

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

1. Please provide a briefing about Pentecostal Christians in Ethiopia: i.e. what does it mean to be a 'Pentecostal Christian' in Ethiopia?
2. What percentage of the population do 'Pentecostal Christians' in Ethiopia constitute?
3. Is there any evidence that 'Pentecostal Christians' are discriminated against?
4. Does inter-religious marriage (ie between Muslims and Pentecostal Christians) occur?
5. If it occurs, is the female (Christian) expected to convert to Islam?
6. Please provide any information about Christian women married to Muslim men facing discrimination or denial of rights (eg to education, or to work)?
7. Is the 'Ethiopian Tsewan (Zion) Church in Australia' affiliated with Pentecostal Christians from Ethiopia? How (religiously) strict are they?
8. How are non-Muslims treated in Ethiopia? Are they discriminated against? If so, in what ways and to what extent?
9. [Information deleted]
10. [Information deleted]
11. Please provide an update on the status of police corruption in Ethiopia.
12. Please provide a (brief) update on the status of women in Ethiopia.

RESPONSE

1. Provide a briefing about Pentecostal Christians in Ethiopia: i.e. what does it mean to be a 'Pentecostal Christian' in Ethiopia?
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The US Department of State Report states that the Pentecostal Church is counted among Evangelical churches and collectively its adherents make up approximately 10 per cent of the population:

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has an area of 472,000 square miles, and a population of 77 million. An estimated 40 to 45 percent of the population belongs to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), which is predominant in the northern regions of Tigray and Amhara.

Approximately 45 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim, of which the overwhelming majority is Sufi. Islam is most prevalent in the eastern Somali and Afar regions, as well as in many parts of Oromiya.

Christian evangelical and Pentecostal groups constitute an estimated 10 percent of the population. Established Protestant churches such as Mekane Yesus and the Kale Hiwot are strongest in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPR); western and central Oromiya; and in urban areas. In Gambella region, Mekane Yesus followers represent 60 percent of the population. The Evangelical Church Fellowship claims 23 denominations under its religious umbrella throughout the country.

There are small numbers of Oriental Rite and Latin Rite Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, animists, and practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. (US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2007– Ethiopia*, Section I. Religious Demography, 19 September - Attachment 1).

Jörg Hausteин in the context of his PhD project in the Department of Theology, University of Heidelberg, Germany - makes the following observations in the following two reports:

Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements in Ethiopia

Though the beginnings of Ethiopian Pentecostalism are fairly recent (e.g. in comparison to neighbouring Kenya), a considerable spectrum of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches has developed there, that includes all major Protestant denominations. Charismatic groups can even be found in the Ethiopian-Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church of Ethiopia.

The majority of Ethiopia's population (about 73 mill. people, 2004 census) belong to the Ethiopian-Orthodox Church or Islam. However, the census of 1994 (the most recent one including religious demographics) mentions 5.4 mill. Protestants (of then 53 mill. citizens), indicating a significant demographic shift in comparison to just 50 years before.

A recent survey among Protestant Churches in Ethiopia (not yet published) concludes with an estimate of roughly 10 mill. members. **The largest Protestant denominations of Ethiopia have formed the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE) that includes Pentecostals, Charismatics, Lutherans, and Baptists alike.** These churches, regardless of denominational or theological background form a dense network: they organize events, exchange ministers, share a post-graduate bible school and facilitate theological dialog. With regard to Pentecostal/Charismatic spirituality it is often difficult to distinguish classical Pentecostal churches from others. **Though there certainly are doctrinal differences (e.g. with regard to the doctrine of "initial evidence"), worship services almost everywhere include speaking in tongues, exorcisms, prophecy, laying on of hands, and testimonies.** The largest Baptist and Lutheran churches provide rules in their constitutions regulating the proper use of spiritual gifts in the service, like the administration of prophecy and speaking in tongues. (Hausteин, Jörg 2008, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements in Ethiopia', European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism website, 25 July.

<http://www.glopent.net/Members/jhausteин/ethiopia> - Accessed 22 September 2008. Attachment 2).

Presently, over 250 religious denominations, churches, or ministries are registered with the Ministry of Justice, **most of which belong to the Pentecostal and Charismatic spectrum.** In urban settings these churches are largely an accepted part of the religious landscape. In regional settings Protestant minorities may still be excluded from social or economic life. **There are considerable regional differences: whereas the Protestant churches are especially strong in the south and west of the country (even forming a majority in some**

regions), Ethiopia's north is still predominantly Orthodox and the east is mainly Muslim. (Haustein, Jörg 2008, 'Brief History of Pentecostalism in Ethiopia', European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism website, 25 July. <http://www.glopent.net/Members/jhaustein/ethiopia/brief-history-of-pentecostalism-in-ethiopia> <http://www.glopent.net/Members/jhaustein/ethiopia>- Accessed 22 September 2008 - Attachment 3).

