



## **Killings and physical injuries of civilians by the Oromo dominated ENDF in Dembecha, Jiga and Finote Selam towns (West Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia) on June 11 and 12, 2023**

### **Overview**

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has conducted investigation into the killings and physical injuries of civilians in Dembecha, Jiga and Finote Selam – West Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region – by Oromo-dominated *Ethiopian National Defense Force* (ENDF) and local police (in Finote Selam). As of Sunday, June 11, 2023 around 6:00 pm, members of the ENDF opened fire in Dembecha city, alleging that they are pursuing members of the *Amhara Popular Front* (APF) and local Fano members. In this incident, AAA was able to verify the death of three civilians and the physical injury of 15 others in name.

On the next day, aggrieved by the incident, the residents of Dembecha town, joined by Jiga and Finote Selam cities conducted protests calling for the withdrawal of ENDF from Dembecha and other Amhara cities. In the interim, local police and members of the ENDF tried to curve the peaceful protest in Finote Selam through shooting at protestors and anyone else found in the street. In this incident AAA was able to identify names of

---

one killed victim and names of an additional ten civilians who sustained physical injuries. The detail of the report, the background (including area and thematic context) and findings of the investigation is elaborated as follows.

**Background: area and thematic context of the investigation**

The town of Dembecha is located in the West Gojjam Zone of Amhara Region in Ethiopia. Though small, its residents are known for being politically engaged and vocal on national and social issues affecting the Amhara community. Since Prime Minister Abiy and his Oromo Prosperity Party came to power, residents in this area have been at the forefront of the Amhara resistance including participating in peaceful demonstrations denouncing the regime’s repressive policies. This investigative report identifies two factors that prompted the latest round of local resistance: one, Prosperity Party’s decisions to disarm the Amhara Region forces (Liyu Hail) in early April 2023 which served as a pretext to deploy the Oromo dominated ENDF in Dembecha and other Amhara Region cities, and the other is the decision taken by the joint military and security council after the Atse Melke Selassie Monastery massacre (found in Debre Elias Woreda, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region), marking Sheret Medhanialem Monastery (found in Dembecha Woreda of West Gojjam Zone) as their next target can be taken as the immediate one.

The government had targeted the Atse Melka Selassie Monastery, alleging that Eskinder Nega, journalist, human rights defender and coordinator of the recently established group, the APF, and his collaborators were there, then the ENDF proceeded to kill dozens of religious persons (hermits, religious students, orphaned children, and pilgrims) and destroyed the monastery itself. After the so-called military operation and religious-oriented massacre, they issued a press release stating “*the success*” of the operation and that what remained was to “*apprehend Eskinder*”, adding that he had managed to evade them but that they were in pursuit

---

Observers shared their fears that the ENDF’s next target under the guise of chasing Eskinder and Fano was to be the Sheret Medhanialem Monastery. And in fact, their fear began to materialize in the aftermath of the Atse Melka Selassie Monastery tragedy, the ENDF immediately began turning its face to Dembecha and started to deploy infantry soldiers. They also established their military base a week before the incident in the city.

**The incident in Dembecha City and AAA’s finding: killings and physical injuries of civilians**

Since Sunday, June 11, 2023 at around 6-11 pm, as per AAA’s sources, by taking the night as a safe avenue for their activities, the Oromo dominated ENDF opened fire on residents of Dembecha town, alleging that there was Fano and APF allies in the city. AAA verified from sources, that members of the ENDF also fired heavy artilleries on the city residents. While explaining the situation, one of the residents of the city witnessed the following:

*“I was coming back to Dembecha from Debre Markos; while I arrived at Dembecha the situation had totally changed: there were sounds of large gunshots in the city; I also saw military personnel [persons wearing ENDF uniforms] shoot at a taxi assistant and another daily worker (laborer). Regrettably, they killed the daily worker though he asked them not to shoot him by loudly stating his innocence.”*

In this incident, AAA was able to verify the killings of 3 individuals and the physical injury of 15 others, who are identified in the list of names herein below.

