



## War updates from Amhara Region, Ethiopia - May 20 to 26, 2024

*Updated May 26th, 2024*

### Overview

For the week of May 20th to 26th, 2024, fighting between Amhara Fano freedom fighters (Fano) and Prosperity Party regime joint forces (joint regime forces) has continued in various parts of Amhara Region in Ethiopia.

- Regime forces have perpetrated extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, sexual violence and looting targeting unarmed civilians including children and elderly persons. Victims are often accused of providing support to Fano forces. There have also been identity based attacks including on the basis of religious affiliation. There has also increasingly been a trend of abducting civilians including family members of suspected Fano forces for use as hostages.
- Regime forces have targeted farmers and withheld farming resources (e.g. fertilizer).
- Educational services have been disrupted in areas with fighting and children have been unable to go to school.

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- Transportation blockades have restricted travel between various areas.
  - Fano forces have continued to gain the upper hand in military engagements with joint regime forces. In addition, regime forces have defected in significant numbers indicating low morale among their ranks. There has also been indications of discord between various factions within the joint regime force.

## **Bahir Dar City**

- On May 19th, suspected Fano forces detonated a bomb within Bahir-Dar city, with casualties remaining unconfirmed.

## **North Gojjam Zone**

### **North Mecha Woreda**

- On May 21st, heavy clashes took place in areas neighboring Merawi town in North Mecha and South Mecha Woredas. The fighting was instigated by regime soldiers, advancing onto Dagi, Birakat, and Wetet-Abay areas. Reports indicated Fano forces successfully repelled the regime's incursion.
- As of May 20th, Fano forces persist in carrying out surprise attacks involving gunfire and bomb explosions in Bahir-Dar and Merawi.
- On May 19th, reports indicated a sudden attack by Fano forces on regime soldiers. This unexpected gunfire targeted soldiers stationed at the China camp on the outskirts of Merawi town. Although the exchange of gunfire was brief lasting less than an hour regime soldiers sustained significant casualties.

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## **Awi Zone**

On May 25th, clashes between Fano and regime forces occurred in Quchi, Dangila, and Addis-Kidam areas, with regime force initiating the attacks and sustaining significant losses.

## **Jawi Woreda**

- In the days leading up to May 25th, intense fighting has taken place in Jawi Woreda, instigated by regime forces advancing into areas. Employing heavy artillery, regime forces advanced toward Bambuluk and other rural kebeles which resulted in significant clashes. Reports indicate regime forces sustained substantial losses as Fano captured numerous weapons.

## **West Gojjam Zone**

### **Sekela Woreda**

- On May 24th, regime forces initiated an attack in Ambisi Kebele of Sekela Woreda.

### **South Mecha Woreda**

- On May 23rd, Fano forces carried out a surprise attack in area called Chiro where regime forces suffered losses.
- On May 24th, regime forces attacked in Gerechech and Dagi areas. However, sources indicate that regime soldiers were repelled after sustaining heavy casualties inflicted by Fano forces. Fighting in the woreda has continued to escalate as of May 25th.

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## **Finote Selam**

- On May 24th, a brief skirmish broke out in the outskirts of Finote-Selam city, though casualties have yet to be confirmed.

## **Dembecha and Machakel Woredas**

- On May 26th, heavy fighting broke out in the vicinity of Amanuel and Dembecha. In Amanuel town (Machakel Woreda) conflict ensued following surprise attacks by Fano forces on the town's outskirts. Reports suggested Fano forces managed to penetrate Amanuel town by midday after fierce clashes with regime soldiers. In Dembecha, regime forces launched an offensive to suppress Fano fighters in Wad-Eyesus Kebele. However, Fano fighters launched a sudden attack before the regime forces could enter the kebele. Subsequently, reports indicated Fano forces again targeted regime forces in areas approaching Dembecha town.

## **East Gojjam Zone**

### **Enarj-Enawga Woreda**

- On May 24th, there was also brief fighting in rural kebeles of Enarj Enawga Woreda. Though the outcome of the fighting is unknown, reports indicated that two minors (civilians) were shot and killed by the regime forces.

### **Bibugn Woreda**

- On May 26th, regime forces launched an attack to suppress Fano fighters in Waber town and its surroundings. Residents reportedly evacuated the town upon the arrival of regime forces, with an elderly woman allegedly shot and killed by the regime forces.

