

ETHIOPIA: ANUAK MINORITIES FACING INSECURITY AND TERROR

Suppressed UN Report Documents Government Role in Destabilizing Region While New Threats of Genocidal Violence Arise

(Massachusetts, 13 December 2006) — The government of Ethiopia continues to persecute minority people in southwest Ethiopia, a newly released United Nations report shows. The 96-page UN report, titled **Livelihoods and Vulnerabilities Study, Gambella Region of Ethiopia** <<http://www.allthingspass.com/journalism.php?catid=13#>> is being released in an effort to raise the profile of the security situation in the Gambella state.

“While the UN report focuses only on the conflict with indigenous people inside the country,” says the report’s co-author **keith harmon snow**, “the Government of Ethiopia is also involved in the invisible US covert war in Somalia, and the destabilization of Eritrea.”

Today, on the third anniversary of the 13-15 December 2003 atrocities and massacres committed by Ethiopian military and government-backed militias, where 424 people were killed in the three days, tensions in the region are extremely high. Reports coming out of Gambella state on 13 December 2006 indicate that Anuak women and children have been kidnapped, that armed minorities with government support are on the move in Gambella town, in the schools and other public places, seeking to provoke unarmed Anuaks into conflict. The pattern follows that seen during the historic massacres of three years ago. Some 2300 Anuak people have been killed since then.

A second report, **“We are now hoping for death”: Violence and Grave Human Rights Abuses in Gambella, Ethiopia**, has also been released. In January 2006, experts from the International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) of the Harvard Law School Human Rights Program travelled to Gambella to investigate the security situation of civilians caught in the middle of the ongoing conflict. The IHRC report was released on 14 December 2006:

<http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/hrp/clinic/documents/ETHIOPIAREPORT.pdf>

“According to the IHRC report, “the Ethiopian National Defense Force’s abuses have included regularly gunning down young Anuak men accused of being rebels and raping women on the roads outside of town. Seven soldiers raped one woman and then detained her husband who tried to stop the crime, beating him every day for a week. The ENDF’s culture of impunity has allowed the violence to go unchecked.” (See: http://www.garoweonline.com/stories/publish/article_6473.shtml.)

The UNICEF report was researched in the remote regions of the Gambella state in the fall of 2005, and it was delivered to the contracting agency, UNICEF, in January 2006, but it was not made public. Co-authored by two expert human rights and genocide consultants, and supported by unidentified individuals and agencies in Ethiopia, the UNICEF report concluded: “It is very likely that Anuak (and possibly other indigenous minorities) and their culture will completely disappear in the not-so-distant future.”

“Conditions in the Gambella region are horrible,” says genocide investigator and co-author **Keith Harmon Snow**. “I am releasing this report because I have continued to receive calls for help and reports of atrocities and suffering from survivors and witnesses. In August the military forcibly displaced all Anuak people from some 13 to 15 Anuak villages in the remote and already devastated regions. Today, December 13, we are getting urgent pleas for help claiming that Anuak children have been kidnapped and another massacre is about to take place.”

“More than 120 interviews were conducted under the most difficult circumstances,” the UNICEF report reads, “and in some of the most inaccessible territory in sub-Saharan Africa. Interviewees included “impoverished and vulnerable populations in remote villages, gold miners, police, local leaders, midwives, teachers, nurses, elders, regional officials, health experts, western NGO expatriates, Ethiopian security officials, Gambella Regional administrators, and members of rebel groups.”

The UNICEF report also documents and exposes massive atrocities committed by all sides against innocent civilians in the isolated and inaccessible Dimma region of Gambella state. Villages have been depopulated or burned to the ground, but the isolation and insecurity prevented researchers from verifying conditions in most villages where massive atrocities have reportedly occurred.

“Interviews and testimonies by eyewitnesses, survivors and officials documented incontrovertible evidence that innocent women, children and men have been the victims of attacks by military forces and rebel forces,” the UNICEF report reads. “People have been targeted for extra-judicial killings, beatings and torture, sexual and gender-based violence, looting and burning of civilian property, and threats to commit any of these. The region is plagued by a comprehensive atmosphere of terror; civilians remain either because they have no choice or because the alternative is a life in exile and displacement, separated from their family and their communities.”

One of the UNICEF report’s authors, unidentified for security and other reasons, is a lawyer trained in international law, a former legal expert and country researcher with Human Rights Watch, and a war crimes and genocide expert who has been and remains affiliated with International War Crimes Tribunals. Co-author **Keith Harmon Snow** is a human rights and genocide investigator who previously worked as field investigator in Ethiopia and Sudan, and as country researcher for the Democratic Republic of Congo, for Genocide Watch and Survivor’s Rights International.

Mr. **Snow** takes all responsibility for releasing the report and all statements and information concomitant with the report’s release.

“While the world is treated to gruesome accounts of suffering and death in Sudan,” Mr. **Snow** says, “very little of any consequence is reported about gruesome suffering and death in Ethiopia. This is because the United States is involved in a war to destabilize Sudan, and replace or cripple its Islamic government, while simultaneously backing Ethiopia and Uganda as partners fighting with the clandestine US forces in regional conflicts.”

“The Government of Ethiopia is allied with, and armed by, the United States, and backed by over 2000 US covert forces based in Hurso, Ethiopia,” **Snow** adds. “The Pentagon and Ethiopian military are prosecuting an entirely invisible war in Somalia, and while persistently threatening, arresting and shooting Anuak men, the Ethiopian military has actually tried to conscript some Anuak men to fight for them in Somalia. This is not a war on terror it is a war of terror. Ethiopia’s clandestine

involvement in Eritrea is equally invisible, and Human Rights Watch has also documented the ongoing repression against the Oromo people in Ethiopia's Oromo State. Other minorities are being forcibly displaced to serve conservation or petroleum interests."

"Please we need your urgent action and voice," one Anuak contact communicated to **Mr. Snow** on 13 December 2006. "Things are going very bad," he cried, "and the Anuak are not very far from another killing which might be more than that of December 13 [2003]. There is high tension and shouting of bad words like 'we will kill all of you including women and children' and 'there is only one step to finish all the Anuaks.' These are the words the Anuaks are hearing today."

Contact **keith harmon snow** for photographs and images from Ethiopia's Anuak territories.

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IHRC REPORT:

<http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/hrp/clinic/documents/ETHIOPIAREPORT.pdf>

IHRC Press release:

http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/hrp/clinic/current_projects/africa/ethiopiareport1.html

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See Current and Past Reports on the Anuak Situation at:

<http://www.allthingspass.com/journalism.php?catid=13#>