

## Reports from South Omo, Ethiopia

July 16, 2011

I am writing to inform you of the situation now in Southwestern Ethiopia. The land area I speak of starts at Gambella, goes south to Bench Maji and to South Omo. The pastoral people were put in jail and beaten badly, women were raped, the government used electric shock on the people in south Omo. The government also brought in the Agadiz special police forces in the indigenous areas.

I heard this from local people. They told me everything that has happened to them. The Suri area government is doing bad things to the people. The government took many Suri cattle. Many of the Suri were put in jail and most of them were taken far away where their families will never see them. The government is not allowing families to visit them in jail. The Suri will take their cattle to Sudan if the government continues doing this. Now, the government is targeting the educated boys and police from the pastoral communities. Most of them have already been arrested. Some of them have been killed.

The main purpose of the government in doing this is to scare away the indigenous people from the area so they can take their land and give it to foreign investors. If the government does not do this the investor will not come to the land, because the indigenous people are carrying many guns.

The Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, the Regional Government President Shuferow Shugute, and the Bench Maji Zonal Administrator Admasu, are going to wipe out all the pastoral people in Southern Ethiopia. Please help the pastoralists in southern Ethiopia they will be under threat for 6 long years. The government plans to settle the mobile pastoralists in large villages. The government plans to set these up soon.

Remember these people are Human beings they are not animals to go and hunt as wildlife. The Pastoralists in southern Ethiopia are now paying many cattle to the government so the government will stop harming them. Now the people are agreeing to everything the government is saying. They have no choice. The people live in fear. They are afraid of the government. What the people are saying is not good. There will be a civil war. The government is now acting like the previous Derg government.

There will be a big problem in these areas if all the cattle are taken by the Government, what will these people eat? Now the drought is badly affecting the Horn of Africa. Now the Gibe 3 dam is being built, and there will soon be no flood waters from the river. The land has been taken away. The cattle have been taken by the government. With all of these things being taken away, what will happen to the poor people in time of the famine? The people who want to wipe out of the pastoralists eat three times a day.

September, 2011

South Omo Zone, Ethiopia

A few days ago a South Omo Zone police commander and his officers went to the Mursi place called Hailewuha to discuss with the community there about the sugarcane plantations and the highland worker's camp. They asked the Mursi why they are always rejecting the government plantations. They strongly told the Mursi that the government wanted to build a second big campsite, for sugar plantation workers, in Hailewuha. Now, they've done it. They cleared the area and are building the second large campsite there.

The Government told the Mursi they will soon look for the Mursi elders and the young men who are rejecting the plantation plans to capture them and put them in prison. Now they know the tribes that are rejecting the plans are the Mursi and some elders from the Nyangatom, and are focusing on these tribes.

In the beginning of the plantation implementation, the government told the Mursi and Bodi not to carry their guns along any roads, and if they do, the government will take them. During that meeting in Hailewuha, one young man had his gun and passed by the soldiers. They told him to give up his gun, but the young man nearly started shooting the soldiers, and the soldiers saw this and they stopped following him.

During all this, Mursi people were calling to the young man to start shooting, and calling to all of the Mursi to shoot the soldiers. Fighting between Mursi and the government will happen. I'm telling you, for sure, that it will happen.

October 17, 2011

News from the south Omo valley of southern Ethiopia

The sugar plantations project, which is threatening local indigenous people, has seen recent increases in severity of abuses by the government.

Government officials gathered the Bodi from many different villages in their areas and also members of the other neighboring group called the Chirim. They had a big meeting about the sugarcane project and villagization. After the meeting, the government took the Bodi and Chirim to show them the resettlement area where they were told they will live permanently. After seeing the place, the Bodi and Chirim refused to live there and all went back to their homes.

October 26, 2011

The government left the area and went to discuss the matter seriously. On October 26, 2011, again the government called the Bodi in the Hanna area for a meeting. They had a very long meeting and again the Bodi men rejected the project, the government became exhausted of

trying to make the Bodi agree. The government called the security forces and the forces came and surrounded the Bodi at a meeting. Even surrounded, the young men still would not be scared into agreeing to the project, so the security forces caught four young men and put them in prison. The last eight months the government has made up many reasons to put local people in jail, but the real reason is opposition to the plantations. There have been more arrest in the past weeks putting the total at more than 100 Bodi\* and 28 Mursi in jail. The tribes fear the next step will be the security forces killing people.

