

# CORI

Country of origin research and information

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## **CORI Research Analysis**

**Date:** 11 December 2015

**Country:** Ethiopia

**Ref:** Eth1215

**Issues:** Domestic Violence and Honour Killings in Ethiopia. Situation of Ethiopian Orthodox Christian women who have married Muslim men, including the prevalence of honour killings and the situation of Ethiopian women at risk of domestic violence and access to State protection

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## **1. Prevalence of Honour Killings**

a) *Prevalence of honour killings in Ethiopia, particularly as effecting Ethiopian Orthodox Christian women, who have been threatened with honour killings after marrying Muslim men*

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Dr Sehin Teferra*<sup>1</sup> reported that there is no prevalence of honour killings among Ethiopian Orthodox Christians,

“There is no prevalence of honour killings among Ethiopian Orthodox Christians; as far as I know, the concept does not exist in Ethiopia and there is no term for it at least in Amharic. Inter-community marriages happen although infrequently, and although either party and particularly women may face ostracism from their respective communities, there hasn't been a reported case of an 'honor killing' among any ethnic group or religious group in Ethiopia for any reason including inter-religious marriage.”<sup>2</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Professor Jon Abbink*<sup>3</sup> reported that 'honour killings' are not really known in Ethiopia. *Professor Abbink* also reported that marriages between Christian women and Muslim men are very rare in Ethiopia; stating that they do occur regularly only in the Wollo region of northern Ethiopia, but there are no serious community tensions or honour killings reported,

“This is a new and quite doubtful story. Ethiopia is not the Middle East, and 'honour killings' are really not known. Perhaps – pending further research – only within the Afar region of Ethiopia one might find cases, as it is solidly Muslim and has a strong family/lineage ethic, but even there I doubt it. In short: there are no honour killings in Ethiopia. I think it is a myth. There may of course, as in any country, be killings of a woman by a husband and vice versa, but not on the grounds of 'honour', as we know from, e.g., Pakistan or other Muslim countries.

Christian female-Muslim men marriages in Ethiopia are very rare. They do occur regularly only in the Wollo region in northern Ethiopia, but there the relations between Muslims and Christians are overall relaxed and unproblematic; there are no serious community tensions and certainly no 'honour killings' are reported. I did long fieldwork in the area and know it well. And Christian women will hardly marry Muslim men, would they know of this 'custom'.

So I am extremely doubtful of this line of stories on 'honour killing' in Ethiopia; they are probably brought by certain people tuning into to Western ignorance and concerns. Again, Ethiopia is not the Muslim Middle East.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Sehin Teferra is a Researcher, Trainer, and Co-Founder of Setaweet Service, an Ethiopian feminist network. Dr Teferra holds a PhD from the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies. Her PhD title was 'Occupational Hazard or Patriarchal Entitlement? : Feminist Analysis of the Dynamics of Violence in Ethiopian Sex Work'

<sup>2</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sehin Teferra conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

<sup>3</sup> Professor Jon Abbink is an anthropologist and carries out research on the history and cultures of the Horn of Africa (Northeast Africa), particularly Ethiopia at the African Studies Centre at the University of Leiden. His current projects are a historical-cultural study of the relationship between political change and ethnicity in Ethiopia, an ethno-history of South Ethiopia, and a study of violence and culture among southwestern Ethiopian ethnic groups. Since 2001 he is also Professor (extraordinary) of African Ethnic Studies at the Vrije Universiteit (Free University) in Amsterdam

<sup>4</sup> CORI Interview with Professor Jon Abbink conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sam Bekalo*<sup>5</sup> reported that honour killings do not seem to be prevalent in Ethiopia, compared with neighbouring Sudan and Somalia. *Dr Sam Bekalo* also stated that Ethiopia is one of the rarest exemplar countries in terms of Muslims and Christians living in together in harmony, and inter- religious marriages are widespread,

“Firstly, from my experience of living and working with the inhabitants of East / Horn of Africa, honour killings of a Christian women for marrying a Muslim do not seem to me prevalent in Ethiopia, as compared with the neighbouring Islamic Sudan (North) and Somalia (*almost all Somalis are bound by one religion Islam*). It is almost unthinkable and very dangerous for Muslim to convert to Christianity or marry Christian or vice versa in Sudan and Somalia, but not to that extent in Ethiopia.