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## Central Gonder Zone

- Educational institutions in Central Gonder Zone have been forced to close indefinitely, particularly in areas that have experienced intense fighting between Fano forces and regime forces including Gonder Zuriya, West Dembiya, East Dembiya, and Chuahit Woredas. The ongoing conflict has severely disrupted educational activities, leaving students without access to learning opportunities. Schools remain closed, and the timeline of resumption of classes is uncertain.
- In this zone, regime forces have engaged in a pattern of mistreatment against farmers who traveled to towns for market activities or other personal errands. These farmers are unjustly accused of being Fano members or sympathizers to Fano forces. Numerous farmers have been subjected to beatings, arbitrary detention, and even killings by regime forces. They are also being denied access to essential agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers, under the pretext that they have not paid taxes or medical insurance.
- A farmer in one of the towns in Central Gonder Zone was arbitrarily detained by regime forces after he questioned why taxes were not being collected in his community. The farmer had asked regime officials, “*if you wanted us to pay tax, you should have come to our residences.*” The farmer’s detention is a clear violation of his right to freedom of expression. He was simply exercising his right to inquire about regime policies and practices. The farmer’s current whereabouts are unknown, raising concerns about his safety and well-being.
- The mistreatment of farmers has severely disrupted their livelihoods. With the planting season underway, they are unable to access the necessary resources to cultivate their land. This situation threatens their ability to provide food for their families and communities. The regime’s actions are impeding their ability to earn a living and undermining their basic needs.

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- In the same zone, regime forces have been implicated in numerous incidences of robbery and sexual violence. More than six cases of rape have been reported in the zone. These crimes appear to be part of a pattern of abuses by regime forces stationed in the area. Civilians, particularly women, have become targets of sexual violence and theft. The perpetrators of these crimes have not been held accountable, fostering a climate of impunity. This emboldens regime forces to continue committing human rights violations with little fear of consequences. The sexual violence and robbery perpetrated by regime forces have a profound impact on the lives of civilians in Central Gonder Zone. Victims suffered physical, psychological, and emotional trauma. The climate of fear and insecurity undermines their sense of safety and well-being.
  - On May 24th there was fierce fighting between Fano forces and joint regime forces in Wogera, West Armachiho, and West Belessa Woredas.
  - On May 25th, intense fighting broke out between Fano forces and joint regime forces in Gedebye, Amba-Giorgis, Belessa, Gonder Zuriya, and areas on the outskirts of Ayimba and Dembiya. At least 11 locations in Central Gonder Zone have become frontlines of fierce clashes. Intense fighting is raging in areas stretching from Amba-Giyorgis town to Gedebye. Clashes are ongoing in Werqe-Demo, Gedebye, Chemrasge, and Gara since morning. As a result of the conflict, transportation services between Debark and Gonder city have been suspended. Additionally, heavy fighting is taking place between Fano forces and joint regime forces along the stretch from Belessa to Wogera Woreda.

### **West Dembiya Woreda**

- On May 24th, regime forces extrajudicially executed Merigetta Waka Bayu, a prominent trader and respected taxpayer in Ayimba town. Merigetta Waka Bayu

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was allegedly targeted due to suspicions of providing financial support to Fano forces. Eyewitnesses reported that he was forcibly removed from his shop and shot in the head in front of his family members.

### **East Dembiya Woreda**

- On May 20th, Fano forces carried out an attack on a state militia base in Qoladiba town. A prolonged exchange of gunfire ensued but casualties are unknown.

### **West Belessa Woreda**

- Since May 23rd intense fighting has been ongoing particularly in kebeles surrounding Degoma town. Fighting broke out following attempts by regime forces to extort local farmers to pay taxes. On May 24th, clashes intensified in Grag-Ber at Zandra Kebele, Dangor-Giba, Jaja, Aysel-Eyesus, and Qoz-Abo. During the fighting on May 23rd, regime forces found themselves encircled by Fano forces. Regime soldiers who attempted to break the encirclement suffered heavy losses as Fano forces launched attacks from multiple directions. The regime forces were effectively neutralized, and Fano forces seized a substantial amount of weapons.

### **Gonder Zuriya Woreda**

- On May 19th, Fano forces apprehended a group of impostors operating under the guise of Fano under direction from regime authorities in Tara Gedam, Libo-Kemkem, and Qulqual-Ber. These individuals were engaged in robbery and extortion, targeting prominent public figures in Gonder city. During interrogation, the apprehended impostors confessed to hijacking five Muslims in Enfranz the previous week. They also admitted to receiving orders from Gonder Zuriya administrator Ato Ermyas and Ato Solomon, the authority of peace and security of Gonder Zuriya, to incite religious conflict by targeting Muslim followers. The Fano

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forces successfully rescued 11 individuals who had been kidnapped by these impostors. Five of the victims were Muslims from Enfranz town, while the remaining six were Christians.

