



## **Update on Developments in Ethiopia, Amhara Resistance and the Abiy Regime’s Military Operation – May 7th, 2023**

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has verified that on May 7th, 2023, the Abiy Ahmed-led *Oromo Prosperity Party* (OPP) regime has intensified its war on the Amhara people of Ethiopia. The regime has deployed the Oromo-dominated *Ethiopian National Defense Forces* (ENDF) to various localities of the North Gonder, North Wollo and North Shewa Zones of the Amhara Region as part of a “law enforcement operation” to disarm *Amhara Special Forces* (ASF) and Fano (volunteer, non-state militias). In response, heavy fighting has broke out between the ENDF and Amhara forces. Since the start of the operation, there have been mounting reports of human rights violations including indiscriminate shelling of civilians, property destruction, arbitrary arrests and house-to-house searches. In parallel, abuses have continued in other parts of the country including by the Oromo ENDF and other armed groups, namely the *Oromo Liberation Army* (OLA) also known as the *Oromo Liberation Front* (OLF) Shene. According to media reports, the *Tigray People’s Liberation Front* (TPLF) is mobilizing on the northern Welkait and Raya fronts to launch invasions into the Amhara Region and to capture these areas. The reports indicate that some of the TPLF soldiers are wearing ENDF uniforms and they are mobilizing heavy artillery and armaments indicating they were not disarmed

---

in accordance with the Pretoria agreement. Verified updates are provided below, however this is not intended to be an exhaustive list of incidents:

- The OPP-led ENDF operations against prominent Fano leaders exacerbated public outrage and protests including strikes and road blockades throughout Gonder city and various areas within the North Gonder Zone (Amhara Region, Ethiopia). In addition, the ENDF shelled civilian populations causing dozens of casualties and property destruction. In South Gonder Zone, authorities arrested two members of opposition party, *National Movement of Amhara* (NaMA). Meanwhile in areas to the north, the TPLF is mobilizing its troops to invade and attack the Welkait and Telemt areas.
  - The ENDF troops was heading to areas like Dabat, Ajire Janora, Wegera, Debark, and Zarima targeting prominent Fano figures. After the Prime Minister’s call for “Ethiopians” to support the so-called “law enforcement operation” the government is taking in the Amhara Region in his inaugural speech at Halala Kela-a Gebeta Lehager Project in South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region, the tension was escalating across the region including in Gonder town.
  - Since May 4th, 2023, in Gonder and Debark cities, there was a two-day stay-at-home public strike in which transportation services were interrupted, and major business areas were closed with the aim of protesting the Abiy Ahmed-led Federal government’s attack against Fanos on the pretext of “law enforcement operation”, and deployment of ENDF soldiers across the Amhara Region. The strike was accompanied by road blockage to cut off the transportation of military supplies.
  - The strike was a peaceful protest demanding an end to government measures that targeted Fanos and withdrew its newly deployed forces, especially the

---

ENDF to return to its camps. However, both in Gonder and Debark, the government forces start firing and beating people. Due to these brutal acts of the government forces, civilians were killed and wounded.

- In Gonder alone, sources reported that at least six civilians are shot dead, and more than 10 individuals are injured.
- In Debark town the government brutality continues, and its forces killed a person with a disability (with hearing impairment) named Balemual Gebre, and two other individuals are severely injured and admitted to the University of Gonder Referral Hospital.
- In Gedebye and Amba Giyorgis, at least two civilians are shot died, and many are injured.
- According to sources from the hospital, a total of 18 civilians are referred and admitted to the University of Gonder Referral Hospital due to critical nature of injury they sustained.
- Starting from May 7th, 2023, the transport service and business operations are resumed both in Gonder and Debark cities. However, the tensions are still high, and the ENDF have a continued presence everywhere in the town driving heavy artillery, pointing their weapons, and threatening the people.
- According to a media report from [Ethio News](#) on May 6, 2023, in Debre Tabor town (South Gonder Zone) two members of opposition party NaMA were arrested. One of the victims is named Abebe Moges, a worker at the town's Culture and Tourism Office (third day since his arrest) and the other is Melkamu Tassie, a teacher at Ebinat High School. Both are accused of disseminating information that Fano is encircled using social media and causing the dispersion of the ASF by disseminating false information using the same platform.