In March 2007, a major incident occurred in a predominantly Muslim area of southern Ethiopia:

An Ethiopian evangelist was beaten and killed by Wahabbi Muslim extremists while evangelizing on the streets earlier this week, reported a Christian persecution watchdog group.

The Christian man, identified as Tedase, was on the streets with two young females evangelizing Monday afternoon on Merkato Street in Jimma, southern Ethiopia, when he was attacked by Muslim militants, according to International Christian Concern's sources in Jimma.

Tedase was reportedly walking in front of a Wahabbi Mosque on Merkato street when a group of Muslims exiting the mosque confronted him and his party. The women ran away from the mob but Tedase continued to evangelize. The Muslims then pulled him into the mosque and "savagely" beat him to death with the intention to kill him, according to ICC's sources.

"This was no accident or case of mob frenzy getting out of control," noted ICC in a released report Thursday.

Sources speculate that Tedase was used as an example to scare other Christians in the area; Jimma Christians were in the midst of an evangelism campaign and news of the outreach had spread among Jimma residents as well as militant Muslim groups in the area.

Ethiopia was ranked third earlier this year in ICC's "Hall of Shame" list of the world's top ten persecutors of Christians.

ICC noted that Jimma is a Muslim-dominated area where local authorities are almost exclusively Muslim. The watchdog group also observed that Wahhabism was imported from Saudi Arabia.

Wahhabism is a reform movement of Islam that originated in Arabia in the 18th century.

Followers adhere to an extreme literalist view of Sharia law, or Islamic laws. (Riley, Jennifer 2007, 'Evangelist Beaten to Death by Muslim Extremists Inside Mosque' Christian Post website, 27 March.

<http://www.christianpost.com/article/20070330/evangelist-beaten-to-death-by-muslim-extremists-inside-mosque.htm> - Accessed 22 September 2008 - Attachment 4).

Another source outlines the recent tensions:

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, concern about Islamic extremism has been rising across the Horn of Africa, and notably in Ethiopia, a country where Orthodox Christianity is often associated with national identity but whose population is nearly half Muslim, according to Ethiopian demographers and U.S. officials.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi cited radicalism within an Islamic movement that had taken power in neighboring Somalia, and its potential to spread across the border, as the main reason Ethiopia invaded that country in December.

Just two months earlier, an incident near the southern Ethiopian town of Jima underlined those fears. **Though the motive remains a matter of debate, several days of violence between Muslims and Christians swept through the area, ending with 19 people killed and five churches and 600 houses burned, according to a government report.**

Police eventually contained the violence, but the gruesome aftermath of a massacre of several worshipers in a church was captured on videotape by an evangelical Christian relief group

investigating the situation. Soon, bootlegged copies -- including an edited version superimposed with such phrases as "Look at what they are doing to us" -- began showing up in markets across the country, including more than 300 miles away in Dese, where vendors began selling them alongside Britney Spears videos.

The rumors followed: The next religious battleground would be Dese, a long, narrow city of a thousand rusted roofs situated in a crevice in the grassy Tossa mountains.

In many ways, Dese is a hodgepodge of a place, where streets are framed by arched doorways built by Arab traders, striped awnings hung by Italian occupiers, and boxy lacquered mini-malls with cafes where large-screen TVs are tuned to al-Jazeera and Randy Travis songs occasionally drift out of open doors.

Above all, though, Dese is a symbol of Ethiopia's peaceful religious intermingling, a characteristic that is found to varying degrees across a country where nationalism or ethnicity or even devotion to soccer tends to trump religious fervor.

For centuries, Muslims and Christians here have lived in the same neighborhoods, celebrated each other's holidays, intermarried and blended religions with indigenous beliefs.

Relationships are cemented through such Ethiopian institutions as the idir -- groups of neighbors, often religiously mixed, that raise money to pay for funerals.

In Dese, it is easy to find someone like Zinet Hassen, a Muslim woman wearing a long, black burqa who said, nonchalantly: "My uncle converted to Christianity but there was no stigma."

...

And so when the violence erupted in Jima last October, the news arrived in Dese amid a changing atmosphere.

One recent evening, Nurys Seid commented that the speakers seemed to have become louder lately, a sign, he figured, of the kind of low-level religious competition that he is beginning to feel within his own family.

