



Update on Developments in Ethiopia: Amhara Protests, Mass Arrests and Ongoing Crimes of OLA – May 14th, 2023

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has verified that as of May 14th, 2023, the Abiy regime and the Oromo-led Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) has continued its attack on various towns in Amhara Region. On May 14th, 2023, anti-government protests were held in Alamata and Lalibela towns. Federal and regional security forces have continued mass arrests of Amharas in Addis Ababa, Amhara Region and Oromia Region. Lastly, the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) has perpetrated abductions and property destruction in Oromia and Amhara Regions. Updates based on AAA's independent investigations and assorted reports from independent media outlets are compiled below.

- According to multiple media reports, anti-government protests were held on May 14th, 2023 in Alamata and Lalibela cities (North Wollo Zone, Amhara Region). In Alamata (Raya Alamata Woreda, North Wollo Zone) large-scale protests were held calling for immediate recognition of recognition of the Amhara identity of residents of Raya, an area which was occupied by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) for many years and which experienced countless large-scale atrocities against ethnic Amhara residents both historically and during the war in Northern

Ethiopia which began in November 2020.¹ Similar protests were held in the Raya area in recent weeks/months.² Anti-government protests were also held in Lalibela town (Last Woreda, North Wollo Zone) on May 14th, following attempts by Prosperity Party agents to intimidate and blackmail residents to participate in a pro-government rally.³

- According to multiple media reports, public health specialist and social media activist Ermias Mekuriya was abducted by security forces in Addis Ababa city on May 12th, 2023.⁴ Ermias was reportedly on his way to the Merkato area to purchase supplies for IDPs in Debre Birhan (North Shewa Zone, Amhara Region) who survived genocidal massacres and ethnic cleansing in western Oromia Region.
- According to media reports, Awoke Senshaw was abducted from his home in the Lideta sub-city of Addis Ababa.⁵ Awoke had been missing for 9 days since the date of the media report (May 12th, 2023). Awoke worked at the Ethiopian Commercial Bank and was an executive of the bank workers' association, and he did not have any political involvement. Mekonnen Ayele was abducted from the Arada sub-city of Addis Ababa.⁶ At the time of the report, Mekonnen had been missing for 15 days.
- AAA has verified that on May 5th, 2023, civilians travelling from Sire Woreda to Nekemte town in East Wollega Zone were abducted by OLA militants. Originally, six people were abducted including 4 men and 2 women. Among them, one person managed to escape and the two women were later released, while the remaining three men were still being held captive.

1. Mendis Andualem (M) - escaped

¹See AAA's reports on human rights violations committed in [Alamata](#) and [Kobo](#).

²See protests in Raya from [March 19, 2023](#) and in early [April 2023](#).

³See media report from [Ethio-251](#) on May 14th, 2023

⁴See media reports from [Ethio-251](#) and [Roha Media](#)

⁵See media [report](#) from Ethio-251 on May 12th, 2023

⁶See media [report](#) from Ethio-251 on May 14th, 2023

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2. Wibayehu Arage (F) - released
 3. Tibeltalech Damtie (F) - released
 4. Wondifiraw Biresaw (M) - still being held hostage
 5. Getasew (M) - still being held hostage
 6. unidentified male victim, still being held hostage
- AAA verified that on May 8th, 2023, federal security forces arrested two Amhara men in Anger Gutin town while they were having lunch in a hotel. One of the captives was later released.

1. Mohammed Sayed (M) - still under arrest
2. Mohammed Ahmed (M) - released

Similarly, according to local residents, since last December, arbitrary arrests continued in the area, and detainees were held in custody for long periods without appearing in court. Sources also reported that a large number of defense forces have been deployed this week in the area and that there is a threat of attack targeting the Amhara community. Though the residents did not know the reason, this week, all of the detainees were taken to Nekemte city, the capital of East Wollega Zone.

- Earlier this week, OLA militants carried out another attack in Meqi town in East Shewa Zone (Oromia Region). According to sources, no casualties were reported as a result of the attack, however, at least 3 vehicles were burned. Similarly, locals reported repeated attacks by the OLA militants against vehicle drivers in the area between Wolenchiti and Metehara towns of East Shewa Zone. Sources were unable to identify the exact number of victims, their identities and where in the country they were coming from.

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- According to reporting by Ethio-News, the situation has become less tense in Gonder city as nightly gunshots stopped since the night of May 11th, 2023.⁷ The ENDF has also been returning to its camp. In Shewa Robit, the arrests continued including two youths arrested on May 11th and an additional four were arrested on May 10th, 2023, but they have not been brought before court. In Yimlwo Kebele, located in the area surrounding Ataye, the Oromo ENDF undertook a heavy artillery attack. The attacks have also been accompanied by house-to-house searches and harassment. In Jewha, OLA have been detaching tin and other materials from residents' houses to sell. In Woldia, bombs were thrown into the house of the Gubalafto Woreda administrator by unknown assailants. The bomb did not explode and there were no casualties. However, a bomb was mistakenly thrown at his neighbor resulting in the injury of two people. In Kobo town, over 23 youth were arbitrarily arrested.
 - According to a report by Emat Gurage Media, on May 12th, 2023, Oromia Region security personnel killed three civilians and injured a fourth after their homes were demolished on an ethnic basis.⁸ The deceased victims include Mr. Mohammed Abdela, his wife, Lebiba Jemal and their pregnant neighbor Lubaba Belatu. The survivor was Lubaba's spouse who sustained injuries. The incident reportedly occurred in the Sebeta sub-city on the outskirts of Addis Ababa city. The ethnic-based demolition occurred on May 11th, 2023 and while the victims prepared to retrieve their belongings and return to the rural areas of Gurage Zone (Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region) however they were able to secure temporary housing. Despite this, the Oromia Region forces arrived at their temporary residence at night, broke in and murdered Mohammed and Lebiba, and then opened fire on Lubaba and her husband.

⁷See media [report](#) from Ethio-News on May 12, 2023

⁸See media [report](#) from Emat Gurage Media on May 13th, 2023

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- Multiple media sources reported that on May 12th, 2023, official of woreda 8 of Kirkos sub-city, Alebachew Amogne, was shot dead in his office.⁹ Thereafter he was transported to Zewditu Hospital for medical treatment but despite this, he succumbed to his injuries. A suspect was arrested in connection with the murder.
 - In an interview with Addis Dimts media on May 12th, 2023, Commander of the East Amhara Fano, Mirae Wedajo stated they (Fano) are under attack by Oromia Region forces of Oromia Region President Shimelis Abdisa wearing uniforms of the ENDF.¹⁰ Fano Mirae also denied accusations against him by the Prosperity Party of involvement in the assassination of Amhara Prosperity Party head, Girma Yeshitila.

⁹See media [report](#) from Amhara Media Center on May 12th, 2023

¹⁰See media [report](#) from Addis Dimts on May 12th, 2023

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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