

AEROPLANE HIJACKINGS BY ERITREANS 1969-1971

Eritreans were showing their displeasure of being governed by Ethiopia. A demonstration in 1958 in Asmera ended up bloody. In the same year conscious Eritreans in Port Sudan formed a group for struggling politically to free Eritrea. They sent persons into Asmera who secretly recruited members and it progressed. A member knew only his immediate 7 members that it was dubbed "Mahber 7" and also as "Harakat". But because this was striving only politically, another group formed a revolutionary organization in Cairo in 1960. And a year later Idris Awate started the first armed struggle in 1st September 1961.

Because injustice on Eritreans was growing, the oppressed had outlets to flee and join the armed struggle. While the struggle was going on, it was in 1967 that the Ethiopian government decided to get rid of the insurgents. They showed cruel methods of bombing and burning many villages to the ground and massacred thousands of civilians, which led to mass expulsion of Eritreans into neighbouring Sudan.

Hijacking attempts by Eritreans were an act of presenting the world to see the atrocities against the Eritrean people. The superpowers like USA was more interested in the Emperor Haile Selassie and their own interests that mass killings of Eritrean civilians went unnoticed in the world media. Those attempting the hijackings used to carry with them fliers describing who they are and what their aim was. They wrote that the Eritrean struggle was just and for the right to determine their independence.

Also the 50s and 60s were revolutionary times for African countries, which were achieving independence from their colonies either peacefully, and some fighting for it. Many students had leftist ideas.

According to veteran ELF fighter Idris Humedai, when the atrocities suffered on the Eritrean civilians went unnoticed by the world, Osman Sabbe formed a group to hijack airplanes, without the acknowledgement or approval of the ELF leadership and condemned that it would kill the innocent. It was formed in 1968 and disrupted in 1970. The name was called "Ikab" which meant the bird Falcon and also revenge in Arabic, or Menezemet al-Ikab – the Ikab organization, where Palestinians in Syria trained ELF members as Sabbe had contact with the PLO.

ERITREA: NEWS BULLETIN PUBLISHED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT

Address: FARDOS Str. - Tel 27367

ISSUE No. 97
AUGUST 5th, 1969

IKAB COMMANDOS WARN AGAINST TRAVELLING ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES

The Eritrean Liberation Front Ikab commando organisation has issued a statement warning against travelling on board Ethiopian Airlines planes. The statement also urged international

airline companies to cancel their current agreements with Ethiopian airlines and not to conclude any new ones. This, the statement said, would be in the material interest of the companies. The Ikab organisation statement stressed that the decision to destroy Ethiopian Airlines planes was taken in view of the Ethiopian air force continued bombing of peaceful Eritrean villages and its murder and displacement of thousands of Eritreans.

A person's concern for the Eritreans plight can be best described as is: -

THE TIMES December 27, 1969 p. 7

Letters to the Editor

IN ERITREA

From Mr. Christopher Walker

Sir; --Hijacking an aircraft as a means of political expression has received a blow from the foiling of Friday's attempt by the Eritrean Liberation Front; and many people will feel relief. As an occasional air passenger myself I can only concur.

Yet, as often with actions of desperate men which are abhorred by luckier people, the facts and the attitudes behind the action demand closer inspection. May I point out the bare essentials of the Eritrean case?

Eritrea became an Italian colony in 1890, and remained thus until entry of the Allies in 1941. From the surrender of Italy to 1952 she was under British Military Administration. In 1952 the problem was taken over by the United Nations, which recommended federation with Ethiopia. She remained thus federated until November 1962, when Emperor Haile Selassie, despite undertakings in 1952 that the status of the federation would not be changed, dissolved the federation and closed the Eritrean Assembly never (never representative, being originally formed to say "yes" to British policy, but nevertheless Eritrean). He declared Eritrea "part of the Ethiopian empire", with all that entails: being part of a cast-ridden and totally undemocratic country, entirely against the will of the Eritreans themselves.

