received considerable attention in the Western media.

The relationship between the formation of these new communities and Ethiopia's military objectives has received considerably less public scrutiny. This is probably in large part due to the desire of most Western aid agencies not to involve themselves in the internal political affairs of the countries in which they operate. However, in light of the fact that villagization and various kinds of resettlement programs have a long history of employment as a military strategy (Vietnam, Guatemala and Cambodia, for example), and that Ethiopia maintains the largest standing army in Africa, with some 300,000 troops deployed within its own borders against more than a dozen different opposition movements, questions quite naturally arise about the possible relationship between relocation policies and military objectives for the regions affected by these policies.

Probably no area of Ethiopia is more affected by resettlement and villagization than the southwest provinces of Wollega and Illubabor, which have been, and continue to be, the major receiving grounds for hundreds of thousands of highland settlers. At the same time, the indigenous populations are now being rapidly villagized. Not incidentally, these provinces are also the battlegrounds between the Ethiopian army and two armed opposition groups: the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), whose partisans operate and control territory in the three westernmost districts of Wollega Province, and the Gambella People's Liberation Movement (GPLM), which is active in the Gambella district of Illubabor Province.

During May and June of 1987, I interviewed 75 refugees in Sudan who had recently fled from resettlement and villagization schemes in Wollega and Illubabor. My original purpose was to investigate the ecological consequences of these programs, but it soon became apparent from my respondents' testimonies that a military agenda lies hidden not far below the surface. Their descriptions of life in the new communities created through villagization and resettlement clearly indicate that these programs - quite apart from any developmental aim - are engineered to contain rural armed opposition and increase military control of this region. Resettlement and villagization are tools of militarization in both senses of the term. First, they imbue the societies they create with military characteristics: regimentation of labor, top-down decision making, compulsory participation under threat of corporal punishment, surveillance, curfews. Second, these newly created communities are themselves used as military infrastructures and provide recruits for the army as well as for special militia forces responsible for locating and punishing suspected rebel collaborators. Armed militia groups comprised of residents of the resettlement camps in Wollega are now being used to implement villagization in the surrounding region and to execute and torture political prisoners. In Gambella, Illubabor,

settler militia groups were used to conduct reprisals against Anuak civilians after an armed uprising last spring.

The Settlement Communities of Bambesi and Megele

In refugee camps in both Damazine and Yabuus, in the Blue Nile Province of Sudan, I spoke with people who had been among the first wave of resettlers to be moved to Wollega under the current program and who had escaped within the last few months. These refugees, from the highlands of Wollo and Tigray, had lived for at least two years in resettlement communities in the Asosa district known as Megele and Bambesi. Although the Ethiopian government is now claiming that these resettlement sites are rapidly moving toward "self-sufficiency," the refugees' testimony indicates that very little about life inside these communities has changed since Niggli (1985) described them as forced labor camps.

Clearing forested land, plowing and cultivating in the collective fields and constructing houses constitute the settlers' daily activities in Bambesi and Megele. Men and women are organized in separate work brigades and rise at dawn to begin their work. Instructions are given by brigade supervisors who also punish those who appear to be sloughing off. My respondents said that the nature of their duties changed little during the two or three years they lived in the camps.

Several people I spoke with in both Damazine and Yabuus bore on their bodies the marks of beatings and torture which they said they received in the settlements. According to all the respondents, beatings by camp cadres are frequent and routine. Insolence, disobedience, absence from work, refusal to work or suspicion of communicating with local people are all punishable by beatings or lashings.

Escape attempts provoke more severe punishments. The most commonly cited was beating the escapee with sticks while his hands and feet are tied together behind his back. Severe beatings on the soles of the feet ensured that the culprit would not repeat his offense. Repeated plunging into vats of water is another form of torture inflicted upon captured escapees.

Camp residents subsist on monthly food rations which, in 1987, consisted solely of 15 kg of unground grain, usually maize, for each adult. Children receive half rations. This amount seems to be standard in both Bambesi and Megele. Needless to say, such an allotment hardly constitutes an adequate diet. (The recognized standard ration for famine victims is 20 kg/mo of mixed foods.) Indeed, many of the newly arriving refugees in Damazine were emaciated; malnutrition was especially evident among the children.