Please help these people. This plantations project brings these people no peace. Please tell the Ethiopian government to stop abusing these people. Tell Meles Zenawi to leave these people alone.

Now everything is under government control in the south Omo area, especially in the Mursi and Bodi areas. The road to Hanna, in Bodi territory, now has put up a check point to stop journalists like the BBC and Survival International. It is the same things in the Mursi area too, even the tourists are not allowed to go further into the rest of Mursi land and to the Omo River, it is very sad.

\*note the source said it may be more than 200 Bodi in jail now.

News update November 3, 2011.

News from near Mizan Teferi in Southwestern Ethiopia, on September 16, 2011 the government was planning to move the Suri people imprisoned for opposing the plantations from the town of Tum to different areas of Ethiopia. The Suri prisoners didn't want to be moved and they escaped from prison. Many of them had run away many times. Now the government decided to take them somewhere to be trained to be soldiers to guard the national borders. The Suri are extremely frightened to be taken away.

Yesterday at 10 pm, nine Suri prisoner escaped and they were shot at. One is dead and four of them are badly wounded. The wounded are in the hospital. Four others were caught and badly beaten. They are in critical condition and government has not allowed them to be taken to the hospital. Other Suri are not allowed to go and see them. Most of them in Mizan were given 30 year prison sentences.

November 24, 2011

News update, first step to the end.

There is recent bad news from the Mursi and Bodi tribal areas of southern Ethiopia. In Haylewoha, the government put many Ethiopian defense forces around the village and established a road block.

The Ethiopian defense forces have started raping the Mursi women in the bush, while the Mursi women are collecting firewood, fetching water, and getting the grass for the calves.

The raping started a month ago, the Ethiopian defense forces told the women if they tell their husband they will immediately kill their husbands and children, burn their houses, and destroy their villages.

The women who were raped were silent for many weeks, not daring to talk to anyone about it. Yesterday, the women told some community members without soldiers near. When the Mursi men heard of this all of them were crying.

The men think their government is planning to destroy them all soon, maybe in a few weeks time. The district government yesterday told Mursi they have to bring all of their guns to the government, but the Mursi did not. The government told them if they don't bring the guns they will see government power soon, meaning things will be done by force.

"These problems are coming because of our rich land. The land grab is true. We see our death is near. It is just behind our backs," a Mursi man said. "The government will kill us like it killed many people from the Nyamogn 13 years ago and like it shot the Suri from a helicopter, and attacked other tribes. Now we know the government is a big liar, because the development he brought to our land is not real development, it is not peaceful. Anyone can understand this easily. Now people fear the government."

This is the first step to a string of problems:

1. Women are being raped.
2. Killings will happen soon, within a month.
3. The land will be destroyed by big heavy machines.
4. The land will be covered in chemicals and after many years the land will become bad. The plantations will leave and we will have bad land forever.
5. For the land to recover as it was naturally will take ages.
6. HIV/AIDS will take over in ten years.
7. Alcohol.
8. Lost culture.

\*note: so far four rapes by the military of Mursi women have been reported in the last month.

December 2011

Today's South Omo, Ethiopia news

The Ethiopian government sold our land without consulting us or fully explaining to us, what the things they called development meant. It only saw the money that was brought by foreign investors and shook to have this money. It made many bad decisions for us. It is a big

liar to both the tribes and foreigners. Now, the government is going to clear our tribes out like it is clearing the bush from our land, for sugarcane. Tell them to go away from here.

We are the original people of these areas, we know the land and the land knows us. This is our ancestors' land and we do not need rich people to come to us and play on us like they play football. Our bodies are the same as theirs. We have blood just like them; we are not different than them. Tell them to go away from here.

Our lands have many things in them and are very important to us, even if we are poor we want to keep these lands as they are and manage them properly. Because our land has many resources and they have been kept for us by our ancestors, we have cattle, and many different kinds of wild animal species, which we have looked after for thousands of years. We do not want them to suffer and disappear from us and our land forever. We do not want to lose these lands to the government and foreign people who will come and damage them. We never went to foreign countries to damage their land. Why do they come here? Tell them to go away from here.

Listen to what investors and the government of Ethiopia did to us Bodi and Mursi people. We want you to hear the truth so that you can help us. The government put military forces around us and now they have raped our wives. A very bad and shocking thing the highlanders have now done is they have raped our boys in the bush. We have never, never heard of this or seen it before. We have never seen anything like this in our history. We have never seen a man have sex with a man. Now the Bodi and Mursi live in bad conditions. We do not want to face more such terrible things in the future. Tell them to go away from here.

