

INCIDENT REPORT

Alleged OLA militias killed at least 6 ethnic Amhara civilians in successive ambushes targeting passenger buses at Ali Doro town in Oromia Region

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The Amhara Association of America (AAA) regrets to confirm that at least five Amhara truck drivers, their assistants and one child have been shot dead by militias allegedly of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) on the Gojjam-Addis Ababa highway while heading to Gojjam, Amhara Region. The attacks took place around 11:00 pm on Wednesday, April 28th, 2021 in a small town known as Ali Doro (located about 54 miles north of Addis Ababa) in Degem Woreda (district), Semien/North Shewa Zone, Oromia Region. According to Mr. Lucas [name changed] and Mr. Makonnen [name changed], who survived the attack, Amhara truck drivers have been repeatedly targeted by suspected OLA militias within the past two years. Makonnen specifically noted that there have been three attacks targeting Amhara drivers at the same location in the last year alone.

In the latest attack, Makonnen and Lucas confirmed to AAA that five drivers, their assistants, as well as a six-year-old child, were killed and an unknown number of people were injured and taken away to an unknown destination. Of the deceased they were able to identify three of the victims including Mekuanent Kebede, Gedef Andualem, and Brook Fantahun.



(a) Mekuanent Kebede



(b) Gedef Andualem



(c) Brook Fantahun

Figure 1: Photographs of decedents from the April 28th massacre on the Gojjam-Addis Ababa highway

Mr. Lucas recalls the situation in this manner:

“I was travelling to Gojjam by truck with plate No. A17791, which was driven by Mr. Mekuanent Kebede. We were four in number in the vehicle that means the driver Mr. Mekuanent Kebede, his assistant Mr. Gedef Andualem, Mr. Michael [name changed] and I. We were traveling from Addis Ababa to Gojjam. Approaching to the place of attack, we were scared because we had information in advance about a driver and his assistant, who were killed a month ago at the scene by OLA militias. When we arrived at the scene, we came across armed men who stood up left and right and opened fire against us. The car in front of us was turned off by blocking the road, and our car collided with it. I was not harmed during the incident fortunately. But the driver had been shot. His blood was flowing to me because I was beneath him. I was terrified by such a sudden but premeditated attack. After the attack, I buried my neck under the dead driver, pretended to be dead and fell asleep; I was able to escape death by such a narrow gap. The militias then entered our car, and searched our pockets. They took 4,000 Birr from one of my pockets. When they heard the sound of another car, they got out of our car. At this time, however, in addition to the driver, his assistant Mr. Gedef Andualem had

passed away having been shot by the militias whereas the remaining passenger, Mr. Michael survived without sustaining any injury by pretending to be dead like me. Then after, the attackers fled before security forces arrived. I heard a bullet that was fired from a distance before the attackers fled. I suspected it, perhaps might be a signal for the attackers to flee. After the arrival of the security forces, the forces had collected the bodies of five people, including our driver, Mekuanent Kebede and his assistant, Gedef Andualem whereby I enshrouded the corpse being with other people.”

When asked for his view about the nature of the attack, Lucas replied “the attack was ethnically motivated. It is known that the trucks passing through that specific road from Addis Ababa to Gojjam are operated by Amhara drivers.” Another AAA source, Mr. Makonnen recalls the occurrence in the following way:

“We were a total of four people in the truck I was driving with code A3482. When we arrived at the place of attack, armed men in military uniforms blocked the road and opened great fire on us. I think the first shot hit my hand. However, I managed to get out of the way and run across the field through farm land. By doing so, I was able to survive certain death in this way.”

Confirming Mr. Lucas’s account, Makonnen also claimed he had no doubt that the attack was ethnic-based. “It is well known that we are Amharas, who drive trucks along this route to Gojjam. We are often mistreated,” said Makonnen. He further said, “local youths, traffic police and OLA militants have made the lives of Amhara drivers difficult.” Besides, a source, Mr. Workneh [name changed], told AAA that Brook Fantahun, was shot dead during the attack thirdly while driving a truck with code number A85122 and that his funeral was held at his residence in Kosofer town, Amhara Region. According to AAA’s sources, one of the remaining three deceased was a six-year-old boy, but AAA’s attempts to find out their names have so far failed.