Recent indiscriminate bombing of villages in Eritrea by aircraft of the Ethiopian air force has added immeasurably to the bitterness and hatred of the Eritreans towards the Ethiopians, and has created a huge refugee problem across the border in the Sudan.

It seems ironical that the deaths of the hijackers—a tailpiece to Ethiopian oppression of Eritrea—should be given vast news coverage, yet the deaths as a result of Ethiopian bombs of men, women and children at the heart of the Eritrean tragedy should go unmentioned in the press.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER WALKER
9 Margareta Terrace, S. W. 3.

THE TIMES

January 5, 1971 p. 13

Letters to the Editor

ERITREA

From Sir Kennedy Trevaskis

Sir, In the Times of December 30 your diplomatic Correspondent refers to Eritrea in Ethiopia as a “Muslim province” which the Eritrean guerrillas are endeavouring to free from “an autocratic Christian government”. He is in error.

The population of Eritrea is almost equally divided between Christians and Muslims. In 1952 the British Administration then governing the country estimated that there were 514,000 Muslims as against 510,000 Christians.

Yours faithfully,

KENNEDY TREVASKIS

Warnham, nr. Horsham,

Sussex

December 31.

Three fighters made the first attempt by Eritrean nationalists in 1963 at the Asmera airport. Ethiopians were using the civilian airport militarily against the Eritrean civilians and freedom fighters. From the book “Ertrawyan Commando” by Selomon Drar, the three, Said Hussein, Mahmoud Haron and Mohammed Nur Khalifa Nafe’ succeeded on destroying two war planes on 21 August 1963. (Page 11). They were later captured when an informer told on them. Said Hussein was sentenced for 20 years and Mahmoud Haron for 5 years. ELF reportedly executed said Hussein in 1978 charged of being extremist religionist.

There were four hijackings by Eritreans and one by Ethiopians in the year 1969.

(1), In Germany 1st March 1969

(2), Karachi 18 June 1969

The hijackers in Karachi were 1. Ali Said Abdella from Hergigo – the late foreign minister of Eritrea, 2. Fissehaye Commando, from Hadish Adi near Elabered and 3. Mohammed Tillul, from Hergigo.

Ali Said and the others had already come to Karachi and studied the airport. When they were captured, ELF defended them lest they be sent to Ethiopia.

(3), Khartoum-Algiers 11 August 1969, by Ethiopian students. Source: One of the hijackers, Ammanuel Gebre Yesus

(4), Aden 13 September 1969

(One source) In Aden, Mohammed Said Sengor of Hergigo was wounded and caught in Aden. He was serving in the 4th division and when wounded loosing much blood. He was taken to Port Sudan and not getting better, he was sent to Syria for further medication.

His interview was written in Hadas Eritrea end of 90s and that he lives in Asmera.

(5). Madrid 12 December 1969.

(One source) The hijackers of the Ethiopian airline in Spain were Mahmoud Suliman, from Akordet, and Hamed Shenan, from Keren. They were already suspected and the Ethiopian

securities killed them. They were members of Ikab.

Idris Humedai: Ethiopian airlines were cautious and had 2 security at plane rear and 2 in the middle. They dressed as pursers that nobody could identify them. They had silencers to shoot without its being heard. The Spain hijackers were shot with silencers, not their throats cut. (One source) In the Derg time, the anti hijackers wore airline uniforms and carried arms.

(From Idris) Mehsun worked with the PLO and had once hijacked a Jordanian (or American) jumbo jet starting flight from Aman. He later joined EPLF and was martyred.

(1) ERITREA: NEWS BULLETIN PUBLISHED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT

Address: FARDOS Str. - Tel 27367

ISSUE NO 78
MARCH 13th 1969

ELF COMMANDOS DESTROY ETHIOPIAN AIRLINER AT FRANKFURT AIRPORT.

An explosion on board an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 707 at Frankfurt airport wrecked the plane and caused damage estimated at 25 million Deutch Mark.

Shortly after the explosion, the Eritrean Liberation Front issued a statement in Berlin announcing its responsibility for the explosion. The Front warned that other attacks would follow should Ethiopian Airlines continue to aid the Ethiopian army in its offensive against the people of Eritrea. None of the commandos responsible for this expulsion was arrested.

