



Update on Developments in Ethiopia – June 6, 2023

Executive Summary

As of June 6th, 2023, the Oromo Prosperity Party regime has continued ethnic and religious based attacks causing widespread civilian casualties in various parts of the country, which has prompted condemnation from the public and various organizations.

- The Oromo Prosperity Party-led Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) has continued its bombardment of civilian populations throughout Amhara Region and particularly in the North Shewa, South Wollo and East Gojjam Zones, after failing to neutralize Fano. Indiscriminate shelling has caused scores of civilian casualties and property destruction.
- Amhara resistance has continued with protests across the Welkait Tegede Setit Humera Zone of Amhara Region, Ethiopia. Residents of multiple towns called for recognition of their Amhara identity and administration under the Amhara Region.
- Amhara farmers continue protests in response to the government’s apparent withholding of critical farming supplies (e.g. seeds and fertilizer) which threatens creating a food and economic crisis in Amhara Region and elsewhere in the country.
- Authorities arrest author, blogger and human rights activist Assaye Derbie.

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- Oromia Region forces and Addis Ababa security forces opened fire on unarmed civilians (Muslim worshippers) in front of the Grand Anwar Mosque for the second consecutive Congregational Prayers.

Compiled updates on various ongoing developments are available below.

Update on War in Amhara Region and Related Developments

- According to various independent media outlets including Ethio-News, a grand rally was held in all towns of the Welkait Tegede Setit Humera Zone (Amhara Region) on June 4th, 2023 calling for an answer to the decades-old Welkait-Amhara identity question.
 - Among the chants/messages heard at the rally were:
 - * Welkait-Tegede is the source of Amhara ancestry
 - * We have room for guests but not criminals
 - * We paid the price for our freedom, not to return to occupation
 - * We said we are Amhara, we didn't say let us become Amhara
 - * The Welkait-Tegede Amhara question is absolutely just and legal
 - * We would not ask for what we do not deserve nor give up what is ours
 - * We need justice and reparations for the genocide committed against the Welkait-Tegede Amhara people
 - * We are victims, not victimizers, we are massacred not massacring, occupied not occupying, displaced not displacing
 - * It is not acceptable for victimizers to steal the tears of the victims!
 - * Our border with Tigray is the Tekeze (river)
 - The protesters also condemned the recent report from Human Rights Watch which framed Amharas as perpetrators, while ignoring atrocities against

Amharas including three decades of ethnic cleansing by TPLF against Amharas, as baseless and fabricated.

- Since late May 2023, the Oromo ENDF has begun a new wave of military offensives throughout the North Shewa, South Wollo and East Gojjam Zones of Amhara Region which have led to widespread civilian casualties. Though federal forces have been unable to achieve any significant military victories against Fano forces, they have intensified attacks on civilian populations in the absence of any military targets. The federal forces in collaboration with local officials have also tried to compel locals to support their campaign to disarm and attack Fano however they have largely been met with refusal.

Update on situation in North Wollo Zone of Amhara Region

- According to Ethio-News, the TPLF's Army 26 and reinforcement forces loaded in 40 trucks were spotted near Korem and Chercher, approaching the Raya area of Amhara Region.¹
- According to Ethio-News, the Jara IDP camp (Habru Woreda, North Wollo Zone), over 3,000 IDPs are left in dire humanitarian situation without access to basic needs such as food, water, and medicine. Three of the IDPs have died due to hunger.

Update on situation in East Gojjam Zone of Amhara Region

- According to DW Amharic, scores of people were killed and injured in the Debre Elias Selassie Monastery located in Deglo Kebele of Debre Elias Woreda (East Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region).² The report revealed the army launched heavy artillery fire which causing scores of worshippers to be killed.

¹See the media [report](#) from Ethio-News on June 6, 2023

²See the media [report](#) on May 31st, 2023.