- 
- Ethio-News also reports that the TPLF’s army 13 is mobilized to Enda Ababa Guna and Dedebeit (Tigray Region) to attack and capture the Welkait and Telemt areas. The members of TPLF’s army 13 are reportedly wearing ENDF uniforms and saying they are about to move to Welkait to help the ENDF in its fight with Fano.
  - AAA has verified that on April 30th, 2023 the Abiy regime declared open war on the Amhara people in various parts of the Amhara Region. Following this, the ENDF initiated attacks on Amharas in North Shewa alleging that they are Fano members in Majete and Shewa Robit, Antsokiya Gemza, Yifat and Debre Sina areas and the surrounding areas of the North Shewa Zone (Amhara Region, Ethiopia).
    - In these areas, the ENDF has been using heavy artillery such as ZU-23, and mortar in attacking innocent citizens.
    - Following this, dozens of civilians were killed and injured, houses were shelled and property destroyed by the regime’s army.
    - Upon the composition of this update, sources confirmed that they heard the sound of heavy weapons on the outskirts of Debre Sina and Majete. In other places such as Shewa Robit and Yifat the attack of the ENDF had slowed in momentum.
    - Sources added that the regime is deploying more heavy weapons and soldiers with the view of more attacks against the Amhara people in these areas of the North Shewa Zone of the Amhara Region.
  - In Kobo town and the surrounding kebeles of Raya Kobo Woreda and Guba Lafto Woreda of the North Wollo Zone (Amhara Region, Ethiopia), the Abiy regime has been attacking civilians. In parallel, the TPLF is mobilizing its forces from Maychew (Tigray Region) to Raya (Amhara Region) to capture the territory.

- 
- In previous days regime soldiers were conducting house-to-house searches and confiscating licensed firearms.
  - They also detained over 20 youth in Kobo town alleging they are supporters of Fano.
  - In other kebeles of Raya Kobo Woreda including Zobel, Tekulesh, and Belago the regime has conducted military operations against the residents using heavy weapons, alleging they are Fano. Though sources are unable to know the number of killed and injured civilians, they reported the killing and injury of dozens in these areas.
  - Upon the composition of this report the situation is becoming calmer in Kobo town and surrounding areas with some sporadic clashes being heard.
  - In areas named Wonzit and surrounding areas of the Guba Lafto Woreda, heavy fighting has been underway between Amhara Fano and regime soldiers. It started on the morning of May 5th, 2023 and continued at the time of this update's composition.
  - The regime's army was using heavy artillery against civilians causing deaths and injuries. Following this, tension developed in Mersa, Wurgessa and Soldier areas of the North Wollo Zone. There are also sporadic clashes heard in these areas.
  - According to a media report from [Ethio News](#), despite the Pretoria agreement, the TPLF is sending its forces armed with heavy artillery and machine guns from Maychew town towards Alamata and Korem (Wag Hemra Zone). They are saying the federal government will hand over the towns and surrounding areas to them soon. Meanwhile, the ENDF is persecuting Amhara youth who are being accused of being members of Fano. On May 5, 2023, they were seen moving 80 and 120 mm canons from Maychew towards Korem. These signs

---

indicate that the TPLF in fact did not disarm in accordance with the Pretoria agreement.

- The AAA has verified that on May 3rd, 2023, government security forces attacked and killed two young shepherd boys and their five cattle in an area called Tuti, located in Dera Woreda (North Shewa Zone, Oromia Region, Ethiopia).
  - According to information from local residents, the attack was committed by government forces stationed in the area. At that time, 2 teenagers, not more than 15-years-old, were watering their cattle in the nearby river. At this moment, the government security forces had suddenly fired heavy weapons, resulting in the killing of these young herdsmen. In the same attack, both young herdsmen and their 5 cattle instantly died. According to local residents, both of the deceased victims were ethnic Amharas who were guarding their cattle near the river. Their names are:
    1. Turegn Habtiye
    2. Amare Merawi.
- The *Ethiopian Human Rights Council* (EHRCO) issued a statement on May 5, 2023 (Miyazia 27, 2015 EC) outlining the following points.
  - In its statement calling for attention to tensions in Amhara Region, it said - since the beginning of the month of April, protests and unrest followed throughout the region which led to casualties including death and serious bodily injury. In the protests which began in the region starting on April 10, 2023, at least 6 people were killed and over 10 people sustained serious injuries after they came out to protest according to EHRCO's information. Government security forces arrested a large number of people through illegal means accusing them of organizing protests in Dessie, Debre Markos, Bahir

---

Dar and other areas, and EHRCO has verified that they still have not been brought before court. EHRCO stated that the government is responsible for all conflict which took place in the Amhara Region and in EHRCO's May 5, 2023 (Miyazia 27, 2015 EC) statement, it called for relevant parties to carry out all necessary actions to stop the conflict.