Perhaps the other interesting point in connection to inter-religious issue is that, although Ethiopia is primarily and politically considered as Christian nations, nearly half of the population are Muslims. And yet, it is probably one of the rarest exemplar countries, in terms of Muslims and Christians living together in harmony and amicably so far.

Not only this, but also there are widespread inter-religious marriages (*i.e. between Christian and Muslim*) in some parts of the country; particularly in the liberal Wello region in Northern Ethiopia. This has always been a puzzle to me, given that the neighbouring Northern Ethiopians (*i.e. the Amhara and the Tigray ethnic groups*) are conservative Orthodox Christians.”<sup>6</sup>

*b) Circumstances under which a woman may be threatened with honour killings. Does the practice affect women of all ethnic groups and of all religions in Ethiopia?*

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Professor Jon Abbink* reported that honour killings or threat of honour killings does not affect women of all ethnic groups and or all religions in Ethiopia. If at all, perhaps only among Afar and among some fundamentalist Salafist groups. *Professor Abbink* highlighted the practice of female abduction, which happens among several ethnic groups,

“As said, it only very rarely occurs *if at all*, perhaps only among Afar and among some fundamentalist Salafist groups across the country. But then it is an *intra-Muslim* community phenomenon.

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<sup>5</sup> Dr Samuel A Bekalo has conducted research and published widely on Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan. He has lived and worked in the region and regularly visits the area since the 1960s. He has written over 100 expert and documentation authentication reports on these countries. His scholarly reports are based on first-hand experience and benefit from his knowledge of Amharic, Oromo, Arabic, Tigrinya, and Kiswahili. In recent years, Dr Bekalo has worked as a Research Fellow at the International School of Education of the University of Leeds (UK), where he was involved in the capacity building project North-South Higher Education Institutions Link programme for Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. - See more at: <http://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/eritrea-coi/#sthash.iCy3Pfza.dpuf>

<sup>6</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sam Bekalo, conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 22 December 2015

Much more important is/was the practice of female abduction: a man and his friends kidnapping a girl after which he in effect rapes her so as to force her to become his wife. This happens among several ethnic groups, and was the subject of the much praised recent feature film (2014) 'Difret' (= 'Courage'), directed by Ethio-American film maker Zeresenay Berhane. But the practice – called in Amharic *t'elefá* – is a controversial public issue in Ethiopia and prohibited by law. Cases are prosecuted.”

## 2. Prevalence of Domestic Violence and Marital Rape

### a) Prevalence of domestic violence (including marital rape) in Ethiopia

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sam Bekalo* reported that until recently there was no concept of marital rape in Ethiopia. *Dr Sam Bekalo* states that although there are more awareness raising campaigns regarding domestic violence, law enforcement is lacking.

“To start with a positive note, there is more public campaigns and awareness now days about domestic violence, particularly amongst the enlightened city dwellers. Until recently, marital rape has never been heard in the country and was (perhaps still) considered a foreign concept. I say this based on what I overhear from the local people that the new idea of marital rape was racking / breaking marriage / family. Apparently, rightly or wrongly, there were an unusual surge of women filing a divorce appeal citing marital rape as reason.

Nonetheless, it seems to me that there is a relative progress in terms of public awareness and legislation in this front, but the cultural and the law enforcement attitudes and practice still lags behind.”<sup>7</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sehin Teferra* reported that domestic violence is highly prevalent in Ethiopia and that marital rape is very common,

“Domestic violence is highly prevalent; a WHO report found that over 70% of ever-partnered women had experienced a form of sexual or physical violence in the last year preceding the research (2005). Marital rape has not been criminalized and can be assumed to be very common.”<sup>8</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Professor Jon Abbink* reported that domestic violence is frequent, but it is treated in a serious manner and not ignored,

“Domestic violence is frequent, but is socio-culturally defined in a different way from that in the West. And Ethiopian law has many clauses against domestic violence and (marital) rape. Cases brought are usually tried in a serious manner.