Over 600 people were living in the monastery during the time of the attack and an estimated 95% either sustained injuries, were killed or were scattered in the attack. Sources added the church itself sustained damages

- Voice of Amhara also reported monks are being abducted by the government security forces in Debre Elias Monastery (Debre Elias Woreda, East Gojjam Zone). Several monks and orphaned children who were up brought by the monastery were also killed in the monastery by ENDF since May 26, 2023. Many more orphan children were also went missing and severely injured. Four churches inside the monastery were completely destructed by heavy artillery shells of ENDF. Many more ENDF soldiers are also deployed. The Government Media are preparing a fabricated documentary to accuse religious monks of providing military training to overthrow the government. They are also compelling monks to act in the being made documentary and kill those who are not voluntary to do so.
- On June 3rd, 2023, guards of St. George in Kesela Kebele were arrested and have yet to be released. Regarding Debre Selassie Monastery (East Gojjam Zone), local residents told DW that over 95% of monks of the monastery had fled, were killed or injured. Four of the churches in the monastery were damaged.

Update on situation in South Wollo and North Shewa Zones of Amhara Region

- According to Voice of Amhara, on June 6, 2023, the ENDF soldiers opened fire on residents in the Merhabete areas of the North Shewa Zone using heavy artilleries and group weapons.³ Farmers were killed by heavy artillery shells fired by ENDF while working on their farms. Many more houses were struck

³See the media [report](#) from Voice of Amhara on June 6, 2023

by the heavy artillery shells. Following failure to penetrate the defense of local Fano, the ENDF have taken retaliatory measures on civilians. In the same way, civilians, including a woman making injera (bread), were killed by the shells in Mida Woremo Woreda of the same zone.

- As of June 6, 2023, the local strike and lockout in Majete (North Shewa Zone) following the brutal killing of youths continued for the second day. Security houses are also carrying out house-to-house searches in the town. In Dera Woreda (North Shewa Zone, Oromia Region) over 14 Amhara residents were abducted and their whereabouts are unknown. During the last abduction, two of the victims were found dead. For that reason, many youth are leaving their homes. The victims are being accused of being Fano.
- On June 3rd, 2023, in Milewa 01 Kebele (Ambassel Woreda, South Wollo Zone), several bodily injuries were reported following a clash between Fano and local police and state militias who were assigned to disarm and attack Fano. Many of the security forces did not return from the areas where they were sent.
- On June 2nd, 2023, in Jama and Were-Ilu (South Wollo Zone), and in Mida and Meragna areas (North Shewa Zone) meetings between the local administration and ENDF leaders on one hand and the local people on the other were held to discuss how the local people should hand over the Fano militias. The people rejected the idea of surrendering Fano to the ENDF. Over 40 state militias sent and logistically supported by ENDF to attack Fano did not return from the battlefield, it is suspected that they joined Fano. The local leaders in Were-Ilu and Jama opposed the so-called law enforcement operation mentioning it is farming season whereas in Mida Woremo and Meragna areas a 6-month curfew and ENDF Command Post has been declared upon the consent of the local leadership.

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- In Merhabete, six youth were shot by police and house-to-house search, harassment is ongoing. Today alone, 7 youths were arrested. In the town education has stopped because ENDF is using schools as military camp. In Shewa Robit and surroundings, heavy gunfire was being heard last night. Six community elders and youths were arrested and still under detention accused of collaborating with Fano.
 - In Majete town, a strike has been held in opposition of brutal and public execution of youths on June 2 and abduction of more youths by ENDF. Alemu is one of the executed youths. Just outside Ataye town, other youths were horrifically executed by security forces.
 - Residents of Ensaro Woreda, North Shewa Zone have been under persistent attack from the military. On June 1st, 2023, two civilians (mother and child) were killed by ZU-23 in their home due to irresponsible attack of the ENDF.
 - Since May 30th, 2023, federal forces also opened attacks on Alem-Ketema town (Merhabete Woreda) and Mida Woreda. In Alem-Ketema town, the army began by targeting the Merhabete Woreda police station and then continued with indiscriminate killings of civilians. The attack on Mida Woreda (North Shewa Zone bordering Jama Woreda of the South Wollo Zone) began at a place called Kara Mishege. Throughout these areas, federal forces did not have clear targets and attacked civilians in their homes, workplace, sites of worship and more. On the afternoon of June 1st, 2023 the federal forces killed four civilians including two men and two women in Tegora Kebele (Mida Woreda, North Shewa Zone).
 - Due to the attack in these areas various human rights violation is committed by the ENDF against the civilians. The violation includes but not limited killing, physical injury, torture and unlawful detention.



