



War updates from Amhara Region, Ethiopia – July 15th to 21st, 2024

Updated July 21st, 2024

Overview

For the week of July 15th to 21st, 2024, fighting between *Amhara Fano freedom fighters* (Fano) and *Prosperity Party regime joint forces* (regime forces) including the *Ethiopian National Defense Force* (ENDF) has continued in various parts of Amhara Region in Ethiopia. In addition, various attacks and abuses have been carried out against Amhara residents in the Amhara and Oromia Regions by regime allied forces including the *Tigray People's Liberation Front* (TPLF) and *Oromia Region Special Forces* (OSF).

- Fano forces carried out operations targeting regime camps and stations resulting in regime casualties and capture of equipment. In addition, operations were carried out in or near major cities including Bahir-Dar, Gonder, Debre-Markos, Woldia and Debre-Birhan.
- Incidents of attacks on youth and students by joint regime forces has reached alarming levels. In Kimir-Dingaye town of Guna-Begemidir Woreda (South Gonder

Zone, Amhara Region), ENDF soldiers raped 43 female students after forcing them to accept military escort then holding them captive when they were en route to their homes after writing exams in Debre-Tabor University. Over 100 youth were taken hostage in Wedi-Gemzu Kebele of Metemma Woreda (West Gonder Zone, Amhara Region).

- In Raya-Alamata Woreda (North Wollo Zone, Amhara Region), TPLF militias and Tigrayan officials continue to enter en masse with backing from Federal forces despite protests from native residents.
- Reports indicate a recent BBC article featured a falsified story primarily based on testimony from regime officials describing an alleged incident in Qwara Woreda (West Gonder Zone, Amhara Region).
- In Amaya Woreda (West Shewa Zone, Oromia Region), OSF carried out an attack on Amhara civilians causing displacement of residents.
- In Abe-Dongoro Woreda (Horo Guduru Wollega Zone, Oromia Region) OSF carried out systemic looting of animals belonging to Amhara residents.

North Wollo Zone

Raya-Alamata Woreda

- Abuses against Amhara residents continue both by TPLF and Federal force in Alamata town and its surroundings while more TPLF militias and officials are entering from Tigray Proper in the pretext of resettling IDPs. Colonel Ahmed, commander of an ENDF unit in the area is collaborating in arresting youth and suppressing the demands of residents. Col. Ahmed is providing logistics to TPLF militias, and threatening to take measures against residents who express opposition to the presence of TPLF militias in the area. He expressed unwillingness to listen to

demands of residents, saying he would only take orders from Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

- According to Ethio-News, TPLF officials from Mehoni, Shire, and Chercher are entering the Raya area. Habtu Kiros who is appointed as administrator of the Southern Zone of Tigray Region by TPLF is setting up a Tigrayan administration in these areas with these new officials. Over 9,700 TPLF militias and officials have entered the Raya area in the pretext of resettling IDPs.¹
- On July 18th, individuals including settlers not native to the Raya area, and TPLF soldiers who were entering Alamata town in 55 trucks were forced to return to Mehoni after facing demonstrations by residents of Alamata town. After a similar protest which took place the next day, July 19th, ENDF cracked down on youth in the town.² At least four youths were severely injured in the clash and taken to hospital. The TPLF soldiers abducted at least five youths including Kedir Seid, and Ambachew Hailu who were taken to Tigray proper. Other youths including Samuel Ahmed and Abay Berhe were previously abducted.

Woldia City

- On the night of July 14th, Fano fighters carried out a successful operation targeting the second police station in the Gonder-Ber area of Ras Ali sub-city. The operation lasted approximately three hours from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. In the attack Fano killed over 6 riot dispersal forces and police, injured many more, and captured five. Additionally, Fano managed to capture dozens of firearms and ammunition stored in the police station.

¹See July 19, 2024 Ethio-News [report](#)

²See July 19, 2024 footage of [protests](#)

South Wollo Zone

Mehal-Sayint Woreda

- On July 18th, Fano fighters entered Densa town, administrative center of Mehal-Sayint Woreda. Then fighting ensued between Fano and joint regime forces including ENDF, state militias, and riot dispersal forces for the whole day. In the fighting, regime forces killed at least one civilian.
- On July 19th, regime forces killed two young men who were working on their farm in a place called Deger following a surprise attack on the regime forces by Fano fighters.