Now we are not going to fight with the government, so we are going to kill ourselves. We have been sending our children to school in Salamago district. Now, the Ethiopian military forces went into a boarding house where the students live and raped Bodi girl students. Now the Bodi and Mursi have no any ideas what to do. They want to flee somewhere. Tell the government and investors to go way from here.

The government sees us as bad people, and wants to change us by bringing this evil project. We do not accept these new plans because this government has been in power more than 20 years and it did not bring development before. It is not real development. The government only begs the foreigners to sell our land to get huge money. Tell them to go away from here.

The government officials are threatening us every time they invite us to meetings and tell us many things. They are going to destroy our cattle soon and force us to buy the Borena tribe's cattle for marketing meat products, to replace our cattle. They said if we do not do this they will shoot all of our cattle, then they will turn the guns around to us. The people were threatened by government officials and military forces in every meeting to make the Bodi and Mursi accept

the plantation plans. We are now just simply saying yes, yes, it is good, because we have no other choice. Please do not accept any reports they tell to foreigners, which says the Bodi and Mursi people are happy with and supporting the project. This is false, if you accept their reports you are also lying to yourselves, please do not accept them.

Tell them to go way from here.

Suri news

December 12, 2011

Dear all,

Yesterday, bad news has come from Suri area and Mizan Teferi in Bench Maji zone in western Ethiopia. The government brought many Ethiopian country defense forces to the area. Two days ago they brought 1000 soldiers to the Dewabilecho area near the town of Tum and seven big army trucks to Gewa.

The Suri tribal men who were watching the troops told what was happening in the area. They worry killings may happen soon and unexpectedly. One of the military men from inside the military compound said "the government told us to come here and to move the Suri people which live here to different places. This place is the government's and was given to the investors and we are going to move the people out from this place."

This land was sold to the foreign investors from Malaysia. Land investment has become the top human rights violator in the indigenous areas in southern Ethiopia.

The country defense forces were called to come and beat the Suri people and kill them and to move them from their land, Shinyameri, Tum, Dhewabilecho in the Koka, to different areas because the Malaysian company wants to expand their plantation.

The army raped ten of our women including one highlander's wife a man called X. and now he divorced his wife. He is worried she may have HIV/AIDS. This man is now very angry with the army for forcing Suri wives and his wife.

The people now in the Suri area are living a very bad life and fearing what next will be happen to them. They are abused by the government armies like the people in the South Omo area.

The other problem is gold mining in the area. The highlanders have taken over land the Suri have used for gold mining.

Please help us. The government is going to do bad things to us. We heard another story from the Omo areas where the government did bad things to the Bodi and the Mursi. Can anyone find out what the plans is there? Where are the resettlement places?

## **Omo News update December 13**

### **From Bodi**

Yesterday, in my land of the Bodi area, where the Gura River meets the Omo River, bad things happened to me and my friends. In this area, I have been working hard to care for my wives, my relatives and my cattle. I have been doing this for many years now. My father told me here there are many things to survive on there if you are a hard worker. By keeping cattle, planting sorghum, and keeping bees I could live well. Now our biggest threat is only one thing: it is the Sugar plantation farms. Yesterday, the sugarcane farm people cleared my area. I told them to help me by leaving my little forest place where I keep all my beehives with my friends. They didn't listen to me and they destroyed all of my small forest. I lost 300 beehives and my friends lost more than that.

I was trying hard to convince them not to do it and they told me, "You have no land. This land belongs to the government. You should understand that and you have no right to say things like, 'This is my land.' Why are you saying this? Go away from here. If you do not listen to this go and stand with your trees over there, so I can knock you down too." I was scared and I went away from there.

### **From Kwegu**

"I am a Bacha person (the Northern Kwegu) we are the people who have always lived along the Omo River banks, on both sides, and we have never moved from here to different places. Our lives depend on hunting, gathering, and fishing. We do not have cattle like other tribes. We have planted sorghum along the River Omo for thousands of years. The people that live far away called Amaro (Amhara people/highlanders) came to our land and lied to us. They said, "We are coming to help you to improve your lives." At that time we thought it may be a good thing. But they were evil people. Today they cleared all of our bush, even secret ritual places, and they knocked down my beehives. Now all are gone. If we ask them to leave this place, they won't care what we are saying and won't listen to us. Now we have no choice in what will happen next."