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<sup>7</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sam Bekalo, conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 22 December 2015

<sup>8</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sehin Teferra conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

In Ethiopia the problem is recognized and not ignored. In the rural areas, elders often mediate such problems in local informal courts.”<sup>9</sup>

*b) Cultural and police attitudes towards domestic violence*

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Dr Sam Bekalo* said that in the rural areas domestic violence used to be the norm and that such ‘traditional’ attitudes are often held by law enforcers, affecting the level of prosecutions. *Dr Sam Bekalo* stated that a lack of resources also impacts on the implementation of the law, particularly in rural areas. *Dr Sam Bekalo* states that women’s rights are not high on the political agenda, citing government pressure against a leading national women’s rights organization which caused the NGO to have to close services supporting women suffering violence,

“In the large swath of the rural areas, where the predominantly farming communities are largely uneducated and traditional, domestic violence against women even was not an issue as used to be the norm. Now a days there is an increasing awareness that it is a serious issue, albeit it does not necessarily translate into legislative action and prosecution. Firstly, the law enforcer themselves in rural areas are brought up in the old tradition, hence needs major shift in attitude and practice backed up by progressive monitoring mechanisms. Secondly, due to resource and other limitations, there is a gap between policy intentions / legislation and implementation in that part of the world, particularly when one go further away from major cities and towns. Thirdly, in security / conflict risk areas, women and minority protection issues are not in the high agenda as politics. To cite one example, the leading and only national women's rights organization called EWLA (Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association) account was frozen by the government likely for political reasons and forcing it to shut down almost all its activities, including closing its domestic violence hotline service.”<sup>10</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sehin Teferra* reported that within the context of marriage, violence is largely accepted,

“Violence in the context of marriage is largely accepted and expected, particularly in rural areas, both by the police and society at large including women who often conflate masculinity with aggressiveness.”<sup>11</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Professor Jon Abbink* reported that attitudes towards domestic violence are slowly changing; and that in no cultural tradition is it approved,

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<sup>9</sup> CORI Interview with Professor Jon Abbink conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

<sup>10</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sam Bekalo, conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 22 December 2015

<sup>11</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sehin Teferra conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

“Attitudes toward domestic violence – beating of partners, hitting children, rape, abduction and forced marriage, etc. – are slowly changing, with men becoming aware that women, the law and society as a whole do no longer accept it. In no cultural tradition in Ethiopia is it approved.”<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Legal Framework

#### a) Legal framework relating to honour killings and domestic violence

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sam Bekalo* reported that there is a legal framework designed to address domestic violence but its implementation and effectiveness can be ‘painfully slow’,

“[...] there appear to be an official recognition and willingness from the parts of government and women rights groups to protect women from domestic violence and other abuses (e.g. *marriage by abduction*) are starting to trickle down to the mass and rural population. There are legal frame works, some of which mentioned below, designed to address / enforce this. But, their implementation and effectiveness can be painfully slow, due to the resistance of century-old traditional orientation and practice as well as lack of the general system efficiency.”<sup>13</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Dr Sam Bekalo* listed the following laws and sources of support regarding domestic violence, such as the Criminal Code, the Women’s Affairs Department within the Ministry of Justice, a hotline established by the Ethiopian federal police for victims of domestic violence, a national committee to address harmful practices including FGM, and a shelter for victims of domestic violence run by a national women’s NGO,

#### “Official Laws and Support Sources

- The Criminal Code of the FDRE [Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2005] explicitly prohibits domestic violence. They include female circumcision, rape outside of marriage, abduction of women for marriage, and marriage with a minor.
- The Criminal Code outlines the penalties associated with each crime (Ethiopia 2005, Act. 564-565, 587, 620, 648).
- The FDRE, Women's Affairs Department, within the Ministry of Justice is reported to be responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of women
- Ministry of Justice has been reported to opened a special unit for investigating and prosecuting violent crimes, including sexual violence.