Legambo Woreda

- On July 18th, fighting took place in multiple areas of Legambo Woreda including Key-Mebrat, Genete town, and Abuara areas. The fighting continued on July 19th. In Genete town, the fighting was reinitiated on the night of July 19th, when joint regime forces faced significant losses and injuries in personnel and vehicles.
- The regime's North Eastern Command led by Lieutenant-General Assefa Chekol has led fighting in this area.

North Shewa Zone

Minjar-Shenkora Woreda

- On July 16th, fighting was initiated by regime forces aimed at retaking areas controlled by Fano fighters however the Fano managed to defend their positions.

Ensaro Woreda

- On July 17th, joint regime forces initiated fighting and fired long-range weapons like ZU-23, rockets, and mortars without targeting specific areas. Intense fighting lasted for more than five hours between Fano forces and regime forces. Regime forces that initiated the attack struck civilian residents and farmlands in the attacks.

Ankober Woreda

- Between July 18-19, Fano fighters and joint regime forces fought in the Wusha-Wushegn area. In this fighting, Fano fighters took the upper hand position and were able to maintain their positions. Sources reported that dead bodies of regime forces were seen until July 20th.

Hagere-Mariam Woreda and Debre-Birhan City

- Between July 18th-19th, regime forces initiated fighting in the Gina-Ager area and fighting expanded to areas bordering Bulga and Debre-Birhan city. In this fighting, regime forces aimed at controlling areas under Fano control in Hagere-Mariam lost the battle and were forced to retreat to Debre-Birhan city. Fano fighters gained the upper hand position and managed to enter Chacha sub-city of Debre-Birhan city. Due to this, the road connecting Addis Ababa-Dessie-Mekelle was closed on the afternoon of July 19th. Fano fighters withdrew from Chacha sub-city after gaining military dominance against regime forces.

East Gojjam Zone

Aneded Woreda

- Reports indicate that Fano fighters attacked and repelled regime soldiers mobilized from Amber town to rural areas in Aneded Woreda, in an attempt to cultivate

farmlands owned by local regime militias. The regime soldiers tried to compel local farmers to cultivate the militias' farms, but Fano fighters attacked, forcing the regime soldiers to retreat.

Debre-Markos City

- On July 18th, regime soldiers killed a young man named Ababayehu in the city center, claiming he was holding a camera and capturing video.

Enarj-Enawga Woreda

- On July 18th, regime soldiers mobilized from Debre-Work town to a rural kebele called Yedit to suppress fighters but could not find any Fano members. A young man whose name remains unidentified was shot and killed when the regime soldiers found him on the street.

West Gojjam Zone

Dembecha Woreda

- Between July 14th-15th, several regime security and administrative officials reportedly went missing in the Dembecha area, possibly having joined the Fano group.
- On July 18th, there was an exchange of gunfire inside a regime camp, reportedly due to internal quarrels. Casualties are unknown, but at least eight riot dispersal police officers defected from the military.

Quarit Woreda

- On July 17th, intense fighting erupted in Genet-Abo town. Since the night of July 16th, regime soldiers began mobilizing their forces from Jiga, Finote-Selam, and

Gebeze-Mariam towards Genet-Abo to suppress Fano fighters in their stronghold. The Fano fighters, entrenched in Genet-Abo, received this information before the regime soldiers arrived. They waited, holding strategic locations. Almost all residents fled to rural areas starting from the night, fearing indiscriminate attacks by the regime. Gunfire exchange began at mid-day and continued for at least five hours. Due to heavy river flow, both sides were compelled to use heavy weaponry. Some regime troops managed to enter Genet-Abo but did not stay long as Fano fighters pursued and attacked them. Fano fighters inflicted considerable casualties on the regime soldiers, losing one combatant on their side, and one civilian sustained injuries. Ultimately, the Fano fighters successfully repelled the regime forces, forcing them to return to their bases. The fighting reportedly stopped as evening approached.