- On May 23rd, intense fighting erupted between Fano forces and joint regime forces, particularly in Sebha-Gabriel Kebele. During this fierce engagement, numerous state militia forces were killed, including the chairman and vice chairman of the kebele. These slain kebele authorities were close relatives of Ato Desalegn Tasew, the Amhara Regional State Police commissioner.
- After Fano forces gained control of the kebele, they compelled many state militias to surrender their weapons and abandon their military affiliation.
- On May 23rd, Fano forces launched attacks on joint regime forces encamped in Denqez, Gragn-Ber, and Denziz. The ensuing six-hour battle resulted in significant casualties and injuries among regime forces. Following repeated attacks on temporary regime military camps established to control the four woredas from Degoma town, regime forces were compelled to relocate their camp from Degoma to Tseda sub-city in Gonder city.
- As of May 26th, intense fighting has continued in Werqe-Demo, Arba Arat-Telba, Chemrasge, Gedebye, and along the stretch from Gara to Dabat town, where fierce clashes have resulted in significant casualties and material damage especially on joint regime forces. Regime joint forces have deployed ZU-23 anti-aircraft guns, mortars, and heavy machine guns in their operations against Fano forces. However, the regime forces suffered heavy losses, particularly in battles at Werqe-Demo and Arba Arat-Telba. Fano forces encircled regime forces encamped at Werqe-Demo school and launched a devastating attack, destroying ZU-23s and other heavy weapons. In reprisal, regime forces killed six unarmed civilians, including an eight-year-old child. Indiscriminate shelling of villages by heavy artillery has



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resulted in a high civilian toll, as houses and civilians are being targeted. This artillery bombardment continues unabated, targeting villages in various directions.

### **Tach Armachiho Woreda**

- On May 23rd, three military vehicles were ambushed by Fano forces near Torka village. The ambush resulted in the deaths of at least 26 regime forces, including woreda authorities who were operating alongside regime forces. Many other regime forces sustained serious injuries as well.
- The Fano forces seized a significant amount of weapons from the ambushed regime forces, including two light machine guns and 23 automatic rifles, including kalashnikov assault rifles. Among the slain regime woreda authorities were the Peace and Security officer, the coordinator for state militia forces in the woreda, and a police cadet.
- Similarly, in Gabla Kebele (West Armachiho) over 17 state militias were reportedly killed and over 10 critically injured. These state militias had received repeated warnings from Fano forces to abandon their military support for the regime.
- On May 23rd an ambush against regime forces took place in Torka village.

### **Gonder City**

- On the evening of May 21st, Fano forces launched a surprise attack on the Azezo military camp located at Qebero-Meda village, close to Tewodros International Airport. The surprise attack resulted in heavy casualties among regime forces, including high-ranking military officers. The intense exchange of fire continued throughout the night.
- On the evening of May 22nd, Fano forces launched a two-pronged attack on a temporary military camp located near the customs authority office in Azezo

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sub-city. The first attack came from the direction of Loza-Maryam, targeting regime soldiers guarding the camp. Regime forces on duty and those resting within the camp suffered significant casualties. The second attack originated from the customs authority office towards the temporary military camp. Over 13 regime soldiers were killed in the fighting, and more than 15 black kalashnikov rifles were seized by Fano forces. The attacked military camp is situated in close proximity to the ENDF North-Western Command, a heavily fortified base housing well-equipped soldiers.

## **South Gonder Zone**

- Since May 19th, a series of intense engagements erupted between joint regime forces and Fano forces in Tach Gayint, Estie, Dera and other woredas of South Gonder Zone. The military confrontation has encompassed over 19 distinct locations within the administrative zone. Fighting has been ongoing consecutively for six days, with regime reinforcements deployed from Bahir-Dar city and North Wollo Zone to places where the fighting is worse.
- On May 21st, in South Gonder Zone following intense fighting in various places, tensions have emerged between regular soldiers and state militia as the latter accused the soldiers of collecting their bodies but leaving the fallen militias unburied. This indicates a growing rift including a belief that the militias may join Fano if given the opportunity. Many militias abandoned the conflict zone due to resentment over the disrespectful treatment of their fallen comrades. The conflict in South Gonder Zone, which has spread across seven woredas and 19 locations, has witnessed intense fighting between Fano and regime forces.
- On May 21st, fighting continued in several locations in South Gonder Zone: including Kimir Dingaye town (Guna Begemidir Woreda), Densa (Estie Woreda), Gedoda (Tach Gayint Woreda), and Hagere-Bizen (Simada Woreda).