Refugees told me that the distribution of rations in the camps is completely controlled by camp officials, and food is often withheld as punishment for refusing to work. Food storage areas are guarded by militia to ensure complete control over the settlers' diet. One man who had served as a member of the camp militia said his sole responsibility was to beat anyone attempting to enter the warehouse where the grain was stored. Members of

the militia receive slightly higher apportionments of food - an enticement to potential recruits. Food is also used to create a class of informers within the camp population and to discriminate against undesirable groups. One respondent recalled, for example, that the Amharic-speaking settlers received slightly more rations than did the Oromo speakers, and were given wheat as well as maize in their rations.

Sometime in 1986, an announcement was made in both Megele and Asosa that settlers would now have to "economize" and eat less food. This austere measure corresponded with the cessation of internationally donated food supplies, such as wheat and oil, which had sometimes supplemented the standard ration of maize during the first two years. This proclamation enraged the settlers, already constantly hungry, and often prompted their decision to attempt escape.

Some settlers, according to the refugees, supplement their diets with food obtained illegally from the indigenous Oromo people living in the surrounding areas. Clandestine trades of firewood for grain are common; beatings or imprisonment remain the standard punishment for such actions. However, as the local people in these regions continue to be villagized, the possibilities of such contact will become increasingly limited.

At the same time that settlers were "economizing" on food, agricultural production in the settlement collective farms was improving. The refugees stressed, however, that although they had spent all their days clearing, planting and cultivating the collective fields, they received none of the fruits of the harvest except for their meager rations of maize. All the harvests of all other crops produced by the settlers were stored in warehouses guarded by militia and later trucked away.

According to President Mengistu in a speech to the Central Committee in March 1987, production of cash crops and agricultural "surpluses" in the settlement sites are now "contributing to the enhancement of the country's economic development." He went on to note that the unprecedented volume of grain stockpiled last year (5 million quintals) was creating a shortage of storage space; at the same time the price of grain in Addis Ababa dropped by 32 percent.

Ethiopia diverts nearly half of its GNP to the military sector, using cash crops to pay for armaments, so it is clear that the agricultural production of the resettlement sites is effectively strengthening the Dergue's military power. Low food prices in urban areas - government strongholds - suppress potential unrest, and large grain surpluses ensure that large numbers of army conscripts, most of whom are farmers taken out of production, can be fed. In this way, the resettlement communities are directly fueling the militarization of rural Ethiopia.

At the same time, the militarized societies created by the resettlement program have allowed the government to attain complete control over the settlers' diets - and therefore their lives. All the refugees I spoke with said they were more hungry in the resettlement camps than they had ever been during the drought and famine in their homelands. They

were offered no way out of this life of hunger and hard labor except by taking up arms for the government.

Settlers as Militia

According to my respondents, two types of militia are recruited from among the settlers: those who work inside the camp and those who are sent out into the surrounding communities.

The camp militia's main duty is to prevent settlers from leaving the camp. Additionally, they guard machine shops and storage areas where food is kept before being transported out of the camp. Three Wollo refugees who had served in these functions said they were armed only with sticks. However, testimony from other refugees indicates that at least some of the militia guarding the camp perimeter are equipped with rifles.

The cadres select recruits. Two respondents said that a meeting was called in their camp during which the cadres chose 60 young and able-bodied men from among the residents; some were taken for the army, and some for the militia. One ex-militia member said that people who had served in militias back at home were preferentially chosen: "I had served in the militia in Wollo, so when I came to Wollega the cadres said, 'Since you have been in the militia before, you can serve here also.'"

Militiamen work closely with the cadres and are given special privileges. Besides receiving more rations, they also sleep in a special place - though not inside the cadres' sleeping quarters.

The OLF has long alleged that highland settlers organized as militia groups are used by the Dergue as a tool to control and terrorize Oromo communities whose loyalty to the government is suspect. In 1985, Oromo refugees in Yabuus told Bonnie Holcomb that groups of armed settlers, brought from Wollo in the early 1980s, were ordered to locate and punish local farmers identified as OLF supporters.

According to the refugees I interviewed in Yabuus in 1987, these practices continue. In addition, Wollo settlers now appear to be used for at least two other purposes: to torture and execute political prisoners and, organized as armed security forces, to carry out villagization.

In Oromo communities that have not yet been villagized and are located near OLF operational areas, armed Wollo militia harass the families of farmers who have disappeared and are presumed to have joined the rebels. One woman from Begi whose husband fled after being pinpointed as a collaborator reported that the whole family was being attacked and harassed because the government thought my husband was secretly returning to the farm. Once my child's hands were tied behind his back for a whole day. This was done by armed Wollo settlers [from a nearby camp]. They didn't speak our language. They came with the government administrators. They were the same people we had built houses for.