(a)



(b)

Figure 1: Photographs of the late Beriye Abera, a farmer in Abaytir Kebele of Kewet Woreda (North Shewa Zone, Amhara Region) who was killed by the Oromo ENDF.

| No. | Victim Name | Outcome | Occupation | Age | Woreda | Kebele |
|-----|------------------------|---------|---------------|-----|-------------|------------|
| 1 | Priest Dereje Nigussie | Death | Clergyman | 50 | Kewet | Medina |
| 2 | Babye Yeshidane | Death | Farmer | 40 | Kewet | Medina |
| 3 | Agezewe Begashaw | Death | Farmer | 45 | Kewet | Sefi Beret |
| 4 | Beriye Abera | Death | Farmer | 40 | Kewet | Abaytir |
| 5 | Ayfoker Zeyede | Death | Farmer | 16 | Kewet | Medina |
| 6 | Wondessen Aragie | Death | Farmer | 18 | Kewet | Medina |
| 7 | Chaine Misganaw | Death | Daily laborer | 32 | Shewa Robit | 3 |
| 8 | Ayalkebet Mulatu | Death | Daily laborer | 23 | Kewet | Sefi Beret |
| 9 | Minda Gedele | Death | Farmer | 26 | Kewet | Tanbaber |
| 10 | Gezahegn Yigezu | Death | Farmer | 24 | Kewet | Tanbaber |
| 11 | (Name unconfirmed) | Death | Farmer | | Merhabete | Kora-Atamo |
| 12 | Felekech Nigusse | Death | Farmer | | Mida | Tegora |
| 13 | Tafete Yazew | Death | Child | 12 | Mida | Tegora |
| 14 | Alemayehu Shifera | Injury | Farmer | 49 | Kewet | Sefi Beret |
| 15 | Beletewe Tafiso | Injury | Farmer | 32 | Welo | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|--------|--------|----|-----------|----------------|
| 16 | Abushe Belayhune | Injury | Trader | 29 | Merhabete | Alem-Ketema 02 |
| 17 | Mindahune Chenkele | Injury | Trader | 32 | Merhabete | Alem-Ketema 01 |
| 18 | Abraham Telaye | Injury | Farmer | 25 | Merhabete | Yelma |
| 19 | Gureye Belaye | Injury | Farmer | 35 | Merhabete | Kora-Atamo |
| 20 | Gezu (last name unknown) | Injury | Farmer | 42 | Merhabete | Kora-Atamo |

- According to one AAA source, the Oromo ENDF killed his brother and other individuals in their village. Wondessen Aragie, returned from Saudi Arabia a month before he was killed by the ENDF. The source mentioned the individuals killed were all unarmed civilians. In Wondessen’s case, the killing was from an explosive thrown by the ENDF.
- According to a relative of the late Ayfoker Zeyede there were shooting around Shewa Robit town. At the time of the incident Ayfoker Zeyede, a minor, was in his house prior to the fire and was unarmed. He had left his home to see what was happening in the area and he was killed by the ENDF in his village in an arbitrary manner.
- According to another source, the late Priest Dereje Nigussie was in his village during the indiscriminate attack on residents by the ENDF. Priest Dereje was killed along with other neighbors around their home. The cause of death was once again an explosive launched by the ENDF.
- A relative of the late Beriye Abera reported his brother was searching for his lost cow when the ENDF began their indiscriminate attack on their village. The ENDF attack killed Beriye Abera and other civilians from their village. The dead body of Beriye Abera was found after the community began an intensive search the next morning.
- Ethio-News reported members of National Movement of Amhara (NaMA) party

and the Amhara Regional Council released a press statement under the heading of “*an anti-Amhara measure in the name of law enforcement to ensure group hegemony should stop.*” The law enforcement is being undertaken in the calculation of suppressing any bargaining power from the Amhara.