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<sup>12</sup> CORI Interview with Professor Jon Abbink conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

<sup>13</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sam Bekalo, conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 22 December 2015

- In 2010, the Ethiopian Federal Police established a hotline for victims of domestic abuse, and police officers reported to received training on domestic violence from local NGOs) and the Women's Affairs Department
- In 2010-11, Ethiopia has also been reported to have established a national committee to eradicate harmful traditional practices such as FGM (*Female Genital Mutilation*), abduction (and rape (ibid.).

AWSAD (*Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development*) provides a safe house in Addis Ababa – capital of Ethiopia, for women fleeing domestic violence (UN 1 Feb. 2011).<sup>14</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sehin Teferra* reported that there is no legal framework relating to honour killings and the framework around domestic violence is insufficient and laws are hardly ever enforced,

“There is no legal framework related to honour killings because they don't exist. The legal framework around domestic violence is insufficient; the criminal code is phrased in a gender-neutral way and does not acknowledge the fact that women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence. The laws related to domestic violence are hardly ever enforced.”<sup>15</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Professor Jon Abbink* reported that Ethiopian law ‘is serious’ about the issue of domestic violence, although not all cases are prosecuted, because of lack of legal facilities and capacity,

“This topic would demand more time for background research & reporting which I do not have now. In short, and confirming what I said above, Ethiopian law is serious about domestic violence and rape, and cases are prosecuted, although not all, because of lack of legal facilities and capacity. And women are more and more aware of their rights, and often do not hesitate to come out in the open and lodge complaints.”<sup>16</sup>

*b) Willingness and ability of the State to provide protection to women who are at risk of honour killings and/or domestic violence*

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sehin Teferra* reported that there is no protection provided by the State,

“There is no protection provided by the state. However, in cases of extreme threat and only in the major cities of Addis Ababa and Adama, an NGO runs a

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<sup>14</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sam Bekalo, conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 22 December 2015

<sup>15</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sehin Teferra conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

<sup>16</sup> CORI Interview with Professor Jon Abbink conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

shelter whereby women and children who have escaped violent situations can stay for limited periods and get psycho-social as well as medical support.”<sup>17</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Dr Sam Bekalo* reported that the laws are not properly enforced and that domestic violence is under-reported due to cultural acceptance of domestic violence, shame, and lack of knowledge of legal protection. *Dr Sam Bekalo* stated that in rural areas the situation is worse and traditional justice mechanisms apply customary norms that disadvantage women. *Dr Sam Bekalo* said that the government says there is a lack of comprehensive data on domestic violence,

“And yet, as I have already pointed out [See above Section 3. a) Legal Framework, page 6] and admitted by the Ethiopian government and other sources, the laws and acts are neither enforced nor fully implemented. The government says that, since the work and research in the domestic violence field are still in its fancy, there is no complete and comprehensive data on domestic violence. For example, there is no gender-aggregated data to monitor as to how or whether a women was killed by family members or partners. Furthermore, gender-based violence is either not reported or underreported.

The reasons given for not / under reporting include cultural acceptance of domestic violence, shame or fear on the part of the victim, and a lack of knowledge of legal protection. Sadly, the situation seems to me to progressively get worse in rural areas. Traditional courts in rural areas often apply the customary norms of their ethnic groups, which disadvantages women, rather than the national law. Local authorities and communities may be unaware of the legal codes, and women are left helpless in seeking justice against the perpetrators of forms of domestic violence.”<sup>18</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Professor Jon Abbink* reported that the State is paying increasing attention to domestic violence,

“Honour killings do not exist, but the State is more and more paying attention to the problem of domestic violence – both in its policy pronouncements and its practices - and takes cases seriously.”