Rape of Oromo and Komo women by armed Wollo settlers was commonly reported. Several women I spoke with said they had been raped but were too ashamed to discuss the circumstances. They did say that the threat of assault has created hardships for the whole community. Women feel they can no longer fetch water or firewood or travel alone to the market. Gangs of armed Wollo, they told me, would sometimes come into their homes under the pretext of wanting a drink of water and then proceed to rape the women after killing or beating the husbands. In other cases, men have been taken from their homes by Wollo militia on the pretext that they are OLF supporters. While they are being detained, other members of the militia rape their wives.

According to the testimony of three different respondents, militia forces made up of Wollo settlers participate in the execution and torture of political prisoners. I spoke at length with one Oromo farmer who had been a peasant association chairman in Gidami. In 1986 he was captured in a mass arrest and imprisoned for seven months. During this time he was periodically tortured to extract a confession that he was an OLF collaborator. He said the torture included beating the soles of his feet and his testicles, plunging his head into water and putting wax plugs into his mouth which contained needles. During the beatings he suffered broken ribs (still visible through his skin) and burst testicles. This torture was carried out by both party cadres and militiamen recruited from the resettlement camps. He emphasized that the settlers were forced to participate in this - they wore uniforms with short pants so that when it appeared they were not beating the victims severely enough, the cadres beat them on the legs. Other stronger prisoners were also recruited to continue the beatings.

Also in 1986, in a community in Begi which has since been villagized, Wollo militia were used to execute 18 prisoners suspected of supporting the OLF. I spoke with two women who witnessed the execution. This is the account of one:

They imprisoned 18 people and moved them to Nekempte. Then they brought them back and gathered all the kebeles [peasant associations] together and shot each man. I saw this with my own eyes. These people were merchants. They had been traveling to Kirmuk to sell coffee because their wives had no clothes and were naked. Many wives were told that their husbands were cooperating with the rebels. They used the husband and wife to inform on each other. They also used the conflicts between two wives to make them spy on each other.

The women were gathered in a place where we couldn't run away and were told to sit. They brought in the 18 people in a truck. They brought in the armed Wollo people also to shoot them. They forced them from behind to shoot these people. Slogans were shouted: "Anyone who feeds reactionaries and rebels will be shot."

Before they gathered us here, they completely disarmed us - even took away our sewing needles in a thorough security search so we couldn't react. The relatives of these people were forced to keep their eyes open and no one was allowed to cry or show any sorrow. After this, they dragged them into a single ditch like dead dogs. And the relatives had to watch.

Villagization is proceeding rapidly in the Asosa, Ghimbi and Kellem districts of Wollega. Militia forces from the resettlement camps seem to be involved in the process of villagization in three ways. First, they serve as a security force for government officials orchestrating and overseeing the move. Respondents from many different areas mentioned that the party representatives, district administrators and members of the Ministry of Agriculture arrived in their villages surrounded by armed guards "who did not speak our language." Some recognized these guards as settlers from nearby camps.

Second, in some cases, the militia oversee the seizure and collectivization of crops and animals which accompanies villagization. In one village in Gidami, armed men guarded the fields - which were ready for harvest - while the villagers moved their houses. People from other villages were brought in to harvest the crop which was then taken to a place unknown to the villagers. Third, the militia oversee the actual move, including the dismantling and rebuilding of houses.

In one Berta (Fedhashi) community in Begi, Wollo militia were involved in all aspects of collectivization and villagization. A spokesperson in Yabuus said that harassment by Wollo settlers was one of the central reasons his whole village (800 people) decided to flee in March 1987:

[The army] brought the Wollo and settled them all over the country. They came three years ago. Then they armed them and told them to kill us and beat us. [The settlers] told us not to work, not to use money. They said to build our villages together and then sit idly. They told us our harvest would be taken away by the government and government people would eat it. We never ate what we produced. So we ran away because they took everything from us.

The Villagization of Communities in Ghimbi, Kellem and Asosa

In January 1986, soon after villagization was initiated in the province, communities of people from Wollega's three western districts began arriving in the Yabuus refugee camp operated by the Oromo Relief Association. According to the OLF, which operates in all three of these districts, villagization has also produced many internal refugees who are now living in OLF-controlled zones or remote unoccupied areas.

