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Archbishop Abba Mathias of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, has testified that: “Ever since 1974 . . . the churches have been subjected to multiple acts of persecution, suppression and injustice. From the very beginning the Military Junta and its Soviet mentors saw the Christian churches as the main bulwarks against an atheistic Marxist- Leninist ideology.”

“They defined the Church as an enemy of the people, as an oppressor and enemy of the revolution, of being agents of Western Imperialism . . and after concerted campaigns of hate propaganda, the Communist regime confiscated all church properties throughout the nation.”

“The Communists have bombed several churches and converted many churches into military barracks. Priests and monks were left to languish in prison, 14 archbishops were arbitrarily dismissed from their posts — by the Communists. They appointed an unordained Marxist, Mr Yegzaw, to head the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. They confiscated the ‘Radio Voice of the Gospel’ station, nationalised mission hospitals, killed or imprisoned hundreds of ministers and turned 1 500 churches into Cadre ideology offices.”

“The world must be reminded that it is the agricultural policies of forced collectivisation, coercion and the exploitation of farmers that. . . has led to starvation.”

“As a result of religious persecution, gross violations of human rights, collectivisation of agriculture and a regime that is bent on imposing a godless alien ideology throughout the country and as a result of the raging civil wars, two million Ethiopians have fled from their country.