ETHIOPIA CALLS FOR ACTION

Addis Abeba.R. An Ethiopian Foreign Ministry spokesman has called for international action to prevent politically motivated attacks on passenger aircraft.

Referring to the explosion on board the Ethiopian Boeing, the spokesman said, "The Ethiopian government believes that international action should be taken to stop such a serious threat to civil aviation."

(1) Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) attacked Airports & Airlines target (Mar. 1, 1969, Federal Republic of Germany)

Incident Date: Mar. 1, 1969

Description: FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY. A bomb damaged an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 707 jet at the Frankfurt Airport in Germany. Several cleaning women were injured. The Government of Ethiopia blamed the attack on the Syrian-Arab Movement for the Liberation of Eritrea. The ELF (Eritrean Liberation Front) claimed credit for the bombing, which it said was in retaliation for the use of Ethiopian Airlines planes to transport Ethiopian troops into Eritrea, where they attack Eritrean villages.

<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp? GroupID=310> - 22 KB

Aircraft Damaged

Following a bomb attack on an Ethiopian Airlines aircraft at Frankfurt airport on March 11th, the so-called "Syrian Liberation Front of Eritrea" accepted responsibility for the sabotage in a letter to the newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on the following day.

Commenting on the attack, the Ethiopian Herald commented that "failure breeds frustration. And desperation results from festering frustration. For some time foreign agents have been involved in futile attempts to sow disunity among the various peoples of Ethiopia. A new and insidious breed of colonialism seems to lie behind these efforts." It goes on: "Syria has been behind efforts to dupe some Ethiopians into betraying their nation. By playing, on religious differences among various Ethiopians, subversive groups armed and financed through Syria have attempted, with a growing lack of success, to create divisions where none exist." (EH 14/3)

A Syrian Foreign Ministry statement denied an Ethiopian Foreign Ministry charge that the explosion in the aircraft had been staged by "fanatical groups working from Syria". The statement added: "Moves by the Ethiopian Government to hold others responsible for the incident are futile, biased, and discredited attempts to hide the fact that the battle is between the struggling Eritrean people and the Ethiopian authorities." (R. Damascus 22/3)

Anti-Syrian Demonstrations

Radio Addis Ababa reported on March 22nd and March 24th that anti-Syrian demonstrations had taken place in Asmara, Makale, Harar, Dire Dawa, and Gondar. Over 100,000 people were said to have marched through the streets of Asmara and over 40,000 in Harar. Speakers denounced the "propaganda of so-called movements for the partition of Ethiopia" and the recent sabotage of the Ethiopian airliner at Frankfurt. The expulsion of some 30,000 Arabs living in Ethiopia was demanded.

The Radio reported that in reply to a petition from the people of Eritrea, the Emperor had declared that all necessary steps were now being taken to preserve inviolate the Ethiopian people's independence; for the sake of peace, patience had so far been shown towards acts perpetrated by certain Syrian-trained people and intrigues against Ethiopia by the Syrians themselves, but this patience had only encouraged them. (R. Addis Ababa 22-24/3)

Last reference p. 1185A

(2) Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) attacked Airports & Airlines target (June 18, 1969, Pakistan)
Incident Date: June 18, 1969

Description: PAKISTAN. Three armed members of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) attacked an Ethiopian airliner at the Karachi airport. Part of the Boeing 707 burned. No casualties were reported. The terrorists, all of whom were captured, told authorities that they carried out the attack to dramatize their opposition to Ethiopian rule in Eritrea. The three were convicted and sentenced to one year of hard labour. On July 31, the ELF issued a communiqué warning travellers that they would risk their lives if they flew on Ethiopian Airlines. The communiqué said that the ELF would resort to attacks on Ethiopian airliners in retaliation for Ethiopian Air Force attacks on Eritrean villages.