Finote-Selam Woreda

- On July 16th, a Kebele administrator and brother of Binalf Andualem, the Minister of Peace, was killed by Fano fighters. Binalf was previously implicated in ordering killings of local civilians under pretext they had ties with Fano.

Sekela Woreda

- Reports indicate regime soldiers conducted mass arrests of civilians particularly in Gish-Abay town and surrounding areas, targeting those with alleged familial ties with Fano members. Women and elderly were among the detained victims.

Bahir-Dar City

- On July 15th, Fano fighters carried out operations in Bahir-Dar city and surrounding areas. According to these reports, Fano fighters attacked a checkpoint in Tis-Abay town, targeting regime troops. As a result, more than five troops who were guarding

the checkpoint were reportedly killed or injured, and some regime troops were captured by the Fano fighters. On the same day, credible reports indicate that a police commander was killed by Fano fighters in the Gordema area of Bahir-Dar city. The attack, which took place in the evening, resulted in the death of Inspector Fikadu Abiye, who was described as an important figure within the regime's security apparatus in the area.

South Gonder Zone

Guna-Begemidir Woreda

- On July 13th, regime forces carried out rape and physical abuses against 43 students in Kimir-Dingaye town as they were returning home after completing matriculation exams in Debre-Tabor University.
 - The students, eagerly anticipating returning to their homes in Simada and Lay-Gayint Woredas were met with a chilling surprise. At 9:30 pm local time (afternoon), regime military forces arrived at the university, claiming the students required a military escort for their journey. Numerous soldiers boarded the buses intended for the students and invigilators, effectively commandeering their transportation. Upon reaching Kimir-Dingaye town (Guna-Begemidir Woreda), the soldiers commanded the students to disembark and spend the night in the town. The students, understandably apprehensive, refused this demand deeming it to be early enough to continue their journey. The soldiers responded dismissively citing dangerous weather conditions, specifically fog obscuring visibility and creating an opportunity for “attacks by the enemy”. Despite the students’ repeated insistence that they could safely return to their homes without any military escort, the soldiers forcibly removed them from the buses, transporting them to the Guna-Begemidir Technical and

Vocational College in Kimir-Dingaye town. Captain Assefa, perhaps sensing the rising tension, offered the students the option of staying inside the buses if they felt unsafe. However, sooner after, the commander of the regime army unit in Guna-Begemidir Woreda Colonel Juar, along with Captain Assefa and Tilahun (whose military ranking was unidentified) arrived. Their orders were clear: separate the students by gender and move them into different halls within the college. The female students then refused and demanded to remain in their buses or be accommodated together in a single hall, expressing their concerns and apprehension at being separated and potentially vulnerable to the soldiers. The soldiers, however, dismissed their concerns, assuring them that they were safe with the officers. However, in reality the students became forcibly confined into separate rooms unable to return to their buses. In response the female students became panicked and began reaching out to their parents and teachers. The parents, in turn, contacted various authorities including the Simada Woreda Education Secretariat Officer, the Zonal Prosperity Party Secretariat Officer, and the Zonal Police Commissioner. These officials, seemingly more concerned with maintaining control than protecting the students, assured the parents that they had contacted Colonel Juar and the students were safe. Starting at around 3:30 pm local time in the evening, sounds could be heard emanating from the halls where the female students were being held at which point they were being raped and beaten by the soldiers. Residents of Kimir-Dingaye town reported hearing sounds emanating from the halls. Reports indicate that 43 female students were raped of which 33 were visibly limping when returning to their buses, while 13 displayed visible injuries including scratches, swollen faces, and bruises.

- Colonel Juar is a notorious figure in the region, known for overseeing brutal human rights abuses against civilians. He directly ordered numerous atrocities

against civilians, including the burning of 126 residential houses in a rural town called Agona and Welela-Bahir. He is also responsible for the extrajudicial killings of 34 civilians and youths in the area. Colonel Juar also ordered the execution of a significant number of captured riot dispersal force members who defected from the regime. He even instructed soldiers to gouge out the eyes of captured individuals in front of their comrades as a warning to others considering defecting.

