



# **Report on Atrocities against Amhara civilians by a Coalition of TPLF, OLA and Gumuz militants in the Awjemis Desert of Wuzka Kebele in Dangur Woreda in Metekel Zone**

## **Executive Summary**

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has verified from its sources that at least six people have been killed while an additional five have been abducted (presumed dead) by a coalition of militant groups in the Awjemis desert in Wuzka Kebele (ward) of Dangur Woreda (district) in Metekel Zone (Benishangul-Gumuz Region, Ethiopia) on May 29th, 2022. AAA's sources added that there was also at least one Amhara resident who sustained life-threatening injuries due to the attack. Besides the killings, kidnappings, and injuries, millions (ETB) worth in victims' property was lost to looting and destruction in the attack. AAA's sources confirmed that the attack had been perpetrated by a coalition of militants from the Gumuz rebel groups, Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) affiliated *Samri*<sup>1</sup>. AAA's sources also reported active

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<sup>1</sup>See AAA's [report on the November 9, 2020 Mai-Kadra massacre](#) during which TPLF allied militants including Samri killed more than 1,515 Amhara civilians in Mai-Kadra town

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participation from government officials at various levels in the targeted attack against Amhara civilians.

## **Details of the Attack**

The coalition of Gumuz rebels, OLA militants, and TPLF forces, specifically Samri militants, attacked Amhara civilians in Wuzka Kebele of Dangur Woreda (Metekel Zone, Benishangul-Gumuz Region) on May, 29th, 2022. According to AAA's sources, at least six Amhara civilians were killed, five were abducted (presumed dead), and another was injured. The residents of Wuzka Kebele, who witnessed the attack, described it as follows:

*“It happened on May 29th, 2022, the day was Sunday. Around 3 PM local time, the alliance of Gumuz rebels, OLA, and TPLF forces called themselves Samri, started to attack on Amhara civilians in Wuzka Kebele of Dangur Woreda, in the Metekel Zone. The perpetrators were many, numbering between 150 to 200 armed forces. The alliance of these perpetrators was also supported by military-grade weapons such as biraen and dishqa.<sup>2</sup> We were about 20 to 30 farmers. We tried to defend ourselves but we couldn't cope with their attack which was supported by military-grade weapons. In the attack, at least six were killed immediately, which included four women and an additional two men. One of the women was pregnant. I couldn't remember her name though I knew her husband's name, Amanu. Another Amhara, whose name is Mersha, also faced life-threatening injuries due to the attack. We collected and buried six dead bodies of Amharas in Jawi Woreda's Fendika town in a church called Ayima Gabriel.”*

The victims' family members told AAA that were also Amharas who were abducted by the perpetrators. The sources reported that the abducted Amharas were presumed dead

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<sup>2</sup>Biraen and dishqa refer to military-issued light and heavy machine guns, respectively.

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based on past trends in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region and particularly in the Metekel Zone. Another resident of Wuzka Kebele of Dangur Woreda recounted his previous experiences and prognosis of the fate of abducted Amharas as follows:

*“There were also five others Amharas who have been kidnapped by the perpetrators. Three of them were women, while the other two were men. From the previous trends, the kidnapped Amharas will be used as a target for gun firing by the perpetrators. We expect that they will be killed very soon. Amharas who have resided in the Wuzka Kebele are also displaced at the moment due to the attack.”*

According to AAA’s sources, in total, at least six Amhara civilians have been killed and an additional five were abducted and presumed dead bringing the total dead to eleven <sup>3</sup>.

AAA’s sources also indicated that though there are various ethnic groups who live in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, the attacks specifically targeted Amhara civilians with impunity. AAA’s sources managed to identify names of ten of the victims in the Wuzka attack (including names of five of the killed victims, one injured victim and four abducted victims who are presumed dead) by name, sex, and outcome of the attack. The table below shows a list of five victims of the attack.

No	Victim name	Sex	Outcome of Attack
1	Amanu Andarge	M	Death
2	Fitfite Alamnew (pregnant wife of Amanu Andarge)	F	Death
3	Ewnet Ayalew Workneh	F	Death
4	Kassa Alebachew (a father of two)	M	Death
5	Abebu Kinde (sister of Kassa Alebachew)	F	Death
6	Masresha (last name unknown)	M	Injured
7	Awoke (last name unknown)	M	Abducted

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<sup>3</sup>presumption based on past trends of attacks from these perpetrators

8	Zerfe Alene	F	Abducted
9	Sewnet Misanew	M	Abducted
10	Enanu Tsega	F	Abducted



**Figure 1:** Photographed is Amanu Andarge (right) and his wife Fitfite Alamnew (left) who was pregnant at the time. Both Amanu and Fitfite were killed in the attack.

## Property Destruction and Looting

According to AAA’s sources, property belonging to Amharas estimated in the millions has been destroyed and looted due to the attack in Awjemis desert of Wuzka Kebele (Dangur Woreda, Metekel Zone). The sources reported that the destruction and looting of the property was on a large-scale and it was difficult to provide a specific estimate. A survivor of the attack reported the property destruction as follows:

*“I can’t estimate the amount of property destroyed or looted in this attack.*

*What I can say at the moment is that very large amounts of property*

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*belonging to Amharas have been destroyed by the attack. Let me share with you one of the wealthy men whose property had been destroyed. His name is Ato Asfaw Zeleke. The attack targeted his camp and all the property in the camp had been destroyed. There are also many other Amhara farmers whose properties have been looted in the attack. But I can't estimate the actual damage incurred to properties belonging to Amharas by this attack."*

An eyewitness also reported that 150 cattle, 250 donkeys, and 350 containers of anti-weed chemicals and pesticides were destroyed and looted in Wuzka Kebele as follows:

*"More than 150 cattle and 250 donkeys were looted. In addition, over 350 cartons of pesticides, and anti-weed were destroyed and looted. They also destroyed and looted soy seeds. The perpetrators looted as much as they could and they destroyed anything they couldn't carry. All destroyed property was carried to Anjakuya, an area in the Dangur Woreda of Metekel Zone where the coalition forces provided training to its members."*

## **State Complicity**

AAA's sources reported that government officials at different levels were aware of the attacks and atrocities against Amhara civilians in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, specifically in the Metekel Zone. The sources reported despite government officials having prior information about the attack against Amharas, they failed to protect civilians from the attacks of the terrorists and rebel groups. Besides the government officials' failure to protect civilians, there were regional, zonal, and woreda-level administrators and officials who participated in the attacks against Amharas.

AAA's sources reported state compliance with the perpetrators at various levels such as at federal, regional, zonal, and woreda levels as *"we have reported the attacks that target the*

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*Amharas in different times. But no one was interested in protecting us*". Besides these, the victims and survivors reported that the government forces and officials targeted Amharas who organized and defended themselves. One of the survivors reported the situation as follows:

*"I participated in the fight against TPLF last summer on the Wollo front. When I returned to my home, I was providing military training so that the Amharas could defend themselves from the attacks that are perpetrated by various rebel and terrorist groups. However, the government security forces in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region detained me for months. There are higher officials of the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State that support the Gumuz rebel groups, which mainly attack Amharas in the region."*

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## 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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