<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=310> - 22 KB

(2) ERITREA: NEWS BULLETIN PUBLISHED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT

Address: FARDOS Str. - Tel 27367

ISSUE NO. 96
JULY 28th, 1969

SOMALI PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS CALL FOR RELEASE OF ERITREAN COMMANDOES HELD IN KARACHI

Somali parties and organisations have sent the following cable to President Yahya Khan of Pakistan:-

We, the undersigned, representatives of Somali Liberation Movements, parties, and youth organisations, declare our absolute support for the Eritrean Liberation Front. We appeal to you to intervene to secure the release of the three freedom fighters who were arrested following their attack on an Ethiopian airliner at Karachi airport.

They are fighting for freedom as well as for the self-determination for their country.

ERITREA: NEWS BULLETIN PUBLISHED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT

Address: FARDOS Str. - Tel 27367

ISSUE No. 97
AUGUST 5th, 1969

AN E.L.F. DELEGATION ARRIVES IN PAKISTAN

An Eritrean Liberation Front delegation has arrived in Karachi to follow the case of the three Eritrean commandos who were arrested following their attack on an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing at Karachi airport on June 30th, 1969. Speaking at a press conference shortly after his arrival in the Pakistani capital, the leader of the delegation said that he was in Karachi to seek the release of the three commandos who acted in defence of a noble cause. He said he intended to place before Pakistani government officials

the facts about Ethiopian repression in Eritrea and about conditions there in general. The E.L.F. delegation leader expressed appreciation of the Pakistani government's decision not to hand the three Eritreans over to the Ethiopian authorities. He also noted the Eritrean people's as well as his own gratitude to the Pakistani people for their support and understanding of the Eritrean struggle and their defence of the case of the three Eritrean Commandos.

(2) Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) attacked Unknown target (June 18, 1969, Italy)
Incident Date: June 18, 1969

Terrorist Organization(s): [Eritrean Liberation Front \(ELF\)](#)
City: Rome
Country/Area: [Italy](#)

Description: ITALY. An Eritrean student died when a bomb he was preparing in his room in Rome exploded. Leaflets in the room announced an impending attack by the Eritrean Liberation Front.

<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=310> - 22 KB

(2) Africa Research Bulletin
June 1-31, 1969, Page 1441

ETHIOPIA

Aircraft Attacked

A Karachi police official said on June 19th that youths arrested the previous day for "trying to destroy the Boeing 707 aircraft of Ethiopian Airlines at Karachi Airport by throwing hand grenades and firing stengun shots" would be tried before a Karachi court. The youths, all Eritreans holding Ethiopian passports, have been charged with attempted murder, arson and destruction. They were identified as Ali Abdullah, 20, Mohammed Idris 21, and S. Abraham, 22. (EGG 20/6)

Responsibility for Explosions

In a news bulletin the "Eritrean Liberation Front" has claimed responsibility, which destroyed several locomotives and some track belonging to the Ethiopian railway and the Ethiopian Embassy in Djibouti (Afar and Issa Territory) on May 17th (p.1419). The Front, which earlier destroyed an Ethiopian Boeing aircraft in Frankfurt (p.1352), was continuing its operations against the Ethiopian railway as part of its continued campaign against the vital Ethiopian establishments, the aim of which was to weaken the economic and military resources of the enemy who was carrying out an extermination campaign against the Eritrean people. (R. Damascus 7/6)

Last reference pp 1351C, 1419A.

(3) ERITREA: NEWS BULLETIN PUBLISHED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT

Address: FARDOS Str. - Tel 27367

ISSUE NO. 98
AUGUST 12th, 1969

ETHIOPIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HIJACK ETHIOPIAN PLANE

Six Ethiopian University students have forced an Ethiopian plane on a domestic flight to change course and land at Khartoum. The six students, along with an Ethiopian official, applied for political asylum in the Sudan.

The students had been registered at Haile Selassie University, scene of widespread unrest early this year.

The Ethiopian authorities immediately asked for the return of the students and sent a high ranking delegation led by the minister of state to negotiate the students extradition. The Sudanese prime minister said the question would be studied in the light of international agreements.

(3) Ammanuel Gebre Yesus

I studied history at the Addis Abeba University. I was always against oppression of people and was more of humanitarian, not politician.