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- In several woredas in South Gonder Zone including Estie, Gayint, Simada, and Dera, suspected female intelligence officers have been sent to areas where Fano forces are entrenched. The Fano forces are investigating these suspects agents to verify whether they were conducting covert military operations.
  - In South Gonder Zone alone, over 123 civilians have been taken hostage this week under accusation of supporting Fano forces. Among the hostages, 26 are children under the age of seven.

### **Guna Begemidir Woreda**

- On May 20th, in Kimir Dingay town a civilian residence was struck by mortar fire. Four residents, including a two-year-old child, were severely injured while seeking shelter. The house was completely destroyed and the injured are receiving treatment at Debre-Tabor Hospital.
- On May 20th intense fighting took place in Arba-Minch Kebele, Menehariya, Bale-Egziabher Kebele, Abo and Kimir-Dingay. In the fighting, 22 regime forces were confirmed killed including 11 regime riot dispersal forces, 6 regime soldiers, and 5 states. In addition, over 45 regime forces sustained severe injuries. The primary objective of the fighting in Kimir-Dingay was to divert attention from the war in Lay Gayint and Tach Gayint Woredas and to hinder movement of regime reinforcements to those areas. The battle commenced at 4 am and lasted until 12 pm. The Fano forces' strategy was successful, as regime forces were unable to traverse Kimir Dingay to reach Nefas-Mewcha town to assist their besieged forces in Lay Gayint Woreda. In addition, farmers in Guna Begemidr Woreda have been denied fertilizers due to allegations of supporting Fano. Fano forces attempted to distribute fertilizers, but their efforts were thwarted by ongoing fighting and the deployment of reinforcements from Debre-Tabor city.

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- On May 21st, several civilians were taken hostage in Kimir-Dingay town infants as young as 3-months-old, along with their mothers, under allegation of being family members of Fano fighters.
  - On May 22nd after facing military defeat to Fano forces, retreating regime forces carried out extrajudicial killings of at least 8 civilians in Kimir Dingay town under pretext of affiliation to Fano or of being Fano collaborators. Among the killed victims were individuals with mental disabilities. Victims killed by regime forces include: (1) 29-year-old merchant Fitihi-Amlak Beza, (2) 47-year-old daily laborer Melku Aletasebe, (3) phone repairman Fisseha Beza, (4) 40-year-old merchant Yabibal Zewdu and (5) 39-year-old preparatory school teacher Gete (last name unknown). Victims killed and injured by regime forces in Tach-Gayint Woreda between May 18th and 19th include: (6) 23-year-old Berelew Melese (a resident of Kebele 10) who was killed in his mother's home; whereas (7) 48-year-old Asres Asmamaw (mother of the late Berelew Melese) and (8) 45-year-old Tesfaye Biyayelgn (a resident of Kebele 11) suffered injuries to their leg and eye, respectively. The late Melku Aletasebe was from Qirarem-Eyesus Kebele and supported his impoverished farming family by carrying loads in the town. He was known for his skill in house construction and sold materials during market days in the town. He was falsely accused of being a Fano member before being killed by regime forces. The late Fisseha Beza was dragged from his home and killed by regime forces in front of his family members. He was the sole breadwinner to his family members and his body was buried at the Kimir-Dingay St. Michael's Church. The late Gete also owned a restaurant and was dragged from his house and killed at the doorway in front of his wife.
  - On May 22nd, as regime soldiers retreated to Debre-Tabor city, local residents blocked their path and demanded they surrender their weapons. The soldiers

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responded with gunfire, resulting in multiple youth casualties. A lot of injured youths have been admitted to the Debre-Tabor Hospital for treatment as a result. Following this incident, regime forces settled in a temporary military encampment at the Guna-Begemidir Woreda Office. Regime forces subsequently conducted house-to-house searches, killing a large number of additional civilians. They also shelled Wuqro-Medhanialem Kebele with heavy weapons, including heavy machine guns and mortars on May 23rd. Residential houses belonging to eight farmers were destroyed with mortar fire, and six civilians were injured including four from the same family. One of the victims was a 4-year-old child. The injured have been admitted to Debre-Tabor Hospital, with some reported to be critically injured.