## **South Omo Update, 7 January 2012**

Last week some of you heard about the problems that happened between the Bodi tribe and the government in South Omo region along the River Omo. During the time the Kuraz sugar plantation project started in the area the Sugar workers hit by car, five Bodi people every month on the road and in the town called Hana of Sala Mago Woreda (district). And when the workers ran over the Bodi people the government didn't pay any attention and didn't put those drivers in jail. It was intolerable for the Bodi people.

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, at 4 pm local time (10 pm) a truck killed one Bodi woman while she was on the way to her cattle camp. The truck killed her in the bush where there was no car traffic and her body was buried the next morning. This is another way to destroy indigenous people in their own land, run them over by trucks. Most Bodi people didn't understand why these trucks had come to their land and why the government troops had come. They just watched them quietly.

The relatives of the woman's husband came and took revenge by attacking the worker's camp and smashing the truck and destroying four machines in the sugar worker's camp. The military came and fought heavily. Two Bodi people were wounded, but not too seriously. The Bodi became very angry. They felt that the government is not treating them fairly as Ethiopian citizens. They have seen since the Sugar Project began that the trucks are killing only Bodi people and none of the highlanders that had moved into the area.

The government was looking for a way to move the Bodi and Mursi into settlement sites. The fighting has become a way for the government to catch the Bodi and Mursi people, to scare them making it easy to settle them in the sugarcane farm areas. The military commander Wondimagegne said at a meeting in Hana on January 9<sup>th</sup>, "Those people have never seen the government's power before, so now they are testing the government by fighting. This is nice for us, don't act strongly, let them go ahead and think we are cowards and let them think they have become stronger than us and kill us and we will do a big revenge all in one day. If they do it again go and kill as many of them as you like. Then if we call them to a meeting and tell them to resettle, they will immediately agree to everything we tell them."

The commander went on, "The Bodi and the Mursi are like the Afar people in northeast Ethiopia. The Afar were trying to do the same thing the Bodi and Mursi are doing now. The government took great revenge upon them and killed many of them. After peace, they feared the government and obeyed everything the government told them. The Gambella were doing the same thing the Bodi and Mursi are going to try doing now. They were trying to interfere with the government plans, so the government killed many of them. They really fear the government and today they sign anything the government wants without arguing. "

The Sugar plantation manager Tilahun said at meeting the same day, "Some of Bodi were run over by trucks in the past months and they were afraid and didn't do any things to us. What they tried to do today, it isn't really the issue about the woman. We know that. They wanted to try to fight the sugar workers and scare them into running away and to stop working on the farms. This is the issue. Also there are some stupid foreigners telling them lies and telling them to resist the plans by fighting the government."

"We called the Bodi people to a meeting today and had a difficult meeting. We tried hard to make things acceptable to them and to make peace. We finished by paying compensation to the victim's husband of 50,000 ETB (\$2, 941.17 USD) and the Bodi are happy with that."



The Bodi Men met separately and said, 'Now we are already dead people. We've seen the evidence of how the government will treat us. The problems have already come to us. Bodi people be strong don't give up and let the government come finish us all. We have the right to this land and have the right to stay in it, and live on it. The Government says it belongs to him, but when did it plant in it what kind of seed it use? God has given us this land to live in.'

This is a call to the world to please help the sufferings people of the Bodi, Mursi and Surma tribes of southwestern Ethiopia. Their lives are threatened by Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's militants, right now.

February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

The sugar workers killed a pregnant Bodi woman by truck on the road as she was going home on the 7th of January 2012. After fighting broke out, the government called Bodi people for a meeting and at the meeting they made peace and the government promised the Bodi people:

'I am not going to destroy you. I am not going to finish your cattle. I am not selling your land to others no one can buy the land and put it in his bag and carry it. I am not going to remove you to bad place, I am not going to destroy your beehives again, I am going to make your lives better, no more begging, trust me and follow what I'm telling you now.'

Today at the Bakadey area again along the forests of the Omo River the government workers of the sugar plantations cleared many trees with Bodi beehives in their branches. About six big trees, full of honey barrels, all are gone. The owners of the honey barrels keep begging the workers not to knock down the trees. But they don't even answer the Bodi. The military are in the bulldozers and the Bodi are afraid to keep asking them to save the trees.

South Omo news update, Hamar

Hamar village, burned up by police, on 25 January 2012, in Mago Park territory. Hamar moved to the Mago River with their cattle, a few months ago, and stayed there because other parts of their land was drying up, and they went looking for pasture areas. That is their traditional place for the cattle in the Mago River.