Those people I spoke with in Yabuus had fled before they were actually transferred to their new village but after they had constructed much of it. Many had witnessed and participated in the villagization of neighboring communities. Some had actually been OLF supporters and sympathizers in their communities; others contacted the opposition forces for assistance only after fleeing their homes. All respondents reported frequent guerrilla activity in and around their communities and had experienced some form of harassment by government forces suspecting them of aiding the rebels. The order to begin villagization often came shortly after an intimidation campaign carried out by government forces, which could include executions, mass arrests, lootings and search and seizures.

Most of these refugees described villagization as the last in a series of repressive measures designed to weaken their resistance to government control. Some believed the specific purpose of villagization was to isolate them from the rebels - this rationale was openly admitted to some of the villagers by the cadres implementing the program. ("Anyone who does not want to move into the new village only desires to feed the rebels.")

In all cases, the houses of the new villages were constructed close together on either side of a road with all the doors facing the same direction. Indeed, the communities created through villagization appear to be similar to those created by resettlement, according to the refugees' descriptions. Residents are organized into brigades to work in collective fields and subsist on rations doled out by officials. My respondents said they saw no evidence of social services in the new villages, although some noted that prison compounds were often a central feature.

Villagization in these regions is completely militarized, as the role of the resettler militia, described above, attests. In all cases, the dismantling and reconstruction of homes took place under the eyes of armed soldiers. Stiff fines were levied against anyone absent from this work. Refugees said they had seen people become sick and die under the heavy labor; one man from Begi who was unable to pay his fine for missing a day's work hanged himself.

In one strange variation, a village of Komo people were also put to work constructing underground bunkers for the Ethiopian army:

Then the Dergue [soldiers] told us to dig holes for them into the earth and put down big pieces of wood and savanna grasses on top and then earth on top of that, and just to leave a hole for them to come in and out.

Integrated Settlements in Gambella: Armed Uprisings and Government Reprisals

The dense rainforests in the Gambella lowlands of Illubabor Province form what is undoubtedly the largest remaining tract of forest in Ethiopia. This area is also the homeland of the Anuak, a Nilotic people whose villages are distributed along the banks of the many rivers that water the region. Traditionally, the Anuak fish from the rivers, hunt in the surrounding forests and practice a form of shifting horticulture in the alluvial soils along the river banks.

By 1979, the Gambella rainforests had become the target of one of the Dergue's early resettlement schemes. Anuak farmers were violently evicted from their villages when Amhara settlers were brought from Wollo to serve as unpaid workers in a large-scale irrigation project along the Baro River. The clearance of Anuaks away from the rivers coincided with a mass conscription campaign as Ethiopian troops swept through Anuak villages. The uprisings that followed resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Anuaks.

Resettlement resumed again in 1984 under the new program. By 1985, 70,000 highland peasants had been resettled into three large areas of virgin forest in Gambella, the traditional hunting and fishing grounds of the indigenous Anuak people. In the same year, villagization was initiated in Illubabor Province and by March 1987 had affected 7 percent of the rural population (62,000 people). By September 1988, the government plans to have villagized a quarter million peasants (25 percent of the rural population).

In the last year the distinction between villagization and resettlement in Gambella has blurred. Local Anuak, who had been used as unpaid laborers in the construction of the resettlement camps, are being villagized into these same camps as a part of a program of "integrated settlement." Some of their original villages and surrounding gardens have been destroyed to make way for collective agricultural schemes. At the same time, some of the highland settlers have been organized into armed militia and security forces to control the Anuak population and squelch resistance.

In Khartoum, I spoke with Anuak refugees who had fled Gambella within the last year and who had witnessed or participated in the formation of two of these integrated settlements near the Baro River. According to their testimony, Anuaks were evicted from three adjacent villages between December 1985 and January 1986. These residents were moved by militia units - some members were highland settlers - into the settlement sites. Those who refused to go were bound and beaten with sticks.

In some cases, the militia confiscated the Anuak's gardens along the Baro River and destroyed the crops. In other cases, the crops were left to wither or be consumed by wild animals. All respondents indicated that in no way were villagized Anuaks allowed to return to their old fields. In one village, these riverbank lands were transformed into an irrigated state farm and planted in rice. Some of the villagized Anuaks were forced to work as laborers in the scheme; the rice harvests were trucked away to government storage areas.