#### **4. Child Custody**

*a) Issues relating to the custody of children of an orthodox Christian woman who has left her husband (particularly for mothers who are victims of domestic violence or at risk of honour killing)*

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<sup>17</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sehin Teferra conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

<sup>18</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sam Bekalo, conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 22 December 2015



In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sehin Teferra* reported that Ethiopian law applies equally to all, regardless of religion or ethnic group. *Dr Teferra* reported that in general custody for children under the age of five is usually given to the mother, unless there are circumstances that deem her unfit. For older children, the well-being of the child is the most important factors,

“As a secular country, Ethiopian law applies equally to people of all religious and ethnic groups. Often, traditional mediation systems which are almost all-male entities are more powerful than formal courts. In general, custody for children under the age of five is almost always given to the mother, unless there are circumstances indicating that she is unfit. For older children, the well-being of the children is considered the most important factor and there are instances where the children have been asked to choose which parent they would like to live with. Again, there is no risk of honour killing as a trend. As far as I know, domestic violence is so normalized as to not act as a large determinant of child custody disputes, unless it's an extreme form of violence.”<sup>19</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Professor Jon Abbink* reported that the final custody is decided in court or in a local court,

“If a woman leaves her husband she'll try and take the kids with her and go back to her family (e.g., parents) and if not, the children stay with the father or with other relatives of the mother. The final custody is decided in the court divorce proceedings, in a local court (or among Muslims in some areas in a Muslim *shari'a* court).”<sup>20</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sam Bekalo* reported that custody is governed by the Custody law under the Revised Family Code.<sup>21</sup>

## 5. Support

### a) *Situation of single women/mothers in Ethiopia who do not have family support*

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sehin Teferra* reported that the situation varies depending on the woman's capabilities and circumstances,

“As everywhere in the world, the situation of single women/mothers without family largely depends on their capabilities and circumstances. A vast majority of educated and uneducated women are in paid employment and provide for themselves and their children. For unskilled women, sex work and domestic work are common fall-back options. Urban-based women have more options than

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<sup>19</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sehin Teferra conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

<sup>20</sup> CORI Interview with Professor Jon Abbink conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

<sup>21</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sam Bekalo, conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 22 December 2015

rural-based women but I don't think ethnic and religious identities are factors in the strategies of single women/mothers.”<sup>22</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Professor Jon Abbink* also reported that the situation of single women/mothers who do not have family support varies considerably,

“This varies very much. Some are assisted by friends, others go to a women's shelter in towns, notably Addis Ababa. They can also go and live on the streets for some time and beg for a living. Others enter into another relationship with a male. It is, however, unlikely that a single woman/mother cannot find a relative to help her.

Uneducated women have less options and will suffer more. There are not big differences across the ethnic & religious groups, except that within Muslim communities the pressure on the women to stay and conform to social, religious and familial norms is greater. They will be less on the move.”<sup>23</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sam Bekalo* said that the economic conditions in Ethiopia are challenging for many people including professionals, and that to his knowledge there is no state welfare support system,

“Let alone for single women/mother with no extended family support, even for a couple with decent jobs life would be a real struggle, due to the sky-rocketing basic commodity prices (*e.g. food, fuel, house, medicines*). To put it in context, as a visitor with a strong Sterling Pound exchange rates, I found life to be increasingly expensive across Ethiopia. Although I am not economist, by my calculation, a meal in a decent restaurant in the capital amounts to half or a quarter of a month salary of a school teacher. As such and to meet ends, I was told that teachers do 2 or 3-shifts teaching jobs (*i.e. morning, after noon, evening + weekend private tuition for children of wealthy parents*). How they cope with all the work loads and the overall effect on their own wellbeing and the impact on the quality of education is a different matter.

As far as I am aware, there is no state welfare support in Ethiopia as is the case in the UK. In the absence of state welfare support provision, with few jobs to go by and the fierce competition, families and relatives support network either from within the country or from abroad (*i.e. remittance*) are critical in the case of Ethiopia.

Access to the meagre services and justice are often competitive and unequal and can also be arbitrary; particularly to the uneducated poor and marginalised ones. Rightly or wrongly, the enlightened and well-connected family members have

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<sup>22</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sehin Teferra conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

<sup>23</sup> CORI Interview with Professor Jon Abbink conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

better chance of accessing the available service system and protect their interests.