In those student movements of that time, we were not narrow nationalists and we were not negative on the Eritrean cause but we strived for a greater Africa to live peacefully together. We wanted a broader revolution against the feudalism in Ethiopia. Our emphasis was on the social situation in the country and we wanted change.

Ammanuel Yohannes was sent from Meda. He was a humble and innocent person that we called him "The Saint". He had changed his name returning to Addis, to a Muslim name. I was in Khartoum on the 1972 hijacking time. After I was in meda for 11 months, I fled to Uganda and then to Sweden. I will tell you the story another time, it is long. Also when I was imprisoned in Asmera at age 17 and I saw how a man was tied behind sitting on a chair being beaten by whip at the face.

Those hijacking in 1971 were Ammanuel Yohannes, Yohannes Sebhatu, Musie T Mikel and Debessai Gebre Selassie. Debesai was an innocent type, not very urban. He had sent letter to the US from some Arab country and the letter reached Andebirhan who forwarded it to meda, thus his being killed, along the rest, as Menkae. They were all Addis University students. Try to get the pamphlet the 72 hijackers were planning to distribute about the struggle for Eritrea and Ethiopia. They were suspected before the start.

Petros Yohannes was my friend and he was much interested in politics. (There were 4 hijackers of 71 according to newspapers of the time, Aida)

We who hijacked the 1969 airplane were seven, being;

- 1, Ammanuel Gebre Yesus, 2, Binyam Adane, a nephew of Ato Abebe Retta.
- 3, Iyasu Alemayehu 4, Berhane Meskel Redda
- 5, Abdissa Ayana, 6, Haileysus Weldesenbet
- 7, Gezahegn or Gezu.

One person from us backed at the last moment. We seven were not organized as some were communists, anarchists etc. We were not with ELF.

The flight was local and having studied the route, fuel capacity and that there were no security agents we planned well. Two of us boarded the plane in Bahr Dar, some in Gonder. We were armed with pistols not to use but to give orders. We forced the plane to Khartoum knowing that the communist authorities in Khartoum would not reject us.

Our demands were that students sentenced to as much as 7 years be freed. The students were freed and schools started.

There was going to be a meeting in Khartoum where the Emperor was to join. So we had to go away and I went to Algeria. I was imprisoned there for 6 months and at last Herui Tedla came and freed me. National congress of ELF was to be held inside Eritrea and I participated

(3) Africa Research Bulletin

August 1-31, 1969

ETHIOPIA

Aircraft Hi-jacked

The pilot of an Ethiopian Airlines Dakota plane on a regular Bahr Dar to Addis Ababa flight was forced on August 11th to change course and land at Khartoum (Sudan). Seven student passengers had threatened the Pilot and forced him to change course. Airport officials at Khartoum immediately detained the students for questioning, but the plane and the rest of the passenger returned to Ethiopia.

According to the Ethiopian Herald, the students made a statement at Khartoum that they were communist disciples of Mao Tse Tung and had forced the pilot to change course and Land at Khartoum airport so that they could continue their journey to Communist China. The Herald comments that "it will be recalled that a few foreign-duped students like the seven who forced the pilot to change course and land at Khartoum Airport, attempted to disrupt public security and the smooth functioning of schools in Addis Ababa recently. Some of those students were dismissed from schools and the University and some were arrested and tried for their illegal and disruptive activities and were subsequently jailed. (EH 13/8)

ELF Claims

An Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) spokesman in Damascus stated on August 19th that in the first half of August Eritrean fighters had killed 113 Ethiopian officers and soldiers in the Massawa area; 37 of them had been killed in an ambush 100 km. from the port. The others were killed in a second ambush two days later. The areas along the coast under the control of the Eritrean fighters were exposed to shelling and bombing by Ethiopian artillery and bomber aircraft, which were attempting to destroy the nationalists' bases. (R. Baghdad 19/8)
Last reference pp. 1381,1441C

(3) September 1-30, 1969

Page 1528

Ethiopia

Students Pardoned

Emperor Haile Selassie on September 9th granted pardon to University and other students who were sentenced to prison terms and suspended from schools for their part in the student disturbances of March 1969 (p. 1381B)

Referring to the disturbances in a radio broadcast the Emperor said, "it was not hard to imagine the difficulties the nation faced when youngsters of school age, from whom we were expecting much, were led into mischief. Foreign elements have been the cause of student disturbances, and this has come to light by the nature of the leaflets distributed and the nationalities of their authors." The Emperor said that the style and presentation of the writing were detrimental to the national interest and unity of the country.