Debre-Tabor City

- Intense fighting erupted between Fano fighters and regime forces in Debre-Tabor city on July 17th, starting at 4 am in the morning local time. The clashes were particularly concentrated in the villages of Tsegur-Kidanemihret and the road leading from Debre-Tabor to Mahdere-Maryam town. Fano forces specifically targeted the regime's military checkpoint and soldiers stationed around the military camp in Kidanemihret. Additionally, fighting took place in the eastern part of Debre-Tabor city, including Aba-Aregawi and Gafat villages, between 4 and 5 am. The extent of casualties in these areas remains unknown. Both sides utilized heavy weaponry in the fighting, underscoring the intensity of the conflict.

Estie Woreda

- On the morning of July 18th, intense fighting erupted between Fano fighters and regime forces in Mekane-Eyesus town, beginning in the middle of the night and lasting until 3 am. The clash involved heavy weaponry, including ZU-23s, heavy machineguns, and mortars. The extent of casualties is currently unknown. Fano fighters operating in the area have appealed to residents to report individuals who have been setting up checkpoints under the guise of the Fano in order to extort money and steal property from civilians. This appeal highlights the residents'

frustration with the regime's tactic of using these fake checkpoints to discredit the Fano movement. The regime has a history of sending individuals to commit crimes and then blaming the Fano, further inflaming tensions and undermining the trust between the Fano and the local population.

Tach-Gayint Woreda

- On July 20th, a fierce battle erupted between Fano fighters and regime forces in Tach-Gayint Woreda, centered around Arb-Gebeya town. The fighting, which began at 9 pm local time and continued until 1 pm the following day, resulted in heavy losses for the regime's militia forces. The immediate trigger for the conflict was an offensive planned by the regime forces stationed in Arb-Gebeya. They intended to launch a coordinated attack against Fano military bases, moving out from Arb-Gebeya in various directions. However, Fano fighters intercepted this military plan and preemptively launched their own counter-offensive assault on Arb-Gebeya, which served as a command center for the regime forces. The Fano encircled the regime forces, inflicting significant damage and disrupting their planned attack. Although the exact extent of casualties remains unknown, both sides sustained significant military losses.

Lay-Gayint Woreda

- On July 20th, nine bus drivers transporting matriculation examinees from Debre-Tabor University to Nefas-Mewcha town were detained by regime forces. The drivers were arrested for allegedly failing to request a military escort from the regime. The students had refused the military escort, prompting the drivers to proceed without it. The pretext was used despite 43 female students previously raped by escorting military forces. The drivers' detention is essentially punishment for not facilitating the potential rape of the female students. These students, who

were natural science examinees, were well aware of the crimes committed by the military forces and refused the escort for that reason. The soldiers accused the drivers of influencing the students' decision to refuse the escort.

Central Gonder Zone

Gonder-Zuriya Woreda

- Intense fighting erupted on the night of July 15th, between Fano fighters and regime forces, stretching from Maksegnit town to Belessa. Over the past 13 days, 34 locations in Central Gonder Zone have been battlegrounds, with no respite for the regime forces. Despite deploying special commando units, the regime has suffered heavy losses across all fronts against the Fano. As a result of fierce Fano attacks, the three military command corps stationed in Belessa, Seqelt, and Maksegnit town were forced to relocate. The majority of Prosperity Party-led institutions in Belessa have been dissolved.
- On July 17th, intense fighting erupted between Fano fighters and regime forces in two locations within Gonder-Zuriya Woreda.
 - In Enfranz town, fighting commenced at 11:30 am local time in the morning. Fano fighters infiltrated the town, overpowering regime forces and capturing key areas including the police station. As a result of this fierce battle, the main road connecting Gonder city with Debre-Tabor and Bahir-Dar has been blocked, disrupting transportation. Fano forces now control most of the town, with fighting concentrated in areas where riot dispersal forces are positioned.
 - Simultaneously, a fierce battle has been raging in Qulqual-Ber since early morning. Fano forces have gained control of numerous public institutions, including the police station. The conflict has spread to Maksegnit town, where a significant number of regime soldiers have been encircled by Fano fighters.