- According to a media [report](#) from independent Amharic language media outlet, *Amhara Media Center* (AMC) on May 7, 2023 (Miyazia 29, 2015 EC), an ethnic Amhara man by the name of Habtamu Difru was arrested by government security forces on May 4th, 2023 in Gundo Meskel town of Dera Woreda (North Shewa Zone, Oromia Region). Details of the report are as follows:
  - Residents of Dera are being mass arrested for their Amhara identity without a court order including a soldier who was arrested in Gundo Meskel who served for over 10 years. His name is Meto-Aleqa (Lieutenant) Habtamu Difru. He was born in the Dera area of Shewa and is an ethnic Amhara. On May 4, 2023 (Miyazia 26, 2015 EC), the anti-Amhara forces arrested him under pretense of “organizing Fano” in Gundo Meskel town. Meto-Aleqa Habtamu Difru was not only a soldier but an engineer according to AMC's sources. He served in the army for ten years. In addition, he served for two years as an engineer servicing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). He also served as a militia protecting residents of Dera from attacks by the state-sponsored Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) Shene. Despite all this, he has been arrested in Gundo Meskel town as a prisoner of conscience by the anti-Amhara forces of the Oromo Prosperity Party on May 4th who considered his Amhara identity as a crime
- On May 6th, 2023, journalist Gobeze Sisay (founder and journalist at independent media outlet *Voice of Amhara*) was arrested by government security forces and

---

transported to Addis Ababa city. According to a press [statement](#) released by the Ethiopian peace and security joint taskforce circulated by state media outlet, Fana Broadcasting Corporation. An English translation of the original Amharic report is available below.

Gobeze Sisay has been arrested following the government announcing he committed terrorist acts to dismantle the constitutional order in Amhara Region in coordination with extremist forces. After he attempted to escape to another country via Djibouti, the Government of Djibouti in collaboration with international police apprehended him and transferred him to Ethiopia. Today, he was transported to Addis Ababa according to the peace and security joint taskforce. The peace and security joint taskforce announced in its April 30, 2023 (Miyazia 22, 2015 EC) statement that it is working to take severe actions against the extremist forces who have been organized and operating both within the country and abroad to dismantle the constitutional order and dismantle the Amhara Region power structure to forcibly take it over. In accordance with this, the peace and security joint taskforce would like to state that the following individuals are wanted for their suspected terrorist acts and will be apprehended in collaboration with international police (Interpol), to ensure they are held accountable in a court of law:

1. Habtamu Ayalew
2. Minalachew Simachew
3. Biruk Yibas
4. Eyerusalem Tekletsadik
5. Zemedkun Bekele
6. Lidetu Ayalew



- 
7. Mesay Mekonnen
  8. Gobeze Sisay
  9. Mihret Wedajo (Mirae Wedajo)
  10. Belete Shegaw
  11. Mulugeta Anberber

Among these suspects, *Gobeze Sisay Zegeye* is a suspect involved with organizing the extremist armed forces in the Kobo area of Amhara Region, was involved in coordinating the killing of Mr. Girma Yeshitila by the extremists, organized attacks against defense forces and the public by the extremists, and was a spokesperson and coordinator (for the extremists). The individual was operating to instill terror in Amhara Region, forcibly control power and eventually to dismantle the federal government, in collaboration with the extremist party. The peace and security joint taskforce has been working with Interpol, in accordance with their agreement, to apprehend this individual and other suspects who have yet to be captured. After Gobeze Sisay fulfilled all necessary formalities and obtained documents, he escaped to Djibouti and attempted to cross into another country, he was apprehended by international police in collaboration with Djibouti national police, and transferred into the custody of Ethiopia, before he was brought to Addis Ababa this evening. The peace and security joint taskforce is currently working to apprehend other suspects wanted in connection with the terrorist group, in accordance with Ethiopia's peace interests.

---

## 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>