The Emperor said that the educated young should put more interest in rural development so that

they could impart some of their knowledge to the elderly people who had no opportunities to learn and acquire modern skills. The primary purpose of any education was to produce responsible citizens who would render useful services to their country.

The Emperor added that Ethiopia's belief was to take from any ideology only those elements that were useful to her own interests and adopt them to her culture for her own development and progress. "Ethiopia has never been under the domination of any alien ideology and will never be under one." (EH 10/9)

(4) Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) attacked Airports & Airlines target (Sept. 13, 1969, Ethiopia)
Incident Date: Sept. 13, 1969

Description: ETHIOPIA. Three armed members of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) hijacked an Ethiopian Airlines DC-6 with 66 passengers aboard. The flight, bound for Djibouti from Addis Ababa, was forced to land at Aden, Southern Yemen. One of the hijackers, Mohammed Sayed, 18, was shot by an Ethiopian secret police official who had been a passenger on the flight. Police captured the other two hijackers.

<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=310> - 22 KB

(4) Africa Research Bulletin
September 1-30, 1969

Aircraft Hi-jacked

Three armed Eritreans on September 13th hi-jacked an Ethiopian Airlines plane and forced the pilot to land at Aden. The DC-6 aircraft was on a flight from Addis Ababa to Jibuti with 39 passengers and a crew of five. The Ethiopian News Agency reported that two hi-jackers had been detained. The passengers and crew of the aircraft were being questioned by the authorities of Southern Yemen. In Damascus a spokesman for the Eritrean Liberation Front claimed responsibility for the hi-jacking. (EGG 14/9)

The aircraft, its crew and passengers returned to Addis Ababa by September 19th. The South Yemeni authorities were still holding in detention the two hi-jackers and an Ethiopian security officer who shot and wounded one of the men. (NA 19/9)
Last reference pp. 1351B, 1381, 1497

(5) Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) attacked Airports & Airlines target (Dec. 12, 1969, Spain)
Incident Date: Dec. 12, 1969

Description: SPAIN. Two men armed with pistols and explosives were killed by plainclothes security guards as they attempted to hijack an Ethiopian Airlines jet shortly after takeoff from Madrid on a flight to Addis Ababa. In Damascus, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) admitted that the two slain men were members of the ELF but claimed that they had not intended to hijack the airliner, merely to hand out leaflets. On December 10, Spanish police had arrested a third suspected ELF member at the Madrid airport for carrying explosives.

<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=310> - 22 KB

(5) Africa Research Bulletin

December 1-31, 1969

Page 1611-2

ETHIOPIA

Hijackers foiled

None of the passengers or crew members aboard an Ethiopian Airlines DC-6B aircraft was hurt when an attempted hijacking was foiled by Ethiopian Airlines inspectors, who killed the alleged hijackers while the plane was in flight. Shortly after the incident, which occurred on December 12th, during a regular flight from Madrid to Addis Ababa, the plane landed in Athens, where police carried out an investigation, but then allowed the plane to continue its journey to Addis Ababa, with passengers, inspectors, and corpses aboard. (EH 14/12)

The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) announced on December 13th that the two "martyrs" who tried to hi-jack the airliner on the previous day wanted to use it to distribute a statement issued by the Front on "the Ethiopian terrorisation of the Eritrean people and the mass massacres committed by the Ethiopian authorities against Eritrean citizens". (R. Damascus 13/12)

Passengers Threatened

In another statement on December 17th, the Secretary-General of the ELF, Mr. Osman Salah, said that the killing of two of its agents during the abortive hijacking attempt "frees us of the engagement we had undertaken not to harm passengers travelling aboard Ethiopian Airlines planes. Our future, operations", he continued, will show international public opinion the adequate measures that the ELF is going to take in answer to the Ethiopian challenge. I hope my warning will be heeded by all who travel abroad the aircraft of Ethiopian Airlines".