The Park people were angry and threatened the Hamar people and the government sent the police and chased the Hamar away with their cattle. The police burned their houses, and many of the personal things gone, some men lost money, grain, honey, butter and some calves and goat kids. The Hamar people are so angry now at the police, but they have no power to defend themselves and the police don't care how the Hamar react or what they have lost.

The threats to the Omo people keep going up. The indigenous people in southern Ethiopia in the future will have no place for the people to live and no place for their cattle to live. They have no right to the land and the government is not recognizing them as human beings or treating them like Ethiopian citizens.

News update from southwestern Bench Maji

On the Saturday morning of 11 Feb 2012, in the Suri area, sixty government officials, police, militia, and Dizi people went to Suri places to mark the land with GPS and paint. There they started taking GPS points of the area and painting the houses, trees and rocks in the Suri area of Boltang. One Suri woman asked those people 'Why are you painting the trees, rocks, cooking stones and houses without telling us beforehand what you are doing?'

Because of this question the head of justice and security bureau, Daniel, grabbed a cooking pot and hit the Suri woman in the head and he lead people in shooting the sky and the militia started shooting at the Suri, and luckily the woman wasn't wounded and ran way. The police rushed into the villages and shot at Suri people. The Suri fought back with them and three police were killed.

On market day, the Suri went to the town of Maji. There, they met big problems from the town's people and the police, and some Suri were slaughtered by machete. The number dead was 31 and 9 were wounded.

The Suri people tried to go fight with them but they couldn't get into the town. The military rushed to the territory to block the way. The Suri came back and now the military is staying in Maji.

The reason for fighting is foreign investors are taking the land and the government wants to move the Suri people to a resettlement place near Kola. It is now cleared for them to go and live there permanently. But in the last meeting between the government official and the Suri people most Suri strongly rejected the plan. The government was pushing the Dizi people to have war with Suri people. The Dizi are claiming the land is theirs although the Suri have been there a long time. The Suri will have to leave the place and it will be easy for the government to resettle them.

These problems will go on for many years for the indigenous people, please pay attention to the situation of these tribes.

The First Encounter of Problems of Displacement and Death Threats, in the South Omo Region

Written February 20, 2012

The government many times sent officials to the Bodi people who live on the Oso River, and they told them to move out from there to a place called Gura. They said wait in Gura and the Bodi would later move to a new place where they would have a better life, in a new resettlement town. This resettlement site is now being cleared and officials are measuring the place to give each adult 50 square meters.

The Bodi refused to move there because the things they were told were so strange for them and the plan was not clear. After the government tried and tried to talk to them, the police and another people called the Aari highlanders came down to the Bodi area to the Bangko River to the cattle camp, in midday.

That time the men were at the river watering the cattle and only a few men, women and children were in the cattle camp. The police hid themselves and surprised the village and shot at them. One Bodi man was shot dead but the rest escaped. The police burnt the village to the ground and many calves, goat kids, money and many other personal things were lost.

All the men at the river heard the guns and ran back to save the children, but when they reach the village they only saw the smoke, but the people were alive. Some cattle were taken and the men ran after the police. They reached them a short while later and fought a lot and nine police were shot dead. The Bodi got their cattle back.

One month later, the government sent the military to Bangko and chased the Bodi out from there to Gura. The government told them not to bring their harvest of the crops of sorghum and maize and to leave behind the gourds and calabashes. The government promised it will provide all the stuff for them and grain. The government forced them to the Gura area and they were settled.

At Gura, they waited for two months and they didn't receive any grain. Later, the government brought 50 KGs sacks one sack to be shared by two adults of which to feed the children from. They waited for two months again and they received the same amount and a few plastic cupfulls.

Now the Bodi have decided to moved back to the Bangko and Oso Rivers. They are hungry and they do not want to see their children die. In the Oso and Bangko, the land is fertile and the place is cool. Before when they lived there, they were never hungry. They moved back to Oso from Gura because they didn't get enough food like they were promised by the government.

The government heard that the Bodi of Oso had moved back again to their land. The government sent a very strong threat to the Bodi for the Bodi to come back immediately. Otherwise they will get big troubles like they have never seen before.