The high school geography teacher, a Muslim, married a Christian woman in a civil ceremony last year, and now they have a son nearly a year old.

So far, however, they have been unable to decide whether to raise him as a Muslim or Christian. In fact, they have not even given the child a name.

Seid's parents are hoping for Abubakr. His wife's parents are pulling for Abel.

For the time being, though, they are calling the child Abush, which, roughly translated, means baby.

"We have arguments sometimes," said Seid, adding that neither he nor his wife is particularly religious. "I think different cultures are more difficult to resolve, but this religious issue can be solved through discussions." (Mc Crummen, Stephanie 2007, 'Ethiopians fear for their interfaith oasis', *The Washington Post* - Attachment 5)

4. Does inter-religious marriage (ie between Muslims and Pentecostal Christians) occur?

5. If it occurs, is the female (Christian) expected to convert to Islam?

6. Please provide any information about Christian women married to Muslim men facing discrimination or denial of rights (eg to education, or to work)?

A search of available resources has not provided information on mixed marriages between Muslims and Pentecostals Christian.

However the following article about a mixed marriage between a Muslim Sudanese woman and a Christian Ethiopian man implies that such marriages are not the norm:

Khartoum - A Muslim Sudanese girl has married a Christian Ethiopian man in a ceremony backed by a controversial religious edict allowing Muslim women to marry non-Muslim men.

It was reported that the marriage of the Muslim woman and the Christian man, a mix prohibited by orthodox Islam, was recently sanctioned by a fatwa issued by contentious religious scholar Hassan Abdullah al-Turabi.

Al-Turabi was also the secretary-general of the opposition Sudanese Popular Congress.

The marriage ceremony was conducted in a church in al-Qadarif town on Sudan's eastern border with Ethiopia.

Bride's relatives divided

It was reported that participants in the marriage festivities said the bride was "happy with her marriage to a Christian man and was convinced of the legitimacy of the idea that was backed by the fatwa of Dr al-Turabi".

The relatives of the bride were divided over such a step, that would render the woman an apostate under Islamic tradition.

Almost all Muslim scholars shared the understanding that Islam prohibited Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men, but allowed Muslim men to take non-Muslim wives since children in both cases followed the religion of the father.

Abdul Fattah Idris, professor of comparative religious laws at the Azhar University, said: "Muslim women are prohibited by the sharia law [Muslim law] from marrying people of the book [Jews and Christians]." ('Muslim, Christian make history' 2006, News24 website (South Africa), 22 May http://www.news24.com/News24/World/News/0,,2-10-1462_1937118,00.html – Accessed 24 September 2008 – Attachment 6)

7. Is the 'Ethiopian Tsewan (Zion) Church in Australia' affiliated with Pentecostal Christians from Ethiopia? How (religiously) strict are they?

The website of this church does not indicate that it had direct affiliation with other Pentecostal Christian churches in Ethiopia. However its 'Faith Statement' indicates that its style of religious expression is in keeping with the Pentecostal form:

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

We Believe (sic) that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the bestowing of the believer with power to be an effective witness for Christ. This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the new birth; is received by faith; is received by faith, and is accompanied by the manifestation of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, as the initial evidence - Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,5,8; 2:1-4; 8:15-19; 11:14-17;19:1-7.

('Faith Statement', undated, Tsewon Ethiopian Evangelical Church', Zion Church, <http://zionchurch.org.au>, Melbourne, <http://zionchurch.org.au/faith-statement.html> - Accessed 26 September 2008 – Attachment 7)

8. How are non-Muslims treated in Ethiopia? Are they discriminated against? If so, in what ways and to what extent?

As indicated above Muslims make up a major part of Ethiopia's population:

Some Protestant and Muslim groups continued to complain that local officials discriminated against them when they sought land for churches, mosques, and cemeteries, but there was no infringement on religious practice.

Tensions between Muslim and Christian communities resulted in localized violent episodes. Additionally, there was reported tension between the traditional Sufi Muslim majority and Salafi/Wahhabi Muslims who derived support in part from foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

...

Approximately 45 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim, of which the overwhelming majority is Sufi. Islam is most prevalent in the eastern Somali and Afar regions, as well as in many parts of Oromiya.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

...

The Government officially recognizes both Christian and Muslim holidays and continues to mandate a 2-hour lunch break on Fridays to allow Muslims to go to a mosque for prayers. Official holidays include Christmas, Epiphany, Good Friday, Easter, Meskel, Eid al-Adha, the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad, and Eid al-Fitr. The Government also agreed to a request by Muslim students at Addis Ababa Commercial College to delay the start of afternoon classes until 1:30 p.m., to permit them to perform afternoon prayers.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion. The law at all levels protects this right in full against abuse, either by governmental or private actors.

