



Ethnic-based Massacre of Amhara IDPs and civilians by Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in Anno town (Gobuseyo Woreda, East Wollega Zone, Oromia Region, Ethiopia)

Executive Summary

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has undertaken a human rights investigation over a reported ethnic-based massacre of Amhara civilians on February 2nd, 2023, in Anno town (Gobuseyo Woreda, East Wollega Zone, Oromia Region, Ethiopia) by the *Oromo Liberation Army* (OLA). From interviews with several eyewitnesses, survivors, and victims' families as well as examining photographs and videos, AAA has verified the attack by the OLA militants left at least 41 Amhara IDPs and residents of Anno town killed and an additional 12 suffering injuries ranging in severity between minor to serious. In addition, the militants were engaged in extensive looting and destruction of houses and properties belonging to Amhara civilians. The massacre was ethnic-based, only Amharas and their properties were selectively targeted and attacked. The attack was indiscriminate in nature and targeted anyone with an Amhara identity regardless of age, sex, and disability. Significant numbers of victims are IDPs forcibly displaced from the town's surrounding rural kebeles following similar ethnic-based attacks by OLA, especially in October 2022. The *Ethiopian Human Rights Commission* (EHRC) also reported about the

same incident that the OLA militants killed 50 people of which 42 were IDPs displaced from 13 kebeles (11 kebeles in Gobuseyo Woreda and 2 from surrounding woredas) and 8 others were injured. The EHRC also said that ethnic Amharas were selectively killed on grounds of their identities. The EHRC also reported that the militants extensively looted properties including from an IDP camp.

The Ethnic-based Massacre

According to testimonies from eyewitnesses and victims' families, the heavily armed OLA militants came in large numbers and entered Anno town on February 2nd, 2023, at around 5:20 a.m. which faced little resistance from local security forces and private gun owners who were both under-equipped and outnumbered. After the OLA entered the town, they immediately began attacking Amhara residents and properties. The exact number of casualties was estimated differentially across different sources. Tilahun Kassa (name changed), a resident of Anno town and an eyewitness of the attack, estimated the number of killed Amhara civilians to be beyond 100. However, AAA could only verify the killing of 41 Amhara civilians and injury of an additional 12.

Hailu Shewaye (name changed) who participated in the recovery and burial of victims' dead bodies shared his assessment of the casualties with AAA:

“I personally counted 42 dead people. 30 of them are Muslims, I organized the burial procession they buried them in mass graves in the Muslim cemetery located in Anno [town]. We buried 3 dead bodies in a grave. 9 others are [Orthodox] Christians buried in [St.] George Church’s graveyard. Unfortunately, two dead bodies one by the name of Muhammad Omer were eaten by hyenas. I also know 12 injured people being cared for at Nekemte Hospital.”

Other survivors and eyewitnesses including Ahmed Yimam (name changed) and Sofia Yosef (name changed) told AAA similar things with this testimony.

The massacre was both ethnic-based and indiscriminate. As AAA has verified from eyewitnesses, survivors, and victims' families, the OLA militants targeted only Amharas on grounds of their identities. Local collaborators of the militants helped them by locating Amhara houses, and then they broke into the houses and killed anyone regardless of age, sex, disability, or other grounds once they believed their targets had an Amhara identity. The youngest known victim who was killed by gunshots with 4 of his family members is an 8-month-old only infant named Minale Masresha. His brother-in-law, Hailu Gedamu (name changed) told AAA *“this infant and his likes’ only crime was being born Amhara.”* Other types of vulnerable such as the oldest female victim Aynalem Ambaw (70) and Tesfaye (last name unknown), a mentally disabled man were also killed on grounds of their ethnic identity. Most of the victims were killed and injured while they hid and stayed home, by the assailants who went house-to-house. In such ways, multiple family members, including Masreshaw Amare’s five family members, were killed. The method of the killings in most of the cases was by gunshots whereas in some instances there was stabbing and slathering with knives.

Haile Gedamu whose displaced father-in-law, Masreshaw Amare’s five family members were killed told AAA how the massacre was ethnic-based and indiscriminate and mentioned the saddening story of his hard-hit father-in-law’s family:

“We were four together in a house. They broke into the house we were in. They held light firearms; they wore Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and Oromo Special Force (OSF) uniforms. Their hair is braided like women’s hair. They talk to each other in Oromiffa (the language of the Oromo people). When just I saw them approaching, I rolled out and escaped as our

militias (state militias) provided me cover. But my father, Alebachew Yesuf who was with me was shot to death, in the head. The third, Kemal Mohammed (35) was also killed by a gunshot in his chest. The fourth, Ibrahim Indris (25) survived but was injured. They shot him in the thigh.”

