



Preliminary report on the latest genocidal invasion by state-backed OLA militants in the North Shewa Zone of Amhara Region

Executive Summary

According to preliminary investigations undertaken by the Amhara Association of America (AAA) ethnic Amhara civilians and security personnel in the North Shewa Zone of the Amhara Regional State bore the brunt of yet another round of ethnic-based violence perpetrated by the *Oromo Liberation Army* (OLA), along with *Qeerro* (ultra-nationalist Oromo youth) and the Oromo Special Zone administration security personnel. The attack, which began on Saturday, January 21st and lasted for days before returning to normalcy on the morning of Thursday, January 26, 2023, targeted several areas in the North Shewa Zone of the Amhara Region, including Efratana Gidim and Kewet Woredas (district), as well as Ataye town, and caused hundreds of casualties. The attackers destroyed public and private property, and over a hundred thousand residents fled to neighboring areas such as Mehal Meda and Debre Birhan. This occurred while the Amhara Region has hosted over one million IDPs displaced from attacks in the Oromia Region.¹ In the last few years, the

¹Between November-December 2022 there were intensified attacks against Amhara civilians particularly in the East Wollega and Horo Guduru Wollega Zones of Oromia Region by Oromo Liberation Army and Oromia Special Forces. The Amhara Region Emergency Prevention and Food Security Commission reported over one million people were displaced from the Oromia Region to Amhara Region, as reported by [DW Amharic](#).

North Shewa Zone in particular has been a sight of frequent attacks by OLA and allied forces.² The preliminary investigation has determined that between Saturday, January 21st and the morning of Thursday, January 26th, 2023, a series of attacks by OLA militants which descended from the Oromo Special Zone to neighboring districts in the North Shewa Zone of Amhara Region resulted in:

- at least 45 civilians killed and 8 injured in Jewuha, Zuti Kebele, Addisalem-Negeso Kebele and Mentekie Sherefa Kebele,
- in Mehal Meda Hospital alone, there are more than 200 injured victims mainly from Ataye, Majete and neighboring areas. Vulnerable groups were disproportionately represented among victims, including many women, children, farmers and other civilians;
- at least 81 security personnel killed in Jewuha and Senbete;
- tens of thousands of civilians displaced from their homes in the Efratana and Gidim Woredas;
- destruction of at least 170 residential homes in the Zuti Kebele and Addisalem-Negeso Kebeles alone, and widespread destruction and looting of private and public property.

AAA is conducting a detailed investigation into the latest round of attacks in the area and will release a full report as soon as the investigation is completed, but in the interim, findings from the preliminary overview of major events that have occurred in the area since the launch of the new round of attacks on January 21st, 2023 are provided below.³

²AAA documented atrocities committed by the OLA in North Shewa Zone in its [2021 Annual Report](#) entitled “Neglected Massacres Against Amharas”. The report documented 1,276 civilian casualties (679 killed and 597 injured), widespread looting and destruction of private property and public infrastructure in North Shewa Zone in 2021.

³On Wednesday, January 25, 2023, AAA released a [video update](#) with audio from a survivor of the invasion in North Shewa Zone who spoke to AAA’s investigators.

The attack on Amhara Special Forces and Federal police by OLA militants on Saturday, January 21st, 2023

The OLA, along with its accomplices, attacked an Amhara Special Force (ASF) military camp and adjacent Federal police checkpoint simultaneously in Jewuha (Jebwuha) town (Efratana Gidim Woreda, North Shewa Zone) in the Amhara Region, killing security personnel and at least two civilians. According to AAA's investigation, the incident occurred at around 3 p.m. on Saturday, January 21st, 2023. After attacking the security officials, the attackers took control of Jewuha town and looted and destroyed property belonging to the town's Amhara residents before fleeing to the Oromo Special Zone. The following day, on Sunday, January 22nd, 2023, the situation appeared to return to normalcy, but residents were apprehensive at the prospect of further attacks and began fleeing their homes.

Concerning the period between Monday, January 23rd and Wednesday, January 25th, 2023

The OLA militants launched a full-fledged attack on several Amhara villages and towns in North Shewa Zone, Amhara Region on Monday, January 23rd, 2023, killing, wounding, and displacing civilians and destroying private and public property with the help of security personnel and ultranationalist Oromo youth from the Oromo Special Zone. In Mehal Meda Hospital alone, there are more than 200 injured victims mainly from Ataye, Majete and neighboring areas of the North Shewa Zone. Overall, the following areas were affected by the invasion: Addisalem-Negeso, Jewuha, Mentekie Sherif, and Alala areas in Efratana Gidim Woreda; and Zuti (05) Kebele of Shewa Robit town, Wacho and Teri Kebele of Kewet Woreda, and 01 Kebele of Ataye town were also affected.

Zuti Kebele of Shewa Robit town: The attack on Zuti (05) Kebele of Shewa Robit town began around mid-day on Monday, January 23rd and lasted until Wednesday, January

25th, 2023, when the assailants were driven out of the area by the ASF and other government security personnel. According to local residents, the exact death toll in Zuti is unknown, but it is estimated that more than 30 civilians were killed, with many more injured and tens of thousands displaced, as well as severe property damage, including the burning of more than 50 residential homes. The assailants were said to be heavily armed, including with *dishka* and *brail*.



(a)



(b)

Figure 1: Photographed are houses burned down by invading OLA forces in Zuti (05 kebele, Shewa Robit, North Shewa Zone, Amhara Region).