Meanwhile, in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian Information Ministry announced that the Ethiopian security services had established "without a shadow of doubt" that the two men who tried to hijack the airliner were Syrians. The Ministry said that the two men were travelling on false Senegalese and Yemenite passports.

The Ministry also protested against the allegation from Damascus that the two men were not trying to hi-jack the aircraft but merely wanted to hand out pamphlets to the passengers. Rejecting this as "absurd", the Ministry complained also against the news agencies and radios which had carried this report. (EH 17112)

Students Killed

Three students died and another five were wounded in a gun battle between police and students at the Haile Selassie I University in Addis Ababa on December 29th. The two sides exchanged fire when police forced their way into the main University buildings occupied by thousands of students following the slaying of a student leader, Mr. Tilahun Gizaw, December 28th.

A Ministry of information communique said that as the security forces moved in on the campus, some students "not only tried to obstruct the police from carrying out their duties, but opened fire on them from buildings inside the campus. The police were forced to reply with fire and in the

exchange three from among the University students were killed and five wounded", the communiqué said.

The Ethiopian Herald reported that the cause of the trouble was the killing by an unidentified gunman of Mr. Tilahun, President of the Addis Ababa University Students' Association. The Information Ministry communiqué said that Mr. Tilahun was shot as he was walking with two friends. He was rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors tried unsuccessfully to save him. Police said that later "a few University students broke into the hospital, beat up the nurses and doctors and forcefully took the remains of the student to the University.

Also on December 28th, and only 15 minutes before Mr. Tilahun was attacked, another student, Tesfay Wolde-Gebrel, was stabbed in another part of the University district. He is now in a critical condition in hospital. The stabbed student told police he had been attacked by a fellow-student.

The Ministry of Information quoted police as saying that the two crimes "were the work of a few University students who tried create a situation in order to disrupt public order and security". Police said that the students refused to hand over the body to the Tilahun family, and also obstructed police efforts to investigate the shooting. "Police were later forced to take all the necessary measures in order to hand over Tilahun's body to his relatives", the Ministry said, describing how the shooting started.

The University will remain closed, on orders of the National Education Ministry, until police have investigated the clashes between students and police, according to an announcement over Ethiopian television. (EH 30/12)

Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) attacked Airports & Airlines target (Mar. 1, 1970, Italy)
Incident Date: Mar. 1, 1970

Description: ITALY. A bomb was found in the luggage aboard an Ethiopian airliner in Rome. The device had been placed by members of the ELF.
<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=310> - 22 KB

THE TIMES March 2, 1970 page 1

Bomb plane halted at take off.

Rome, March 1. – A bomb which was discovered in the lavatory of an Ethiopian airliner at Rome airport tonight was exploded in a nearby field by an Ethiopian security agent.

The Ethiopian Boeing 707 was carrying 27 passengers, nine crew and four security agents. Among the passengers was M. Jean Remi Ayoune, Foreign Minister of Gabon, who was travelling to Elisabetha, Ethiopia, for a meeting of African Unity.

A state of emergency was declared at the airport. All passengers were ordered off the aircraft and police carried out a search.

The aircraft was rolling toward its takeoff point when an agent opened the lavatory door and spotted the suspicious suitcase. The captain turned the jet round and taxied it on to an apron.

The agent jumped off the aircraft, ran to a field and threw the suitcase as far as he could. He fell face down to the ground and the suitcase blew up as it landed. A.P.

June 1-30, 1970
page 1785
Internal Security
Ethiopia

ELF's Headquarters Moved

A spokesman for the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) said on June 27th that members of the Front in "exile" in Rome had decided to move their "secret" headquarters to Copenhagen.