Reinforcement troops from the Azezo Central Military Command have been dispatched to aid the besieged soldiers in Maksegnit. The ongoing fighting highlights the escalating conflict between Fano fighters and regime forces in the woreda.

- On July 17th, a fierce battle erupted in Enfranz town and Qulqual-Ber, resulting in heavy casualties for joint regime forces, particularly the riot dispersal units. Fano fighters surrounded the military camp housing the riot dispersal forces, unleashing a barrage of weapons and detonating multiple bombs. The surprise attack resulted in a significant number of riot dispersal force members being killed. Sources suggest that only those riot dispersal force members stationed near the public tanker in town managed to escape. The remaining forces, unprepared for the well-coordinated Fano attack, are believed to have been either killed or completely disbanded.
- All public institutions, including the police station in Enfranz, remain under the control of the Fano fighters. However, the main road connecting Gonder city to Debre-Tabor and Bahir-Dar has been reopened to public transportation since the morning of July 18th.

Gonder City

- Plans by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to visit Gonder city and launch a 100-meter corridor development project following inauguration of the Gorgora Hotel Project were scrapped due to ongoing fierce fighting between Fano fighters and regime forces. This conflict which had raged uninterrupted for 12 days forced Abiy to travel to Gorgora by helicopter from Bahir-Dar city. In anticipation of Abiy's visit, the Gonder City administration had ordered riot dispersal and traffic police forces to surrender their weapons. This order, perceived as a sign of mistrust by the administration, deeply offended the officers. They felt betrayed by the regime they

were serving, believing they were expendable in the face of the perceived threat posed by Fano. This disillusionment ultimately led many riot dispersal and traffic police officers to defect and join the Fano fighters, convinced that their loyalty to the regime was not reciprocated.

- On the night of July 19th, intense gunfire erupted in Tseda sub-city of Gonder city. This marks yet another clash between Fano fighters and regime forces in this area, which has seen repeated attacks. The extent of casualties from this particular engagement remains unclear.

Wogera Woreda

- On July 15th, Fano fighters successfully captured a significant number of regime militia forces and riot dispersal forces stationed near Dabat town in Arebur, seizing their entire military equipment.
- On the night of July 17th, Fano fighters launched a surprise attack against regime forces stationed at their camp in Wegera town. The extent of casualties sustained in the attack remains unknown.
- On July 21st, fierce fighting erupted between Fano fighters and regime forces in Senbetge and Bra Kebeles since the morning. Regime forces suffered heavy casualties and retreated to Amba-Giyorgis town without retrieving dead and injured soldiers. The Fano forces regained control of these kebeles.

Kinfaz-Begela Woreda

- Starting from the afternoon of July 20th at 9 pm local time and lasting until the morning of July 21st at 1:30 am local time, intense fighting occurred between Fano fighters and regime forces specifically in Silare town, administrative center of the woreda. The regime forces sustained heavy human casualties and equipment losses.

Numerous dead bodies of soldiers were seen scattered across Silare town. The regular military forces were unable to retrieve their fallen or injured comrades during the fighting. Additionally, Fano fighters captured 15 militiamen with their full military equipment, a Kebele chairman with his weapon, and seven regular soldiers, all with their equipment. The Fano fighters took control of Silare town.

West Gonder Zone

Metemma Woreda

- On July 17th, Fano fighters launched a surprise attack on a Federal Police camp in Metemma town, inflicting heavy casualties on the regime forces. The camp in Awlala village was particularly hard-hit, with numerous confirmed fatalities. Fano fighters captured an unspecified number of Federal Police officers and seized a significant amount of weapons, including heavy weapons and small arms, from the camp. While the attack was brief, it inflicted significant damage on the regime forces in Metemma.
- On July 19th, intense fighting erupted in Wedi-Gemzu, resulting in significant losses for the regime. Confirmations indicate that at least 17 members of the regime's joint forces were killed and seven sustained critical injuries. The Fano fighters suffered two critical injuries. After prolonged fighting, Fano forces successfully gained control of the military camp previously held by regime forces. They also seized over ten heavy weapons and small arms from the regime. In retaliation for the Fano's successful attacks, including the surprise assault on the Federal Police camp in Awlala two days prior, regime forces took over 100 youths hostage in Wedi-Gemzu Kebele. They also extrajudicially executed four youths, including a young girl under the age of 15.
- On July 20th, Fano fighters launched a surprise attack on regime forces in Mender 6