- On May 23rd, regime forces killed over 12 civilians in Kimir-Dingay town by forcibly removing them from their homes and executing them on the same day. Numerous civilians in the town have been detained on suspicion of providing information to Fano forces.

### **Dera Woreda**

- On May 20th, conflict between regime forces and Fano forces engulfed Gelawdiwos and Licha areas of Dera Woreda. The battle in Gelawdiwos was particularly intense, resulting in heavy casualties among regime forces. In Gombat Kebele (16-km from Bahir Dar city) Fano forces launched a surprise attack on regime forces moving towards Debre-Tabor, Gonder, and Hamusit. The sustained gunfire prevented the soldiers from reaching these areas to engage in combat.
- On May 22nd, intense fighting occurred between Fano and regime forces in Arb-Gebeya, Gelawdiwos, and Lichaye towns of Dera Woreda. The fighting lasted from 4 am to 12 pm, with regime forces suffering heavy losses. In Arb-Gebeya town, over 20 regime soldiers were reportedly killed. Fano forces regained control

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of the town in the evening. Two Fano fighters sustained serious injuries and two with slight injuries during the fighting, but there were no fatalities. Over 20 small arms were captured from regime forces. The defeated regime forces retreated to Gelawdiwos, where the fighting continued as reinforcements arrived from Ambesame town.

- On May 23rd, residents gathered to collect and bury the dead. Additional reinforcements, including armored vehicles, were sent from Bahir-Dar and Hamusit to support regime forces.
- As of May 23rd, Fano forces destroyed five military pickup trucks and captured three of them in Lichaye. Over 35 regime forces were killed including regime soldiers, state militias, and riot dispersal forces. Uncollected bodies of the regime forces remained in the area throughout the day.
- The 78th and 92nd regime army divisions suffered severe casualties in intense fighting in the Gelawdiwos area. Eyewitness accounts and reports indicate that at least 73 regime soldiers were killed and 33 regime soldiers were captured in fighting with Fano forces. Fano forces seized a significant quantity of weapons from the regime forces including a large number of small arms and six heavy weapons.
- On the evening of May 23rd, a fierce firefight erupted between Fano forces and joint regime forces in Arb-Gebeya town lasting for approximately one hour.

### **Farta Woreda**

- On May 26th, Farta Woreda Administrator Mulu Abeje and Bante Mergiyaw, the coordinator and secretary of the woreda militia forces, faced repeated accusations of seizing civilian property and detaining unarmed civilians under false pretenses of supporting Fano forces or having familial ties to Fano members in the woreda. They actively provided intel to regime riot dispersal forces and regular regime military

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units, leading to arrests and killings of numerous youths in Farta Woreda and elsewhere in South Gonder Zone.

### **Estie Woreda**

- As of May 20th, the areas of Lwaye and Madoka became focal points of intense fighting between regime forces and Fano forces in Estie Woreda. Regime forces suffered significant casualties in an ambush by Fano forces in Madoqa Kebele, situated between Gasay and Estie towns. Numerous soldiers were killed and many more injured. As a result of the ambush, Fano forces successfully seized heavy machine guns and their ammunition. Following an ambush against regime forces by Fano forces in Lwaye Kebele, heavy casualties and injuries resulted among regime forces, enabling detained civilians to escape.
- On May 25th, numerous youths who had come to Mekane-Eyesus town from rural villages for market day were forcibly taken by regime forces for military training.
- On May 25th, fighting erupted in Lichaye, but casualty figures are still unknown.
- On May 26th, a major battle took place between Fano forces and regime forces in Liwaye village. In past weeks, frequent clashes have occurred in this area.

### **Sede-Muja Woreda**

- On May 20th, intense fighting took place spanning from Adada to Chefa-Wenz. Since the afternoon, Fano forces began entering Robit town, administrative center of Sede-Muja Woreda after a decisive military victory over regime forces.
- On May 24th, over 11 police officers went missing from their posts. Reports indicate most of them defected to Fano forces, taking their weapons with them.