Addisalem-Negeso Kebele of Efratana Gidim Woreda: The assailants launched their offensive on Addisalem-Negeso Kebele in the Efratana Gidim Woreda around 3 p.m. on Monday, January 23rd and took complete control of the area around 4:30 p.m., after the residents who tried to defend their kebele were outnumbered and overpowered by the assailants, who were armed with military-grade weapons such as *dishka*, sniper rifles, and *brail*. The attackers were said to have received support from the Jile Timuga and Artuma Fursi Woreda administrations in the Oromo Special Zone (Amhara Region). Sources reported that woreda officials used them to use ambulances and government-owned vehicles to transport fighters and coordinate logistics in their attack on Amhara villages. According to AAA sources on the ground, the assailants looted and burned down at least 170 houses belonging to Amhara residents, killed at least three civilians, and injured three more during their temporary occupation of Addisalem-Negeso Kebele.

Mentekie Sherefa Kebele of Efratana Gidim Woreda: The attack in Mentekie Sherefa Kebele (Efratana Gidim Woreda) occurred on Monday, January 23rd, 2023 and resulted in at least 15 civilian casualties (at least 10 killed and 5 injured) and the destruction of property belonging to Amhara residents. Among those killed include Getaneh Awugachew, Maru Lemma, Aslelf Zhekale, and Endashaw Zegeye.

Ataye town: the assailants, who launched a coordinated and premeditated attack on Ataye town between Monday, January 23rd to Wednesday, January 25th, were able to temporarily control some parts of the town at least twice during their two-day offensive, causing damage to several residents' houses and businesses and displacing nearly all inhabitants of the town. Local residents also informed AAA about civilian casualties in Ataye town, but the exact number is unknown.

Deadly attack on civilians and Amhara Special Force personnel in Senbete town of the Oromo Special Zone in Amhara Region

AAA has also confirmed that on Monday, January 23rd, 2023, a convoy of ASF personnel who were deployed and on their way to the North Shewa Zone of Amhara Region to protect civilians under attack, were ambushed by a joint military operation of OLA and Oromo Special Zone security personnel while approaching Senbete town in the Jile Timuga administration of the Oromo Special Zone in the Amhara Region. The attack left an estimated 50 ASF personnel killed. Furthermore, sources from the ground told AAA that Amhara residents in the Oromo Special Zone, including Senbete town, have been subjected to a slew of human rights violations, including murder, the destruction of their belongings, and arbitrary arrest, in connection with the new wave of ethnically motivated attacks on Amhara residents in the area.

Current security situation in the area

On Wednesday, January 25th, 2023, following a two-day long attack launched by the assailants, the Amhara Region security personnel—with assistance from Federal forces—pushed the invaders out of Ataye and Shewa Robit (Zuti) towns, as well as Kewet and Efratana Gidim Woredas of North Shewa Zone, but the next day (Thursday, January 26th, 2023), the group attempted another attack on Amhara residents in Hailemariam and Muachera Kebeles of Antsokia Gemza Woreda, which was successfully defended after causing some damage to civilian property.

Though casualties are expected to increase dramatically, of those killed and injured, AAA managed to identify 21 victims (17 killed and 4 injured) by name and address so far.

No.	Name of victim	Place of attack	Outcome of attack
1	Tensaeneh Gebayehu	Shewa Robit (Zuti)	Killed

2	Geto (father's name unconfirmed)	Shewa Robit (Zuti)	Killed
3	Bizuayehu Getaneh	Shewa Robit (Zuti)	Killed
4	Sintayehu (father's name unconfirmed)	Shewa Robit (Zuti)	Killed
5	Abush Gebeyaw	Shewa Robit (Zuti)	Killed
6	Abebe (father's name unconfirmed)	Shewa Robit (Zuti)	Killed
7	Getaneh Awugachew	Mentekie Sherefa	Killed
8	Maru Lemma	Mentekie Sherefa	Killed
9	Aslelf Zhekale	Mentekie Sherefa	Killed
10	Endashaw Zegeye	Mentekie Sherefa	Killed
11	Derb (father's name unconfirmed)	Efratana Gidim	Killed
12	Alemayehu Eshete	Ataye	Killed
13	Mamush Habtie	Ataye	Killed
14	Maru (father's name unconfirmed)	Ataye	Killed
15	Shume Yifru	Ataye	Killed
16	Minyelu (father's name unconfirmed)	Ataye	Killed
17	Arega (father's name unconfirmed)	Ataye	Killed
18	Chole Alemayehu	Mentekie Sherefa	Injured
19	Belete Asfaw	Mentekie Sherefa	Injured
20	Abebe Tadesse	Mentekie Sherefa	Injured
21	Abush Mengistu	Negeso Kebele	Injured

About Amhara Association of America (AAA)

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) is a non-profit civic organization located in Charlotte, North Carolina that investigates and documents human rights atrocities and repression against Amharas in Ethiopia. AAA seeks to inform U.S. policymakers, international human rights organizations, media, and all Ethiopian stakeholders to pressure Ethiopian leaders to change laws, policies, and practices in Ethiopia so perpetrators are held accountable and victims receive justice. AAA also collaborates with Amhara organizations in the U.S., supports independent Amhara organizations in Ethiopia, and provides humanitarian aid for Amharas impacted due to targeted ethnic attacks. AAA's funding comes directly from members and supporters; the organization is not affiliated with any Ethiopian or American political or governmental entities.

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