The Constitution requires the separation of state and religion; the Government generally respected this provision in practice.

(US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2007– Ethiopia*, Section I. Religious Demography, 19 September - Attachment 1)

A recent serious incident is referred to below:

Societal Abuses and Discrimination

On March 26, an evangelist was killed by a group of Muslim youth near a mosque in the town of Jima, Oromiya Region. At year's end there were no arrests in the incident.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports of deaths resulting from clashes between Muslims and Ethiopian Orthodox Christians.

(US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2007 – Ethiopia*, Section 5 Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons, 11 March - Attachment 8)

9. [Information deleted].

10. [Information deleted].

11. Please provide an update on the status of police corruption in Ethiopia.

A search of available databases does not specifically address police corruption in the recent past, however Ethiopia is ranked negatively in the “2007 Corruption Perceptions Index” - being numbered 138 out of 179. (Transparency International 2008, Annual Report 2007 [excerpt], June. Transparency International website http://www.transparency.org/publications/publications/annual_reports/annual_report_2007 - Accessed 26 September 2008 - Attachment 11)

This year the Ethiopian president encouraged Ethiopians to cooperate in the anti-corruption fight:

President Girma Woldegiorgis urged all segments of the society to join hands in making Ethiopia free of corruption.

The Federal Ethics and Anti -Corruption Commission (FEAC) presents millennium best wishes post card to President Girma Woldegiorgis on Monday [10 September].

While receiving the post card, President Girma said Ethiopians have the courage to fight corruption as they are proud and nationalists.

Girma said if the public is committed to fight corruption, the nation would be free of this harmful practice.

Girma underscored that anti corruption education should be given in a sustainable and coordinated manner.

FEAC's commissioner, Ali Sulieman on his part said his commission conveys best wishes to the Ethiopian people through President Girma.

The message is to sensitize the public to fight corruption and to see prosperous Ethiopia with relentless effort that should be exerted to ensure development, good governance and democracy in the country.

The post card conveys a message calling on all people, nations and nationalities to exert their utmost effort to build corruption free Ethiopia with a new spirit and togetherness, he said.

Ali expressed his commission's readiness and commitment to further continue it's anti corruption fight.

(‘Ethiopian president urge citizens to join hands in fighting corruption’ 2008, *BBC Monitoring Africa*, 11 September – Attachment 12)

12. Please provide a (brief) update on the status of women in Ethiopia.

According to the recent survey by the State Department, women are denied equality:

Women

The law criminalizes rape; however, the government did not fully enforce the law, in part due to widespread underreporting. Most women were unaware of the law, and social mores also discouraged women from reporting rape. Observers estimated that at least 1,000 rapes occurred annually in Addis Ababa, but data based on official police reports counted only approximately 400 cases per year. The press continued to report regularly on rape cases, particularly when injury to minors resulted. Courts sentenced convicted rapists to 10 to 15 years' imprisonment, as prescribed by law

Domestic violence, including spousal abuse and rape, was a pervasive social problem. A 2005 World Bank study concluded that 88 percent of rural women and 69 percent of urban women believed their husbands had the right to beat them. While women had recourse to the police and the courts, societal norms and limited infrastructure prevented many women from seeking legal redress, particularly in rural areas. The government prosecuted offenders on a limited scale.

The combination of pregnancy at an early age, limited birth space, chronic maternal malnutrition, and a lack of skilled care at delivery often led to obstetric fistulae and permanent incontinence. Approximately 8,700 women developed obstetric fistulae annually, and 27,000 women with untreated fistulae were estimated to be living in rural areas. Treatment for fistulae was available at only one hospital, the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, which annually performed over 1,000 fistula operations. It estimated that for every successful operation performed, 10 other young women needed the treatment but did not receive it. The maternal mortality rate was extremely high, partly due to food taboos for pregnant women, poverty, early marriage, and birth complications related to FGM, particularly infibulation.

Prostitution was legal for persons over age 18 and was commonly practiced around the country; however, the law prohibits pimping and benefiting from prostitution. Persons exploited in prostitution routinely reported that poverty was the principal underlying cause.

Sexual harassment was widespread. The penal code prescribes 18 to 24 months imprisonment; however, sexual harassment-related laws were not enforced.

