



## **Update on Developments in Ethiopia – July 18, 2023**

### **Executive Summary**

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has verified as of July 18th, 2023, ethnic-based human rights violations have continued targeting ethnic Amharas in Ethiopia. The Abiy regime has continued its genocidal war on Amharas, and similar targeted has continued in Addis Ababa, Oromia and Benishangul-Gumuz Regions of Ethiopia.

### **Update on War in Amhara Region and Related Developments**

- Since the week of July 10, 2023, military operations reintensified in various parts of North Wollo Zone including Raya Kobo, Lasta, Gidan and Guba Lafto Woredas In response, intense fighting broke out between local members of East Amhara Fano and the ENDF in and around Raya Kobo Woreda.
- Since July 12, 2023, fighting between East Amhara Fano and the ENDF was documented in Arebete, Denkuan Terara, and Teze. On the night of July 12th, the Fano even managed to free over 45 Fano who were detained.
- Since July 10, 2023, AAA identified names of four civilians killed and four others injured in the Raya Kobo Woreda area by ENDF, however sources reported at least

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seven deaths and nine injuries overall.

1. Alemu Kebede (40) - Killed
  2. Biniam Dawit (28) - Killed
  3. Ashenafi Fentaw (22) - Killed
  4. Moges Kassaye (40) - Killed
  5. Assefa Adane - Injured
  6. Gashaw (last name unknown) - Injured
  7. Melese (last name unknown) - Injured
  8. Zelalem Addise - Injured
- Intense fighting was also documented in the Muja and Gidan Woredas of North Wollo Zone in which casualties were reported on both sides including five government combatants and two Fano.
  - Intense fighting has been reported in Wegdi Woreda of South Wollo Zone since July 16, 2023.
  - On July 14, 2023, Chief of Police in Debre Birhan city (North Shewa Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia), Minweyelet Chinkelo was assassinated by unknown gunmen. Following the police chief's death, tensions have risen in the city.
  - According to Amhara Media Center, on July 18, 2023, Fano took full control of Maksegnit town in Central Gonder Zone (Amhara Region, Ethiopia) from ENDF after freeing a detained Fano member.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See media [report](#) from Amhara Media Center on July 18, 2023.

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## July 7, 2023 Gilgel Beles Massacre

- On Friday, July 7th, 2023, Gumuz militants open an attack on ethnic Amhara residents of Gilgel Beles town located in Mandura Woreda of Metekel Zone (Benishangul-Gumuz Region, Ethiopia). AAA was able to verify killings of 13 civilians, physical injury of 7 others, and displacement of many others from the area.<sup>2</sup> AAA identified names of seven deceased victims.
  1. Nuredin Ali (M, 11)
  2. Harun Indris (M, 40)
  3. Geta Abera (M, 38)
  4. Ibrahim Chanie (M, 29)
  5. Ashenafi Abate (M, 22)
  6. Eshete Wubet (M, 34)
  7. Felegush Worku (F, 31)
- The incident occurred despite ENDF being stationed a short distance away. The ENDF took no proactive or reactive measures to protect citizens.
- In August 2022, a joint peace enforcement agreement was reached between the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz Regional Governments to deploy Amhara Special Forces (ASF) which allowed for residents to live in relative peace until in April 2023, the Abiy Ahmed-led OPP regime moved to disarm and disband the ASF. Following the dissolution of the ASF, the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional Government invited Gumuz rebel groups to settle in a place called China Camp.
- Following the Gilgel Beles massacre, several human rights organizations and media agencies issued reports.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>AAA issued a brief [update](#) on this incident on July 12, 2023.

<sup>3</sup>The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) issued a [press statement](#) regarding violence and

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## Incidents in Oromia Region

- On July 14, 2023, Oromia Region Special Forces (OSF) shot and killed three Amhara brothers in an area called Salayish in Dera Woreda located in North Shewa Zone (Oromia Region, Ethiopia).<sup>4</sup> The brothers were travelling to Gundo Mesqel (administrative capital of Dera Woreda) to seek medical assistance for one of the brothers who was facing a physical injury. The three victims were identified as follows:

1. Ayele Kumel
2. Talema Kumel
3. Damtew Kumel

- On July 15, 2023, a young man was shot in an area called Cheka in Dera Woreda of North Shewa Zone (Oromia Region, Ethiopia). The young man was a driver identified as Tadiye Kassegn (between 20-25 years old) sustained injuries from the shooting.
- On July 11, 2023, Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) militants attacked civilians in a small town called Mechara located in Hawa-Gelan Woreda in Qellem Wollega Zone (Oromia Region, Ethiopia). The OLA militants killed at least three civilians, injured several others, and looted property in the town including banks.<sup>5</sup> Three of the victims were identified as follows:

1. Ali Sayed (father of five children, over 35 years old)
2. Ayalew Yimer (father of four children, over 35 years old)
3. Amenan (an ethnic Oromo driver between 20-25 years old)

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casualties in Benishangul-Gumuz Region on July 13, 2023. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRC) issued a [statement](#) on July 12, 2023. DW Amharic published an [article](#) on July 10, 2023.

<sup>4</sup>AAA previously issued a [report](#) on large-scale targeted attacks of ethnic Amhara civilians in Dera Woreda by Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) militants in 2022.

<sup>5</sup>According to an [article](#) published by DW Amharic on July 13th, seven civilians were killed in Mechara.

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## Incidents in Addis Ababa

- According to Amhara Media Center (AMC), on July 15, 2023, the Sheger city administration has begun confiscating *bajaj* vehicles (three wheeled rickshaw-like taxis).<sup>6</sup> According to sources, it has been over a week since the vehicles were confiscated and authorities demanded owners brought documents from the Gelan administration. Thus far, over 500 *bajaj* vehicles have been confiscated.
- On July 13, 2023, over twenty Amhara prisoners of conscience who faced torture under the court record of Melak Misale and others were brought before the Federal Higher Court, Lideta Branch First Anti-Terrorism and Constitutional Court.<sup>7</sup>
  - The court adjourned the case to July 23, 2023 to decide whether to grant bail to the victims after the left-seating judge was not present due to health issues and to review a report on torture from the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC).
  - The victims pleaded before the court that, “*we are arrested for our Amhara identity, not because we committed any crime so we shouldn’t be denied of speedy justice for such trivial reasons.*” They also plead before the court that it is to give necessary order on the torture and gross human rights violations against them in the military camp of OSF located in Gelan, Sheger City.
  - One of the tortured detainees told his lawyer, Tewodros Woldemichael about the torture “*In this human rights violation (torture), a fetus was aborted, a life was terminated, but no killing happened as part of the crimes we are suspected of.*”
  - One of the tortured and detained Amhara victims, Ermias Mekuria also spoke before the court saying “*All this misery is happened to us because we are*

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<sup>6</sup>See media [report](#) from independent outlet Amhara Media Center (AMC) on July 15, 2023

<sup>7</sup>See related media reports from [Amhara Media Center](#) and [Ashara Media](#).

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*Amhara. We were beaten and flogged for our Amhara identity. They had taken us to Gelan and abused us as Amharas. We are happy to pay (for this identity) and have been paying for this. Our issue is in the politicians' hands, not under the judges' because judges have been removed and political appointees have replaced them. This proves we are arrested for our Amhara identity and our arrest is politically motivated. The impartiality of the court is questionable in our eyes as we believe such a long political hand is stretched on our case. So from now on we have no trust in the court."*

- Originally, the tortured and detained victims were 28 in number of which 8 of them were released gradually on bail.
- According to Roha Media, on July 13, 2023, prisoner of conscience and youth supporter of opposition party Balderas for True Democracy (Balderas) Biniam Tadesse was transported from Semera (Afar Region) to Nazreth Police Station in Oromia Region.<sup>8</sup> Advocates had called for Biniam to be returned to Addis Ababa after being detained for over 40 days.
- According to Amhara Media Center (AMC), on July 12, 2023, an ethnic Amhara by the name of Birhanu Nigus was abducted by ENDF and Federal Police personnel from his home in Yeka Mikael in the Yeka sub-city of Addis Ababa. The government security forces reportedly entered his home and his whereabouts have been unknown since the incident.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>See media [report](#) from independent outlet Roha Media on July 13, 2023.

<sup>9</sup>See media [report](#) from independent outlet Amhara Media Center (AMC) on July 13, 2023.

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## 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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