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## **Simada Woreda**

- On May 20th, prolonged and intense fighting took place between Fano and regime forces at Wegeda mountain lasting several hours until 1 pm in the evening. Furthermore from 1 pm to 3 pm, there was heavy gunfire exchange between Fano forces and regime forces at Kosh-Gebeya village. In Wute-Maryam Kebele, a fierce clash erupted between Fano forces and regime forces supported by heavy weaponry. Fano forces emerged victorious, capturing a significant cache of heavy weapons, including heavy machine guns, light machine guns, and sniper rifles. In Welela-Bahir particularly in Agona Kebele a two-hour battle ensued between Fano forces and regime forces. This incident holds particular significance as it marked the fourth week since regime forces allegedly set fire to 24 homes in Agona Kebele, accusing residents of supporting Fano.
- On May 21st, at Hagere-Bizen, a massacre occurred after fierce fighting between Fano forces and joint regime forces. Regime forces are responsible for the massacre, in which over 38 unarmed civilians were extrajudicially killed. Additionally, a young woman was raped by regime military forces.
- Following intense fighting between Fano and regime forces in Simada Woreda, regime authorities have engaged in a pattern of hostage-taking and destruction of property. Regime authorities are targeting family members of suspected Fano members, particularly the elderly, children, and women who are not directly involved in the conflict. Numerous family members of Fano have been taken hostage tonight, including children, wives of the Fano forces, and elderly. The regime authorities who led the hostage taking and property destruction including: Endalk Tilahun (Woreda administrator), Fentaye Gashu, Tilahun Awlew, Mayor Yemiyamrew Andarge, Sergeant Mengesha, Demeke Getinet, Belete Teqil (Woreda speaker), Nigus Derib (Woreda deputy administrator), Inspector Nibret (Peace and



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Security Office and Military Command Post Coordinator). In addition to hostage-taking, regime authorities are also engaging in the robbery and destruction of property belonging to detained individuals. Houses are being looted, and properties allegedly linked to Fano members are being destroyed.

- Clashes between Fano forces and regime forces occurred on May 24th in Aguat-Wuha-Medhanialem. Numerous state militia members were killed in the fighting. In retaliation, the mayor of Wegeda town authorized the state militia to seize cattle in the area, alleging that they belonged to Fano supporters. Over 150 heads of cattle were taken.
- On May 25th, regime forces looted the Ashara-Medhanialem church, stealing consecrated items such as ancient Ethiopic Ge'ez Brana (parchment books), gold, silver, and bronze incenses, chalices, and holy vestments worn by priests and deacons during religious ceremonies. The church's priests were severely beaten by regime forces, who accused them of supporting Fano forces and praying for their victory over the Prosperity Party-led regime.
- On May 26th, intense fighting erupted between Fano forces and joint regime forces in Zinjero-Gedel.

### **Tach Gayint Woreda**

- Intense battles erupting across Bethlehem, Agat, Fenta, Adansa, Shodeb, Chefa, Arata-Giyorgis, and Gedoda becoming focal points of the conflict. The main battle, a pivotal moment in the overall campaign, unfolded in Gedoda Kebele on Mosebit Mountain. Here, combatants engaged in a prolonged and bloody struggle, testing the limits of their endurance and resolve. The battles fought in South Gonder Zone were primarily intended to alleviate the intense fighting in Gedoda. Despite being surrounded on all sides, the Fano forces repelled the regime forces and then

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launched a counteroffensive particularly targeting regime forces advancing from Sede-Muja Woreda. This attack resulted in the capture of numerous high-ranking regime military officers, many of whom were killed in action. Regime forces mobilized from Arb-Gebeya to reinforce Gedoda were ambushed at Agat, Fenta-Qusquam, and Segege, suffering heavy casualties.

- On May 26th, Fano forces carried out a surprise attack on Arb-Gebeya. More than 7 regime forces were killed including 6 regime militias, and 1 regime soldiers, while 1 Fano member was killed.
- Fighting in Gedoda has continued as of May 20th when regime forces dispatched reinforcement forces to the area for the third time, Fano forces managed to repel the attack by regime forces. High-ranking regime army officers were among the casualties. Though fighting is ongoing, there were significant casualties among regime infantry.
- On May 21st, intense fighting took place in the mountains of Sefayt and Mosebit with regime forces using ZU-23 heavy weapons in Arb-Gebeya and surrounding areas of Tach Gayint Woreda. Regime reinforcement forces mobilized to these areas were forced to retreat.
- On May 21st, fighting in Agat village continued for a third day which erupted as Fano sought to pursue retreating regime forces from Gedoda. In Tach Gayint Woreda alone, over 108 soldiers have reportedly been killed in two days of fighting. Among the casualties are four high-ranking officers, including two lieutenants and two vice-captains while two commanders surrendered to Fano. in Gedoda Kebele, locals have been collecting and burying dead regime soldiers with dignity. According to sources, the regime was able to collect 85 soldiers.
- On May 23rd, the Military Command Post in South Gonder Zone, made a chilling

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decision to launch a major military operation against Fano forces led by Kefyalew Dessie in Tach Gayint Woreda. In a meeting in Arb-Gebeya, zonal authorities acknowledged that over 153 regime soldiers had been killed in previous fighting. Disturbingly, authorities decided to target civilians perceived to be collaborating with Fano forces. They reasoned that the people had “*fought against us in collaboration with Fano*” and therefore should be treated as enemy combatants.

