

**Observation no: 206**

**Country-year: 1997**

**1. Did the current regime come to power in a military coup?**

**No.**

Both the Prime Minister and President were members of the EPRDF, which came to power after a quasi-civil war between the EPRDF and the ruling military junta.

**2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?**

**Yes.**

Ethiopia experienced coups in 1960 and in 1974, which led to a military led regime up until the early 90s.

**3. Is the country's top leader a former military officer?**

**No.**

While Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was affiliated with former rebel military groups, he was associated with the political element of the group and does not have significant bona fides as a military member. Similarly, the President does not have experience as a former military officer.

**4. Is the military officer corps largely closed to those who do not share the leader's ethnic or sectarian background?**

**No.**

Scholarly analyses of the Ethiopian military post-1991 suggest that the government made a significant effort to appoint military officers from a diverse set of backgrounds and ethnicities.<sup>1</sup> However, anecdotal reporting indicates that the reality may be that the senior military corps is dominated by ethnic Tigreans (reporting online suggests 93.5% of senior military officers were Tigrean).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Luckham, "Soldiers, Armies, and the Nation-State in Ethiopia and Eritrea," pg. 262.

<sup>2</sup> "The Total Domination of the Ethiopian Army by Ethnic Tigrean Officers," *Ginbot 7 Movement for Freedom and Democracy*, May 30, 2009. Accessed 22 May 2015: <http://www.ginbot7.org/the-total-domination-of-the-ethiopian-army-by-ethnic-tigrean-officers/>.

**5. Are there strict ideological requirements for entry into the senior officer corps?**

**No.**

I could find no official requirements regarding ideology; however, most of the senior officer corps initially started in the EPRDF's militia forces and likely shared similar views on the political goals of the country.

**6. Is party membership required for entry into the senior officer corps?**

**No.**

Starting in 1995, all officers were required to resign their positions in the EPRDF in order to separate political entities from the military.<sup>3</sup>

**7. Does military training involve extensive political education or ideological indoctrination?**

**No.**

Military training in Ethiopia post-1991 focused on professionalization of the military and separation from political or ideological education.<sup>4</sup>

**8. Has the military been used to repress internal dissent in the last five years?**

**Yes.**

Reports claim EPRDF soldiers (government soldiers) were involved in operations against the Oromo ethnic group.<sup>5</sup>

**9. Has the military been used to govern the country in the last five years?**

**No.**

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pg. 263.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Mohammed Hassen. "Conquest, Tyranny, and Ethnocide against the Oromo: A Historical Assessment of Human Rights Conditions in Ethiopia, ca. 1880s-2002." *Northeast African Studies* 9, no. 3 (2007): 15-49.

From 1992-1997, civilian governments governed Ethiopia.

**10. Is there a paramilitary organization separate from the regular military, used to provide regime or leader security?**

**No.**

While the previous Derg regime boasted a significant paramilitary force and the EPRDF also functioned largely as a paramilitary force in the civil war period, I could find no evidence suggesting a paramilitary force that continued once the EPRDF gained legitimate power in Ethiopia leading up to 1997 (there is now a paramilitary force that was created in 2009).

**11. Is there an internal intelligence apparatus dedicated to watching the regular military?**

**No.**

I could find no evidence of an internal intelligence apparatus and this may have been a function of the extreme re-organization occurring within the Ethiopian armed forces and security apparatus during this time.

**12. Has a purge of the officer corps occurred in the last five years?**

**No.**

The Ethiopian military was largely in a state of re-building from 1992 to 1997 in which the EPRDF transitioned its militia forces into a professionalized force; there was no rank structure in the militia and therefore it is difficult to characterize any shaping during this period as purging.

**13. Is there an institutionalized forum through which civilian leaders and military officers regularly exchange information?**

**No.**

I could find no evidence of an institutionalized forum and none is outlined in the constitution, though a National Security Council was formed in 2000 and significant detail towards security organization was released in a security directive that year.