- On June 2nd, 2023, the Bahir Dar and surrounding area High Court ruled in favor of releasing Fano Zemene Kassie (commander of the Amhara Popular Force) who has been illegally detained since September 2022.

Amhara farmers protest in response to denial of agricultural inputs supply

- In recent weeks, farmers in Amhara Region have staged peaceful protests due to denial of agricultural input supplies such as seeds and fertilizer. Agriculture is the means of livelihood for the vast majority of residents in the region and beyond, however since the war in northern Ethiopia, the government has failed to provide adequate supplies. In the current harvest season, authorities were scheduled to deliver necessary supplies but did not deliver. This prompted discussions with farmers unions and locals who inquired into the matter but they were met with mixed responses including outright denial of the problem.
- In an interview with regional state media, the Head of Amhara National Regional State Agriculture Bureau, Hailemariam Kefyalew (Ph.D.), said “*fertilizer is abundant*” in denial of the reported shortage and redirected the problem to subordinate officials and farmers’ unions.⁴ On the other hand, the FDRE House of Peoples’ Representatives Agricultural Affairs Standing Committee visited the farmers’ unions in North and South Mecha Woredas in which the unions affirmed that available input supplies are not sufficient and farmers told the committee

⁴See the [interview](#) of Amhara Region Agriculture Bureau Head Hailemariam Kefyalew on state media outlet, Amhara Media Corporation.

members they are “engulfed with lack of inputs”.⁵



(a)



(b)



(c) Farmers from Asinuara Kebele (North Achefer Woreda) sharing maize seed with a coffee cup.

Figure 2: Farmers from Yilmana Densa Woreda (West Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region) rallying a peaceful demonstration requesting the government to supply agricultural inputs. (Photo Credit: Amhara Media Corporation)

- On May 31st, 2023, DW Amharic reported that farmers from Debremawi Kebele of Yilmana Densa Woreda (West Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region) travelled to Bahir Dar where they held peaceful protests.⁶
- The severe shortage of agricultural inputs in the Amhara Region, and the failure of authorities to respond to it, has led protesters to accuse the government of deliberately withholding supplies. Denying resources is used as a means of impoverishing the people and threatening their existence. The consequences will include reduced economic development, severe reduction in agricultural production,

⁵See the media [report](#) on June 3rd, 2023 by state media Amhara Media Corporation.

⁶See the media [report](#) from DW Amharic. AAA supplemented the report with English subtitles [here](#).

which will affect the income and livelihoods of the affected communities. As a result, those impacted will lack the financial resources and purchasing power needed to meet their basic needs, including food. This can result in a vicious cycle of poverty, malnutrition, and poor health outcomes. Politically, the shortage of agricultural input supplies is indicative of bad governance including failure to fulfill basic functions of government at the regional level. The inequity and lack of access to essential inputs also further marginalizes the affected communities from political participation and diminishes their ability to participate in decision-making processes which affect their lives. By and large, the long-term implications of denying agricultural input supplies to specific groups of people are severe and go beyond mere economic consequences. It also undermines democracy, human rights, and social justice, and significantly impacts social cohesion and stability in society. This lack of input supplies in the Amhara Region is a clear denial of resources meant to be equally shared for all and will create discord in the socioeconomic and political order on a national level. Overall, the way both the Federal and Regional Governments are disregarding the issue is worrisome.

Update on ethnic and religious based abuses in Addis Ababa

Protests in response to mosque demolitions in and around Addis Ababa

- According to reporting by VOA Amharic, the Oromia Regional State established a new city called Sheger by annexing lands from outskirts Addis Ababa; the city administration in association with the regional police force begins to demolitions of residents' houses, religious institutions and any building which belongs to non-Oromo's, especially ethnic Amhara's. The Oromo government demolished tens of thousands individuals' homes, Orthodox churches and mosques. According to Ethiopian institution of Ombudsman more than 100,000 houses are demolished after