With regard to the different ethnic groups, from what I hear and observe, the elite groups in power now (i.e. Tigre ethnic group) seem to enjoy disproportionate government service support in the business and all other sectors, despite the fact that the country constitution clearly state that all ethnic groups should have equal rights and opportunities (*i.e. equal playing field*). In this regard, what I heard and read became apparent to me during my frequent recent visits to the country. As I have observed, the high-end hotel and expensive private hospital customers are predominately Tigrinya language speaking Tigre ethnic group members. The same situations at the medium and lower-end too. This has never been the case a decade or so ago. This is inevitably raising eye brows and resentment amongst the other majority ethnic group (*e.g. Oromos*).

All of the above seems to me dangerous as it will potentially create conflicts and setbacks. It needs addressing fairly and quickly. Already, at the time of writing, it is fuelling a renewed mass uprising and persecution in the Oromia region. According to the various reports, at least 70 peaceful protesters in the Oromia region were shot dead by the government security forces. Space and time does not permit here to expand on this.<sup>24</sup>

## 6. Trafficking

### *a) Exposure/vulnerability of single women/mothers without family support to trafficking or sexual exploitation*

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sehin Teferra* reported that there is an exposure/vulnerability of single women/mothers without family support to trafficking or sexual exploitation,

“Yes. There is a growing trend of illegal migration with elements of trafficking to the Middle East for employment; sexual exploitation is a common feature. There is also in-country migration mostly for domestic work although there is no noted trend of migration for sex work.”<sup>25</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015 *Dr Sam Bekalo* said that single women/mothers are highly exposed/vulnerable to trafficking or sexual exploitation, especially given the context of widespread poverty and lack of job and livelihood opportunity. Dr Bekalo also stated that a countless number of young women and mothers are trafficked to Gulf States and beyond, for domestic as well as sexual servitude,

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<sup>24</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sam Bekalo, conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 22 December 2015

<sup>25</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sehin Teferra conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015

“No doubt in my view that single women/mothers, without family support, are highly exposed/ vulnerable to trafficking or sexual exploitation. Given Ethiopia still remains poor and the second populous nation in Africa (now approaching 100 million), there is a massive lack of job and livelihood opportunity.

The options for the desperate single women / mothers, with no financial backup from family friends to stay at home or to go abroad as domestic worker, are begging or join the sex industry or for able and tough single women to work in the building construction sites for meagre payment. Unfortunately, willingly or unwillingly attracted by a promise of a relative better payment, most seem to opt out to join the exploitative sex industry from observing the sheer number of girls / women roaming the streets and hotels of main towns at night.

Aside the above, a countless number of young women and mothers (*also men*) are trafficked by the unscrupulous agent to Gulf States and beyond, for domestic as well as sexual servitude. Lebanon comes to mind as one of the worst places in terms of rights violations and mistreatments. Cognisant of the magnitude of the problems and under pressure from rights groups, the Ethiopian government is paying more attention to the issues, including taking measures of arresting human traffickers/smugglers. This might reduce the stem of flows of migrants and the work of smugglers for the time being. I don't think the problems will go away unless and otherwise sustained affirmative actions are undertaken, including significantly improving job and livelihood opportunities in the country.”<sup>26</sup>

In an interview conducted with CORI in December 2015, *Professor Jon Abbink* reported that the women themselves are not passive victims, ‘but active deciders and have a say,’

“Difficult to say. It is not a massive problem in Ethiopia. The women themselves are not passive victims, but active deciders and have a say. What is more akin to ‘trafficking’ might be the organized out-migration of young women as would-be domestic servants to Middle Eastern countries (Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Gulf States). Here abuse cases are reported.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> CORI Interview with Dr Sam Bekalo, conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 22 December 2015

<sup>27</sup> CORI Interview with Professor Jon Abbink conducted via written correspondence in response to written questions. 02 December 2015