No.	Name of Victim	Sex	Age	Outcome	Kebele	Remark
1	Yinebeb Melse	M	30	Death	Abidenber (rural kebele)	Referred to Debre Markos Hospital
2	Hunegnaw Manie	M	35	Death	1	
3	Melaku Sema	M	24	Death	2	

---

4	Zelalem Nibret	M	24	Bodily injury	1
5	Temesgen Gedefaw	M	20	Bodily injury	1
6	Yikeber Dagnaw	M	32	Bodily injury	1
7	Tasachew Eskahun	M	30	Bodily injury	1
8	Zegeye Hailu	M	30	Bodily injury	2
9	Habtamu Gizachew	M	27	Bodily injury	Godber (rural kebele)
10	Simeneh Kefale	M	30	Bodily injury	2
11	Melsew Temesgen	M	38	Bodily injury	1
12	Muluye Tsegaw	M	25	Bodily injury	Yechereka (kebele city)
13	Ashebir Abatyihun	M	28	Bodily injury	Lejet (rural kebele)
14	Yilachew Abatyihun	M	35	Bodily injury	Lejet (rural kebele)
15	Abebaw Atinafu	M	35	Bodily injury	Lejet (rural kebele)
16	Misganaw Getinet	M	30	Bodily injury	2
17	Azanaw Yeyehu	M	35	Bodily injury	1
18	Amare Addis	M	35	Bodily injury	2

### **The spread of the protest to Jiga and Finote Selam towns**

On June 12, 2023, aggrieved by the horrific measure taken by the Oromo dominated ENDF on Dembecha civilians a day prior, neighboring Jiga and Finote Selam cities expressed their anger through protests. In expounding the situation in Finote Selam, one of AAA’s sources, who participated in the protest, stated the following:

*“We were expressing our grievance on the measures taken by the ENDF a day earlier on civilians in Dembecha; we were also condemning the inhuman measures taken by this body in Atse Melka Selassie Monastery [and religious persons and any individuals found there]. In the interim, the police and ENDF, by wearing the local security force uniforms, have taken forceful measures on us, including firing bullets on us and anyone found on the street; I saw them shoot a girl in her workplace while she was selling coffee in front of a hotel named Semaria.”*

On the same day, the ENDF was also attempting to bring additional military forces from the direction of Finote Selam to Dembecha, however, residents of Jiga town alleging that

this force is coming to continue what they did in Dembecha city; prevented the new force from entering into the targeted area and achieving its mission by closing the main road. Protesters in Finote Selam and youths also did the same; as a result, *“the main road connecting Finote Selam, Jiga, Dembecha and Debre Markos cities has been closed to incapacitate ENDF from bringing additional force”*, said another AAA source.

AAA learned from sources, in the aforementioned indiscriminate attack, one individual was killed (Ashara media reported 5 deaths in the incident) and ten others sustained physical injuries, identified in the list of names stated herein below.

No.	Name of Victim	Sex	Age	Outcome	Kebele	Remark
1	Ayanna Amanu	M	20	Death	1	
2	Asresie Andualem	F		Bodily injury	1	
3	Tsegaye Yirsie	M		Bodily injury	1	
4	Anteneh Mekuria	M	28	Bodily injury	2	
5	Ermias Yeshewas	M		Bodily injury	Enkoqima	
6	Yeneakal Alemu	M	21	Bodily injury	2	
7	Muluken Tilahun	M	28	Bodily injury	2	
8	Genanaw Mengistu	M	29	Bodily injury		Referral to Bahir Dar Tibebe Ghion Specialized Hospital
9	Animut Amanu	M	23	Bodily injury		Referral to Bahir Dar Felege Hiwot Referral Hospital
10	Shibabaw Nibret	M	31	Bodily injury	2	
11	Yechale Demeke	M	22	Bodily injury	2	

---

## 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.

- Contact us via Email: [info@amharaamerica.org](mailto:info@amharaamerica.org)
- Visit our website at [www.AmharaAmerica.org](http://www.AmharaAmerica.org)
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
- Subscribe to our [Telegram Channel](#) and contact us on Telegram via:  
+1-404-458-7046
- To make donations: <https://www.amharaamerica.org/get-involved>