- In contrast to regime forces, Fano forces have captured numerous wounded regime soldiers and have requested an ambulance from zonal authorities to transport the critically injured for medical treatment. Over eight critically wounded soldiers are currently being held by Fano. Regime forces with minor injuries are being treated by medical teams captured by Fano from the regime. Despite this humanitarian gesture from the Fano side, the regional police commissioner and various authorities in South Gonder Zone passed orders to indiscriminately attack civilians in Tach Gayint Woreda. Significant quantities of heavy weapons and small arms have been deployed to Tach Gayint, including BM-107 rockets, 80-mm and 120-mm heavy artillery. High-ranking military officers who led the recent fighting in South Gonder Zone have been detained for allegedly failing to lead effectively, resulting in heavy regime losses.
- On May 23rd from 10 pm heavy weapons including ZU-23 anti-aircraft guns, rocket launchers, and over 11 armored military vehicles carrying regime soldiers were mobilized towards Agat and Feres-Meda. Intense fighting ensued in these areas until 3 pm in the evening. Three ZU-23 heavy weapons were deployed during the engagement however, after 3 pm, all regime forces withdrew from Agat and Feres-Meda.
- Authorities in Tach Gayint Woreda dispatched a delegation of elders and religious leaders to negotiate with Fano forces for the return of captured military equipment,

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including heavy machine guns and other heavy weaponry.

- On May 24th, the secretary of the Prosperity Party Zonal branch and Colonel Juar, commander of the regime military forces in Tach Gayint, addressed a gathering in Arb-Gebeya town requesting for residents to disarm. However, their request to disarm was met with defiance by the community. Residents questioned why they should surrender weapons captured in battles against regime forces and their children (Fano). They emphasized that Fano forces had successfully repelled seven attacks by the regime forces. The Prosperity Party official, who is a native of the area, urged the community to persuade Fano forces to surrender. However, the people present accused the regime of negotiating with the rebel group Shene (Oromo Liberation Army) while ignoring Fano. They argued that Shene's agenda was no more legitimate than Fano, and they refused to engage with the regime representative. The Prosperity Party official attempted to justify their negotiations with Shene by stating that the group had a popular agenda for the prosperity of the Oromia Region but that Fano did not have any valid ground to launch an offensive attack against the regime. However, the people rejected this claim, arguing that Fano forces also had a valid agenda. They told the official that he was no longer welcome in the area, regardless of his birthplace.

### **Lay Gayint Woreda**

- As of May 19th, fighting took place in Tariya, Mosebit, Gora, and Nefas-Mewcha. Intense clashes erupted in Nefas-Mewcha town, particularly near the central prison and the nearby rural Yeduro Kebele. During the battle, over 13 state militias were killed, while another 7 were injured and were admitted to Nefas-Mewcha Hospital for treatment. On May 20th, five of the injured militias succumbed to their injuries and their dead bodies have been delivered to their families for burial. Two dead bodies of state militias were discovered laid on the street. Fano forces regained

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control of Nefas-Mewcha on May 19th, forcing local regime authorities to evacuate to Meqet Woreda in North Wollo Zone hiding themselves in an ambulance.

- On May 20th, coopted religious leaders who tried to cajole Fano members to return back to their normal lives under the cloak of reconciliation in the town, were given a stern warning.
- On May 21st, Fano withdrew from Nefas Mewcha town which they previously captured following a decisive victory against regime forces on May 19th. In reprisal, regime soldiers have been conducting house-to-house searches and beating civilians accusing them of supporting Fano.

### **Libo-Kemkem Woreda**

- On the night of May 18th, the military camp in Mikael-Deber was attacked, resulting in numerous casualties among regime soldiers.

### **Debre-Tabor City**

- On May 20th, gunfire exchange occurred in Werqe village which has been ongoing since 1 pm in the evening.
- The highland operations in Lay Gayint Woreda have been led by Colonel Tadesse who was formerly an army commander and Lieutenant Meseret, who was formerly a commander of riot dispersal who defected to Fano recently with over 100 members under his authority. In the lowland areas, particularly at Gedoda Kebele in the Beshilo area, operations were led by Fano commander Kefyalew Dessie. The conflict unfolded across a diverse geographical landscape, from the Tariya hills to the remote villages of Adada and Chefa-Wenz. The climax of the battle occurred at Gedoda, where Fano led an assault.