Kebele, specifically in Qulil-Afer village on the Diko junction road. The attack targeted an *oral* military truck, a patrol vehicle, and another bus carrying numerous soldiers. The regime forces suffered significant human and military casualties. The oral truck, once attacked, plunged into a steep ravine, resulting in the deaths of all soldiers onboard. Over 50 soldiers were killed in the attack. Among the dead was top-ranking militia force coordinator of Metemma Woreda and a military captain. The regime forces were en route to Wedi-Gemzu village to reclaim a military camp that had been taken over by Fano fighters two days earlier. However, the sudden attack thwarted their movement. In retaliation, regime forces killed unarmed civilians using heavy machineguns. Four bajaj drivers and six daily wage laborers, who had come from other areas for work, were killed, with their bodies found sprawled on the road.

Qwara Woreda

- On July 19th, the BBC disseminated false information claiming that Fano fighters were intentionally targeting ethnic Agew residents in Ikewa Kebele.³ This fabricated news originated from regime authorities aiming to discredit the Fano movement. It is well known that three Fano brigades, including the Aba-Guade brigade, are active in the woreda, established and led by both Qemant and Agew ethnic groups. Ikewa Kebele is under the control of Agew-led Fano forces, further dispelling the BBC's fabricated narrative. This false report is part of a broader propaganda campaign orchestrated by regime authorities in Qwara Woreda. Their goal is to incite ethnic conflict between the Qemant and Agew communities against the Amhara communities in the woreda.

³See July 19th, 2024 BBC Amharic [report](#)

North Gonder Zone

Dabat Woreda

- On July 19th, a group of 45 riot dispersal force members, stationed at the international refugee camp in Mesker Kebele to guard the refugee camp, abandoned their posts to join Fano fighters. The defection occurred without any exchange of gunfire, demonstrating the growing dissatisfaction and disillusionment within the regime's ranks. The defecting riot dispersal force members brought their entire military equipment with them, including heavy machineguns.

West Shewa Zone (Oromia Region)

Amaya Woreda

- On July 18th, OSF killed four Amhara civilians, injured five others and abducted two others in Tiro Kebele of Amaya Woreda. According to sources, the OSF unit named *herpi* raided Tiro Kebele at around 10:00 a.m. that day and began attacking the Amhara residents, taking two civilians hostage. The attack prompted residents to question the militants' actions. In response, the OSF killed four and injured five other civilians. Sources reported that the attack is ongoing as of July 19th, causing residents to flee to neighboring areas. AAA's investigation confirmed that federal forces (ENDF) were encamped nearby during the incident and despite being informed of the active incident, they refused to intervene in the OSF's attacks. However, when local armed residents attempted to defend themselves the ENDF quickly arrived and launched an operation against them. AAA identified names of three killed and two abducted victims in the attack. The killed victims were identified as: (1) Habte Kassa, (2) Gashaw Ageze and (3) Belete Zewdu. The abducted victims were identified as: (1) Asmare Belayneh and (2) Sitotaw Kinde.

Horo Guduru Wollega Zone (Oromia Region)

Abe-Dongoro Woreda

- OSF looted property belonging to Amhara residents in Botrobora Kebele of Abe-Dongoro Woreda. Over 160 farm animals were reportedly taken by regime security and administrative officials for personal use and two women identified as Toyiba and Seada, were arrested after filing complaints about the looting and asking for protection. Residents reported ongoing attacks against Amhara residents, including restricted freedom of movement and the demolition of residential homes allegedly orchestrated by the Kebele administrator, Ato Derese.

About the Amhara Association of America (AAA)

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) is a non-profit civic organization based in Charlotte, North Carolina that investigates and documents human rights violations in the context of conflict, violence and political repression in Ethiopia. AAA seeks to inform U.S. policymakers, international human rights organizations, journalists, researchers, 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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