The decision was taken, the spokesman said, because the Italian police were "totally incapable" of protecting Front members. The Front claimed on June 20th that Ethiopian secret agents were hunting down the clandestine refugee and guerrilla reception centre established in Rome in the spring. The spokesman added that the Front's "exiles" had already reached the Danish capital, most of them "secretly". (NA 27/6)

Last reference p. 1757C

Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) attacked Airports & Airlines target (Sept. 8, 1970, Greece)
Incident Date: Sept. 8, 1970

Description: GREECE. Two members of the ELF who attempted to hijack an Ethiopian airliner in Athens were foiled by security guards.

<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=310> - 22 KB

Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) attacked Airports & Airlines target (Jan. 22, 1971, Ethiopia)
Incident Date: Jan. 22, 1971

Description: ETHIOPIA. Four members of the ELF hijacked an Ethiopian airliner to Libya.

<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=310> - 22 KB

Africa Research Bulletin
November 1-31, 1970
Page 1932
ETHIOPIA

Hijacker Sentenced

A member of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) arrested in December, 1969, two days before an unsuccessful bid to hijack an Ethiopian airliner (p. 1611), was jailed for 20 months by a Spanish military court in Madrid in November.

He was Abdelkader Mahmoud Sulieman, a 24-year-old Ethiopian student. He received 10 months' imprisonment for illegal possession of a pistol and a similar term for bringing explosives into Spain. He was also fined £ 90 for using a false passport.

The prosecuting counsel said that Sulieman admitted that he was a commando of the ELF and that he had gone to Madrid to join two other men in the hijack bid. (On December 12th, 1969, two men were shot dead by security guards when they attempted to hijack an Ethiopian jet shortly after it left Madrid on an overnight flight to Addis Ababa Ed.)

The prosecutor added that the three men had planned to divert the airliner over Paris, throwing out liberation front literature and then land the plane in Stockholm and blow it up. (EAS 6/11)

Africa Research Bulletin
January 1-31, 1971
p. 1988

ETHIOPIA

Aircraft Hijacked

Radio Cairo reported on January 22nd that the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) office in Beirut had denied any connection with the hijacking of an Ethiopian aircraft while on an internal flight from Bahar to Gondar. After the aircraft had landed at Benghazi on January 23rd, the Libyan radio reported that one of the hijackers told the Libyan News Agency that he and his three colleagues belonged to the ELF, and that they had hijacked the aircraft on the orders of the Front's Secretariat.

(R. Cairo 22/1)

Last reference p. 1956

They were four Addis Abeba University students 1, Musie T Mikel, 2, Yohannes Sebhatu, 3, Amanuel Yohannes and 4, Debesai Gebreselassie. They all joined PLF and Amanuel was killed in 1972 while hijacking another plane.

February 1-28, 1971
page 2018

ETHIOPIA

Emperor's offer of Amnesty

Addressing provincial Governors and elders of the Eritrean Governorate in Massawa on February 20th, Emperor Haile Selassie said that bandits operating in the Governorate of Eritrea would be given full amnesty if they voluntarily gave themselves up to the authorities. The Emperor urged the elders to advice all those concerned that their "misguided and foreign-inspired interests" would only disrupt the smooth economic development and social progress in the Governorate. He added that the state of emergency (p. 1956) had been declared to ensure public safety and security and not to harm the inhabitants of Eritrea. (R. Addis Ababa 20/12)

Last reference p. 1988C

THE TIMES

Saturday September 22, 1973

Ethiopian hijack alarm due to misheard signal

Addis Ababa, Sept. 21 – The Ethiopian Government announced that the hijack alarm last Friday, thought to have come from the aircraft carrying Emperor Haile Selassie on his way home from a visit to West Germany, was due to a misunderstanding of communications.

A statement issued here said that investigations by a ministerial committee had established beyond any doubt that the alarm was caused by a misunderstanding in the exchange of communications between the captain of the aircraft and the control tower of Milan airport.

The committee expressed its appreciation to the Italian aviation authorities for their co-operation in establishing the facts of the matter. – Reuter.

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