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- On May 20th, it has been reported that another top official of the South Gonder Zone defected to Fano with his four security details.
  - Drone surveillance has been reported in the zone following intense fighting in vast areas and heavy losses by regime forces. The surveillance suggests there could be drone attacks carried out against residents.

## **North Gonder Zone**

On May 21st, Fano forces under the leadership of Arbegna Sefer Meles successfully recaptured Segalo town, which is strategically located between Sanja and Qiraqir. Despite the presence of regime forces on the outskirts of Sanja, who have positioned heavy artillery and threatened severe reprisals against the town's residents if Fano forces were to occupy it, Fano forces are advancing towards Sanja with the aim of removing the regime forces and regaining control of the town.

## **Debark and Dabat Woredas**

- On May 22nd, numerous riot dispersal forces abandoned their military post in Dabat town at night while on duty. They absconded with their full military equipment. In response to the desertions, regime forces have been deployed to various checkpoints along major roads to apprehend fleeing riot dispersal forces.
- On the evening of May 24th, Fano forces attacked the police station in Debark town, a location where Fano activity is not typically observed. The police station was being used as a temporary detention center for suspected Fano members. The attack lasted for two hours, from 5 pm to 7 pm.
- On May 24th, regime forces stationed in Debark town withdrew from the area. Following this movement, political cadres and high-ranking civil officers also left the town.

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## **West Gonder Zone**

On May 22nd, Fano forces carried out a successful ambush on regime forces traveling to Metema, Shimel-Eger, and Kokit. The regime forces suffered significant casualties and material losses in the surprise attack. One of the three regime military vehicles in the regime convoy was completely destroyed, while numerous soldiers were killed or injured. Fano forces seized a significant number of weapons from regime forces including 17 firearms.

## **Qwara Woreda**

- Under leadership of the Omedla Division, Fano forces in Qwara region have launched successful attacks for two consecutive days on three military camps, resulting in heavy casualties among regime forces. The attacked camps were: Asol, where riot dispersal forces and state militia forces were stationed; Shimel-Eger, where riot dispersal forces were stationed; Alemu-Ber, where regular regime military forces were stationed; regime forces suffered significant losses in the intense fighting, and Fano forces were able to recapture several towns and strategic locations in Qwara Woreda.
- On May 21st, Fano forces supported by local farmers armed with traditional weapons, regained control of most of Qwara Woreda by defeating regime forces stationed in various locations. While Fano forces led by Shegaw have played a role in the fighting, the majority of the resistance against regime forces has come from farmers who view the current regime as an adversary of the Amhara people. The defeated regime forces retreated to Sudan and Altash Park, an area known for its dense and impenetrable forest in the region.
- On May 21st there was fierce fighting between Fano forces and regime forces in Qwara Woreda. In this fighting Fano forces took the upper-hand position and they

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managed to control large portions of Qwara Woreda.

## **Violations of International Humanitarian Law**

- The extrajudicial killings and rape in Simada Woreda highlight the ongoing atrocities being committed by regime forces in retaliation for their losses to Fano. The massacre of civilians and the rape of a young woman constitute war crimes and further demonstrate the brutality of the regime's response to the conflict.
- The hostage-taking of civilians in Simada Woreda and elsewhere who are not actively participating in hostilities constitutes a grave war crime. These actions violate international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights.
- The formal decision to target civilians by Tach Gayint Woreda officials is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. Civilians are protected from direct attack and may not be targeted in reprisals. The decision by the military command post in South Gonder Zone to target civilians is a grave escalation of the conflict. It represents a serious war crime that must be condemned and punished.
- The abduction of civilians in Guna Begemidir Woreda including of a 3-month-old infant is a war crime as it involves the taking of hostages who are not involved in the conflict. The fact that regime forces have resorted to taking infants and spouses of suspected Fano fighters captive are clear signs of weakness and desperation, and further undermines the legitimacy of the regime's actions. The action of regime forces violates the following Geneva conventions:
  - Article 3 common to all four Geneva Conventions: *“Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any*



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*adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.”*

- Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention: *“No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited.”*
- Article 34 of the Fourth Geneva Convention: *“The taking of hostages is prohibited.”*

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## 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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+1-404-458-7046
- To make donations: <https://www.amharaamerica.org/get-involved>



**Amhara Association  
of America**

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