Problems Arising from a Plantation in Suri, Interview with Tenomeri Ulikiwo, May 11, 2012

"Now in Suri area there are many problems. The recent issues are about the Malaysian investment plantation. In the beginning the Suri were saying maybe this is a good thing. Later, the plantation cleared all the grass and all the trees, many trees that were important to the Suri. The government was supporting the plantation. The Zonal and Regional governments were saying these investors were sent by the prime minister, so not to interfere with them. The

Suri people became very angry about this plantation. The plantation diverted the water from the Koka River, there was not enough water for the cattle and the river dried up downstream. After that the Suri said this plantation is not good. First the plantation planted corn to ready the soil. Then the Suri brought all their cattle to the plantation to eat the corn, some of it half grown, some of it full grown. When the plantation realized this they dug a moat all around the plantation. The Suri cut trees down to make a bridge to the plantation and they went and stole the corn from the plantation and now many Suri have full grain stores. After that the plantation brought many soldiers to protect the crops. The Malaysian plantation paid taxes to the Dizi woreda and the Dizi liked the plantation very much so the Dizi woreda helped them to expand and they demarcated with a GPS. On February 11, 2012 they came with a GPS and marked trees, rocks and cooking stones in a village and said this land has been given to the plantation and the Suri must leave this village. The Suri became angry and they started fighting with guns. The government called to another area, Maji, by radio to report this and in retaliation the government killed 54 unarmed Suri in the market place of Maji. Some were wounded and died later. Some say the total was 57 some say 65. After this event five more Suri were killed by soldiers.

“On April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 the government went with soldiers and for two week tried to prevent the Suri from planting crops. This was to force the people to be hungry and accept moving into the resettlement site. Most of the Suri are afraid to go to the place where they plant crops. Only a few went. In one village near the Malaysian plantation, three houses were burned down, with money, gold and grain stores inside. This was done by the plantation workers.

“Two Suri were imprisoned, their hands were tied with ropes and their feet were chained. They were tied up tightly for so long that their arms and hands barely work now. The Suri that were imprisoned some were killed. When it was time to empty the latrines the guards hung the latrines around the handcuffed prisoners necks, while they went to empty them. When the Suri and Dizi were fighting and Suri prisoners were captured the guards allowed the Dizi people into the jail to beat the Suri people severely. Families were not allowed to visit these Suri. Some Suri who did nothing, were randomly picked up on the road and were given prison sentences of, 18, 20 and 25 years. No witnesses testified against these people.

“The government has now sent many police and soldiers to stay in the Suri area. They haven’t done anything yet but the Suri are worried about what these people will do. They have brought big guns mounted on the backs of trucks. There are now four *shembel*, commanders, with their battalions in Suri area. There may be 1000-2000 soldiers now in Suri area.”

- Tenomeri Ulikiwo, Suri man

Events in Hana, Selamago Woreda, South Omo Zone, interview Bimarma Lornbui, May 9, 2012

“Now the government is planning to move the Bodi people to settle in one place. The people are mostly afraid to go to the resettlement site; only about 250-300 have registered to go to the resettlement site. The government in Hana is saying that those that refuse to move will be taken to the resettlement sites by force. The Chirim clan and the Bodi of Gura are refusing to go. There have been many reports in the media about the Omo River situation and this has helped the communities. The government is mad about this and demanding to know who is reporting this. Because of the reports, the government is not treating the communities badly or threatening them anymore. Before when there were meetings between the government and communities the meeting place was surrounded by soldiers to threaten the communities. Now this is not happening anymore.

“They are building a bridge to Bench-Maji area across the Omo River and they blocked the river to do this and also to get the water to the irrigation canals they are building. Only a little water continues to be in the Omo River bed. The river water went very low and many fish and hippos died below the blockade. The water above the dam filled up and flooded and many Bodi and Kwegu cultivation sites were flooded out with the crops in them. After three days, the water became very high and they made an opening in the earthen dam to let the water through. They are building the canals and one has gone for 8 km on the east side of the Omo River. There is no water in the canals yet. Water is being brought to the sugarcane plantation by generators from the Omo River.

“The Bodi are being given 0.5 hectares of land in the resettlement site per family. All the Bodi and Mursi people are really confused about this and worried about the future. Now the Bodi people have started to move to the resettlement site and we will see how it goes. The Bodi in the Gura area are not happy. This year the government is mostly focusing on the Bodi and next year they will go to the Mursi. The sugarcane military plantation guards have nice meat everyday because they are shooting the buffalo in the area of the plantation. The government is not helping the communities or the wildlife. They are only focusing on the investment. They ignore everything else. The Omo area has the second-richest soil in Ethiopia. It will not be depleted for 30 years. The government will not listen to anyone that complains. “

- Bimarma Lornbui, local community member Selamago Woreda