The law sets the legal marriage age for girls and boys at 18, elevates civil law above customary and religious law; allows for the legal sharing of property by unmarried couples who live together for at least five years, eliminates family arbitrators as a means of settling marital disputes in lieu of the court system, allows for the joint administration of common marital property, requires the courts to take into account the situation of children or the weakest member of the family in the event of divorce or separation, and imposes a six-month waiting period on women seeking to remarry following divorce or the death of a spouse. However, the law was not always enforced, and regional councils had authority to determine family law for their respective regions. Four regions maintained their own family law: Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya, and Addis Ababa; however, regional laws were not uniformly enforced. By law, such regional regulations could not conflict with the national constitution.

Discrimination against women was most acute in rural areas, where 85 percent of the population was located. The law contains discriminatory regulations, such as the recognition of the husband as the legal head of the family and the sole guardian of children over five years old. Authorities did not consider domestic violence a serious justification for granting a divorce. There was limited legal recognition of common law marriage. Irrespective of the number of years the marriage existed, the number of children raised, and joint property, the law entitled women to only three months' financial support if the common law relationship ended. A husband had no obligation to provide financial assistance to his family and, as a result, women and children sometimes faced abandonment. The law states that any property owned before marriage belongs to the spouse that previously owned it. Any property gained during marriage is shared equally, although a wife does not have the right to inherit her deceased husband's share. Even with stronger formal laws, most rural residents continued to apply customary law in economic and social relationships.

All land belongs to the government. Although women could obtain government leases to land, and the government had an explicit policy to provide equal access for women to land, rural communities rarely enforced this policy. In nearly all regions women did not have access to land, except through marriage. In practice, when a husband died, other family members often took the land from his widow.

In urban areas, women had fewer employment opportunities than men, and the jobs available did not provide equal pay for equal work.

(US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2007 – Ethiopia*, Section 5 Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons, 11 March - Attachment 8)

Violence against women is a continuing problem:

Violence against women has become a serious problem in Ethiopia. It is increasing at an alarming rate these days.

As for the legal instruments, the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia states that those laws, practices and acts that result in bodily and mental harm to women are prohibited. The most widely used civil code in Ethiopia, the penal code enacted in 1957, provides sanctions for various forms of violence, whether it is violence against men or women. However, this civil code does not specify acts of violence against women.

(Kefi, Kalid 2007, 'Sexual harassment vs the law', The Reporter, 29 October. CISNET Ethiopia – Attachment 13.

A Research Response which provides useful background is attached.

(RRT Research and Information Services Research 2006, *Research Response ETH31133*, 24 January - Attachment 14)

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Government Information & Reports

UK Home Office website <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk>

US Department of State website <http://www.state.gov>

Immigration and Refugee Board Canada <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/>

Non-Government Organisations

Amnesty International website <http://www.amnesty.org/>

Human Rights Watch (HRW) website <http://www.hrw.org/>

International News & Politics

BBC News website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

Topic Specific Links

Christianity News Today <http://www.christiannewstoday.com/International.html>]

Compass Direct News <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php>

Voice of the Martyrs <http://www.vom.com.au/>

The Christian Science Monitor www.csmonitor.com

International Bulletin of Missionary Research <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/>

Transparency International www.transparency.org

Zenit www.zenit.org

Search Engines

AlltheWeb search engine <http://www.alltheweb.com/>

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>

Ask.com search engine <http://www.ask.com>

Yahoo search engine <http://search.yahoo.com>

Copernic search engine

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

MRT-RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2007–Ethiopia*, 19 September.
2. Haustein, Jörg 2008, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements in Ethiopia', European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism website, 25 July.
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4. Riley, Jennifer 2007, 'Evangelist Beaten to Death by Muslim Extremists Inside Mosque' Christian Post website, 27 March.
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- 6.: 'Muslim, Christian make history' 2006, www.news24.com (South Africa), 22 May
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<http://zionchurch.org.au>, Melbourne, <http://zionchurch.org.au/faith-statement.html> - Accessed 26 September 2008.
8. US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2007 – Ethiopia*, 11 March.
- 9 'Premier calls dissidents as morally corrupt, hopeless factional group' 2001, *BBC Monitoring Africa*, 12 September. (FACTIVA)
10. 'Dissident party members reportedly denied entry to parliament' 2001, *BBC Monitoring Africa*, 2 April. (FACTIVA)
11. Transparency International 2008, Annual Report 2007 [excerpt], June. Transparency International website
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- Accessed 26 September 2008.
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14. RRT Research and Information Services Research 2006, *Research Response ETH31133*, 24 January.