Most of the Anuaks villagized into the integrated settlements, according to the refugees, work with the highland settlers on collective farms that were planted in sorghum and maize and cultivated with tractors. In addition, brigades of Anuak and highland settlers were put to work clearing forests and constructing police stations, houses for the militia, meeting houses and clinics. One respondent, who had lived in one of these settlements, said that work began at 6 AM and continued until 6 PM with a two-hour break at noon. Refusal to work brings lashings or imprisonments. Another respondent said he saw one Anuak lashed until he died after protesting that he was too tired to work.

In short, the descriptions of these integrated settlements are those of militarized labor camps. As in the resettlement camps of Wollega, party cadres and armed militia guard the perimeter; anyone attempting escape is imprisoned or shot; all crops produced on the collective fields are transported away and stored while residents receive rations of grain distributed by the cadres. The organization of these communities, as described by the refugees interviewed, strongly resembles the villagized communities in Wollega the Oromo refugees in Yabuus described. Houses are arranged on either side of a road, with

narrow spaces between each house and with doors all facing the road. Significantly, Anuak residents of the settlement communities are prohibited from fishing in the Baro River. One respondent said that his mother and father secretly go to the river to fish anyway, although those who are caught doing so are beaten.

Inside the settlements, relations between highland settlers and Anuak residents are tense. Lack of a common language prevents direct communication. One respondent said that he thought the highland people were treated better by the cadres and received more rations than the Anuaks. In some cases respondents saw Anuak and highland settlers forced to live together in the same hut, although none had witnessed marriages between Anuak and highland settlers. Forced intermarriages were reported in 1986 by a Tigrayan priest who had been resettled to Gambella.

Higher levels of resentment are probably found outside the settlements in Anuak communities not yet villagized. Here militia groups of highland settlers have begun to harass the residents and help themselves to local resources.

Following the resettlement and evictions of 1979, some of the Anuak refugees who had fled to Sudan founded the Gambella Liberation Front and began attacking units of the Ethiopian army occupying Gambella. The current resurgence of the armed resistance movement in Gambella and its reorganization as the Gambella People's Liberation Movement (GPLM) are a direct response to the oppressive conditions created by the resettlement and villagization programs. GPLM guerrillas have clashed with Dergue forces in Gambella several times over the last six months. According to a GPLM spokesperson, the government has been continuously arresting Anuak students and farmers on suspicion of GPLM collaboration.

These claims were confirmed by an eyewitness to these reprisals; a flight technician for the Ethiopian Air Force, he regularly flew between Addis Ababa and Gambella and defected to Sudan several days before I spoke with him. According to his account, GPLM attacks included the burning of a clinic in one of the settlement camps. Following this uprising, Anuak workers at a German fisheries project near the settlement were arrested by Ethiopian authorities and their vehicle was confiscated. Ground troops were sent into the town of Gambella, which was placed under strict curfew, and Anuak residents suspected of collaboration were arrested, tortured or executed. Militia from the settlement camps played a major role in these reprisals, the flight technician said. (Excerpts from his account are presented in the box.)

Conclusions

It should be emphasized that the areas from which all of these refugees fled are the recruiting grounds for armed opposition movements. Conclusions about the role of resettlement and villagization based on these descriptions should be considered as specific to these regions. Nevertheless, these testimonies tell us much about the nature of these programs in an area of open rebellion and their possible use as a military tool.

As the cries for emergency relief aid for Ethiopia yield to the new sober talk about the need for long-term development, the programs of resettlement and villagization have begun to be discussed in different terms. The Ethiopian Herald, for example, now refers to resettlement camps in Wollega as "rehabilitation sites." The highly visible British charity Band Aid has recently chosen to fund some of these camps in the Ghimbi district as part of its emphasis on "long-term development."

It is understandable, and indeed admirable, that those engaged in development work want nothing to do with the bloody military campaigns conducted by the Ethiopian government. Unfortunately, as the testimonies of these refugees make abundantly clear, the participants of these programs are not afforded such a luxury. Individuals and agencies supporting resettlement and villagization schemes may find that what is actually being "developed" through these programs is Ethiopia's military strength. Already in the western districts of Wollega Province, the military uses of the two programs have been dovetailed as militia groups from the resettlement camps are brought in to enforce the villagization of rebellious communities. Already the rainforests of Gambella have been transformed into a theater of violence because of the oppressive conditions created by the integrated settlement schemes there. As more Anuaks are evicted from their lands and as more settlers are brought into the region, we can expect more violent uprisings - which, undoubtedly, will spawn even more preemptive and retaliatory actions on the part of the Ethiopian military as it intensifies its campaign of terror and intimidation.