the regional government announced the formation of Sheger city.⁷

- These actions of the government triggered protests from members of the Muslim community. On June 2nd, 2023, protesters in Addis Ababa expressed their anger against the government in many mosques. The majority of the protests were peaceful and ended in a peaceful manner. However, there were gross human rights violations committed against worshippers during Friday Prayers (Congregational Prayer) in front of the Grand Anwar Mosque in Addis Ababa. The Republican Guard, Federal Police and Addis Ababa Police reportedly encircled the mosque before worshippers gathered. Following the end of the prayers, the participants reportedly tried to repeat their protest from the previous week in a peaceful manner. However, the security forces who surrounded the mosque immediately took action to silence the protesters. They just begin firing directly towards the crowd including towards the inside of the mosque and the gates of the mosque were completely closed by security forces. According to Zemedkun Birru, Head of the Addis Ababa City Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, eight civilians were killed by bullets fired from security forces.⁸
- The majority of the worshippers were held captive by police inside the mosque until 8:00 pm local time. Authorities nearly used the Grand Anwar Mosque as a temporary detainment site. Finally, ambulances were restricted from transporting the wounded and dead persons to hospitals. AAA verified the deaths of three individuals in the June 2nd attack whose names are:

1. Anwar Serure
2. Zubeyer Mudesir
3. Ibrahim Denbel

⁷See the media [report](#) from VOA Amharic.

⁸See the media [report](#) from Addis Maleda on June 4, 2023.



(a) Pictured is the late Abubeker Elias Hussein



(b) Pictured is the late Seraj Mohammed



(c) Pictured is the late Jemal Redawen (17-years-old)

Figure 3: Pictured are civilians who were killed during the protests held in Addis Ababa city during Friday Prayers on May 26th, 2023.

Ongoing Arrests

- According to multiple sources, on June 5th, 2023, blogger, author and human rights activist Assaye Derbie has been arrested from his residence in Addis Ababa by government security forces, and his whereabouts are unknown.⁹

Response from Human Rights Organizations in Ethiopia

- The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) released a report detailing recent arrests and enforced disappearances throughout Ethiopia.¹⁰ EHRC also reported enforced disappearance having taken place in Amhara, Addis Ababa and Oromia Regions. In Oromia Region alone, seven people were arrested by security forces, and in Bahir Dar and Debre Birhan, Amhara Region, security forces made their arrestees disappear. The crime is being committed in two ways, the first involves people being taken to police station informed they were suspected of a crime then taken away from police stations to secondary unknown locations, and alternatively, they would not be taken to police stations and their whereabouts would be unknown from the very beginning. The EHRC also released a report stating that Eritrean refugees were being arrested by security forces in Addis Ababa. Lastly, the EHRC has reported that more than 111,811 houses have been demolished and 500,000 individuals are internally displaced by the Oromia Region Government in collaboration with the Addis Ababa city administration.¹¹ The EHRC condemned the demolitions and displacement of residents calling it illegal and unacceptable.
- The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) released a statement urging the forceful measures by security forces to be stopped.¹² On May 26, 2023, following

⁹See the [media report](#) from Ethio-News.

¹⁰See EHRC [statement](#) on June 5th, 2023.

¹¹See the [statement](#) from EHRC.

¹²See EHRCO [statement](#).

opposition to destruction of mosques, many were killed and injured in Addis Ababa. In the next Friday June 2, similar incident happened. It also reported the deadly military measure in Debre Elias monastery since June 26. Farmers, monks and residents were injured and killed.

About Amhara Association of America (AAA)

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) is a non-profit civic organization located in Charlotte, North Carolina that investigates and documents human rights atrocities and repression against Amharas in Ethiopia. AAA seeks to inform U.S. policymakers, international human rights organizations, media, and all Ethiopian stakeholders to pressure Ethiopian leaders to change laws, policies, and practices in Ethiopia so perpetrators are held accountable and victims receive justice. AAA also collaborates with Amhara organizations in the U.S., supports independent Amhara organizations in Ethiopia, and provides humanitarian aid for Amharas impacted due to targeted ethnic attacks. AAA's funding comes directly from members and supporters; the organization is not affiliated with any Ethiopian or American political or governmental entities.

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