

Ethiopia's Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Roots of Terrorism in East Africa

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Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia has successfully exploited the Western world's concern about terrorism. Yet the record shows that his ruling party appears to be the root of terrorism in the region.

Mr. Zenawi and his party have been in power for the last 14 years. The Prime Minister is telling Western donors that he and his group alone can fight terrorism and maintain stability – hence their need to stay in power indefinitely.

Staying in power has meant violent repression of the domestic opposition. The Western world has apparently acquiesced to this arrangement. Ethiopians fighting for democracy have almost literally been thrown to the wolves. The plight of courageous Ethiopians standing up to tyranny is wrongly viewed as an inconvenience, a dispensable annoyance to larger strategic interests.

Meles Zenawi's organization used terrorism as a weapon both before and after coming to power. Initially, the TPLF directed its terrorism against Ethiopians and foreigners.

Since coming to power, the TPLF has deployed state-sponsored terrorism almost exclusively against real and imaginary domestic opponents.

The evidence below shows substantial terrorist activities before the TPLF came to power and gained respectability. The terrorist activities include:

- Kidnapping
- Hijacking
- Bank robbery
- Armed attacks; and
- Murder.

The information is obtained from the records of the United States Home Land Security's National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC -- A comprehensive Databank of Terrorist Incidents and Organizations.) (<http://www.tkb.org/Incident.jsp?incID=3981>)

Part I

A partial list of the violent activities of the TPLF.

Incident Date	Incident Description	Target	Tactic	Source
May 1, 1976	Axum, ETHIOPIA. A British veterinarian, Dr. Lindsey Tyler, his wife and two children were kidnapped in Ethiopia's Tigre Province by the Tigre People's Liberation Front.	Private Citizens & Property	Kidnapping	MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base http://www.tkb.org/Incident.jsp?incID=1701
June 1, 1976	ETHIOPIA. Jon Swain, British correspondent for the Sunday Times of London, was captured by the Tigre People's Liberation Front near Axum in mid-June	Journalists & Media	Kidnapping	MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base http://www.tkb.org/Incident.jsp?incID=138
Apr. 22, 1983	Korem, ETHIOPIA. Ethiopian guerrillas have kidnapped 10 foreign relief workers, including an American, diplomats in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, disclosed. They said the foreigners, seven of them women, were taken in a raid last Thursday by the Tigre People's Liberation Front at Korem. The hostages included four Britons, an Indian, two Irish nurses, an American priest and nuns from Italy and Ethiopia.	Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	Kidnapping	MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base http://www.tkb.org/Incident.jsp?incID=869
Oct. 17, 1984	Lalibela, ETHIOPIA. Ten foreigners, including two American tourists, were seized by secessionist Ethiopian guerrillas when they overran Lalibela. The captured include two Britons, an Australian, a Finn, three West German medics and a Swiss International Red Cross representative.	Other	Kidnapping	MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base http://www.tkb.org/Incident.jsp?incID=3981
Mar. 2, 1985	Lalibela, ETHIOPIA. Rebels seized a French disaster-relief aircraft, its	Airports & Airlines	Hijacking	MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base

Incident Date	Incident Description	Target	Tactic	Source
	five crew members and four medical staff members in the northern town of Lalibela. The plane had been flying supplies for Ethiopian villagers as part of the international effort to relieve the disastrous drought and famine. The Tigre People's Liberation Front, a regional autonomy group active against the central government, was suspected.			http://www.tkb.org/Incident.jsp?incID=4078
Mar. 8, 1986	ETHIOPIA. Two employees of the American relief agency World Vision were shot to death in the dining room of their residence compound in the northern town of Alamata. The victims were both Ethiopian nationals. According to western diplomatic sources, the attack marked the beginning of a new guerrilla offensive by the Tigre People's Liberation Front, a well-armed, highly disciplined rebel army that has been fighting for more than a decade in northern Ethiopia against the Addis Ababa government.	NGO	Armed Attack	MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base http://www.tkb.org/Incident.jsp?incID=4509
Oct. 1, 1987	ETHIOPIA. A French nurse, Sophie Bedon, was kidnapped by Tigrean rebels, possibly Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF). The woman was taken hostage after an attack on an Ethiopian garrison in Rama.	NGO	Kidnapping	MIPT Terrorism Knowledge http://www.tkb.org/Incident.jsp?incID=5307
Feb. 17, 1988	ETHIOPIA. Members of the Tigray People's Liberation Front abducted six European aid workers. The victims were three Irish nuns, two Belgian doctors and a Dutch nun	NGO	Kidnapping	MIPT Terrorism Knowledge http://www.tkb.org/Incident.jsp?incID=4960

MIPT stands for the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism.
To Be Continued...

CC:
 President Bush
 Prime Minister Tony Blair

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