With the focus of attention in Ethiopia now on "long-term" solutions, it is time to ask what kind of communities resettlement and villagization will in the long term produce, and for what purpose. Ethiopia is one of the most militarized nation-states in the developing world; such questions cannot be divorced from considerations of its long-term military objectives. Significantly, the hidden agendas of villagization and resettlement are already evident to the programs' participants who are now living as refugees in Sudan. As one ex-settler from Wollega said: "Mengistu told us to farm but not to eat. He wants us to feed him."

Testimony of an Anuak Refugee from Gambella

Two months ago [end of April 1987] there was a clash between the government and the people in the area of Gambella. Following this clash, conditions became very, very bad - much worse. Now we haven't any freedom at all in the area. The government captured one of the guys from GPLM [Gambella People's Liberation Movement] during this clash. I arrived one week after the clash and saw that they were arresting many other people also - one of my friends who was with me and other workers in the town. They said, "You are cooperating with GPLM." I saw the conditions for Anuaks had reached the danger point.

The Dergue ground force was sent in. No one could be out in the street after 3 PM in Gambella town or they would be killed immediately. The Dergue brought in their militia with them - Wollo people from the settlement camps and those called Kombote Adiya from Shoa. They gave them guns and they were moving through the town of Gambella

from 3 PM to the early morning, 6 AM. At that time if they meet you and you are Anuak, you will be killed. They said, "You Anuaks are the ones who disturbed Gambella. Since this is Ethiopia, you will be killed." So there were many people killed at this time - and in very bad ways, ways people should not be killed. For example, sometimes they rope a man's arms behind his back and leave him for 24 hours like this. When they untie him, the man dies because of the blood coming, the circulation.

At the same time, unknown Anuak people and workers in Gambella were put in prison along with many government employees. They said, "You know the case, you are collaborators." They put 85 people in prison, including some peasants. I myself saw one guy shot. He was a student and knew nothing about this. During the daytime he was walking from his school and carrying his books and they shot him. When they reported it, they said he was running from the bush - this was their reason the bush - this was their reason.

When they put these guys in the prison, they torture them very badly. We know this because they were taken to a special house they use for torturing people. And when their wives would go to bring them food, they saw they could not eat or talk and were paralyzed. Of course they were not allowed to talk to them. This torturing place used to be a home but it was made into a torturing place in 1982. It is far from the prison so they bring people there in cars to question them. We know the one from GPLM was tortured. Even my friend from Addis saw him and said he was paralyzed. I myself was afraid. You wouldn't say anything or they would put you in prison...

There is an Anuak fisherman working with the church and the car he was given by the Germans was taken by the government. They said, "This is the car used by the GPLM for transport." Even they wanted to put him in prison, but the guy escaped and went to Addis. There are a lot of Anuaks working in the fisheries department with the church. They had a big project planned on the river nearby [an integrated settlement], the place where they have now brought the Kombote Adiya people. The Germans gave materials through the church in Gambella. Some of these Anuaks are now arrested.

During the clash between GPLM and the Dergue, GPLM burned the clinic in [the settlement camp] because it wanted to kill the party cadres who brought the resettled highland people. These cadres are the ones who dominate us. Also the ones from Wollo...

At night, there was fire on every corner and guns; the people were very much in danger. I felt something and took my decision to leave the place. It was better to leave - I didn't want to see those things; maybe I will become mad. When I saw how my tribe was in danger, I didn't want to be in that place; I wanted to forget. So I took my decision to leave [for Sudan]...

Even when I left [Gambella town], things were leveling off. In the months before that [end of April through May 1987], the beatings were increasing daily. The Anuak people from the villages had to leave the town by the afternoon. This is when the killings would

happen. They would be asked, "Where is your ID card?" Most of the time they didn't know the Amharic language, our people. So most of the time they just wouldn't answer, unless there is a student who will translate for them. So they kill him and say, "Oh, he escaped from the bush," if you ask them why. But even you won't ask this because you are afraid of being put in the prison. So you just stay quiet.

The killing of the student was the only one I saw with my eyes, but in the mornings you would see the bodies in the streets. Sometimes they killed them and took them to the hospital. They don't do this in public because they are afraid the people will refuse to leave the wounded or throw spears. We haven't any guns.

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