Sayed Tesfaye (name changed) whose father, Alebachew Yesuf was killed and witnessed the massacre told AAA how his father and others were killed and described the appearance of the OLA militants:

“It happened on February 2nd, 2023. They (OLA) began flooding Anno [town] beginning from 5:20 a.m. They were large in size. The very few militias (Oromia state militias) and private gun-holders could not resist them as they were outnumbered. Then they went shop-to-shop, house-to-house, looting and killing Amharas. Myself and seven others were hiding in my home. They (OLA) were coming for us. But fortunately, a few of our militias (ethnic Amhara militias within the Oromia state militias) defended us. They gave up pursuing us when they fired at them. But, they went to my father-in-law’s house where six people including him were hiding. They broke the house by force and killed five of them while the sixth one survived by a miracle. The head of the family, Masreshaw Amare (42), and the wife, Yeshawa Fenta (35) were shot in their chests. Their children, Gashaw Masreshaw (8) and Abraham Masreshaw (3) were shot in their belly, and the youngest one who was only 8-months-old, Minale Masreshaw, was shot in his groin. They are all dead. The sixth one is wounded and survived. His name is Sitotaw Masresha (12). They (OLA) fired at him intending to kill him. Fortunately, the bullets shot him in his right hand, and then he fell over the other dead bodies. Then, they (OLA) left him alive believing everyone was dead. Another of my neighbors, Aba Worku (55) and his 15-year-old son, Abdella Worku, and his wife Emaway Yimer (45) were also all killed at their home.”

Another eyewitness, Ahmed Yimam also spoke about his witnessing the attack and recalled both the appearance of the perpetrators and details on the ethnic-based massacre:

“Most of us here (Anno town) are displaced from [surrounding] rural kebeles. We are also being attacked even here. My family and I were hiding in our house. When they attempted to come against us, our militias (state militias) forced them to abandon attacking us. I got out of my home for a little while and saw them (OLA). They wore uniforms of militias (state militias), Special Forces (OSF), and the Defense forces (ENDF). They had heavy weapons. They spoke Oromiffa. They killed many people. I personally buried 30 dead bodies in the Muslim cemetery. I also saw five members of a Christian family all killed inside a house. They got local Oromo youth to guide them to Amhara houses. Based on such collaboration they broke into many Amhara houses and killed them inside.”



(a)



(b)

Figure 1: Collected dead bodies of victims of the massacre while they were ready for burial.

Below is list of victims killed and injured by OLA on February 2nd, 2023, in Anno town (Gobuseyo Woreda, East Wollega Zone, Oromia Region, Ethiopia)

No.	Victim Name	Sex	Age	Outcome of incident
1	Masreshaw Amare	M	42	Death
2	Yeshwa Fentaw	F	35	Death
3	Gashaw Masresha	M	8	Death
4	Abraham Masreshaw	M	3	Death
5	Minale Masreshaw	M	8 months	Death
6	Dawid Adem	M	50	Death

7	Sayed Mulat	M	45	Death
8	Sheikh Sayed Hussein	M	42	Death
9	Alebachew Yesuf	M	50	Death
10	Kemal Mohammed Abrie	M	28	Death
11	Hassan Ayalew	M	25	Death
12	Dawid Ayalew	M	20	Death
13	Aba Worku	M	55	Death
14	Emaway Yimer	F	45	Death
15	Ibrahim Siraj	M	39	Death
16	Jemberu Ejigu	M	30	Death
17	Merem Indris	F	28	Death
18	Tade Abdella	M	35	Death
19	Gashaw Kibret	M	41	Death
20	Mohammed Ismail	M	24	Death
21	Molla Adem	M	25	Death
22	Fentaw Assefa	M	52	Death
23	Abdu Sufyan	M	32	Death
24	Mohammed Kasim	M	12	Death
25	Hussein Abebaw	M	31	Death
26	Rahima Tadege	F	8	Death
27	Abdela Indris	M	21	Death
28	Mohammed Yibrie	M	25	Death
29	Aman Seyd	M	30	Death
30	Abdu Seyd	M	27	Death
31	Muhammed Omer	M		Death
32	Abdella Worku	M	5	Death
33	Adem Molle	M		Death

34	Tesfaye Aleneh	M	37	Death
35	Selam Belay	F	36	Death
36	Aynalem Ambaw	F	70	Death
37	Asnakech Tarekegn	F	65	Death
38	Dessaiegn Tarekegn	M	60	Death
39	Tesfaye (mentally disabled)	M		Death
40	Yenus (last name unknown)	M		Death
41	Ali Yimer (last name unknown)	M		Death
42	Ibrahim Indris	M	25	injury
43	Toyba Ayalew	F	21	injury
44	Belay Admasu	M	50	injury
45	Tadesse Belay	M	22	injury
46	Indris Debas	M	50	injury
47	Mekya Ahmed	F	29	injury
48	Adem Ahmed	M	40	injury
49	Tilahun Mohammed	M	42	injury
50	Ibrahim Demele	M	31	injury
51	Sufyan Hussein	M	60	injury
52	Adem Mohammed	M	32	injury
53	Sitotaw Masreshaw	M	12	injury

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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