



Identity-based massacre of civilians by Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) militants in Fentale Woreda of East Shewa Zone in Oromia Region

The identity-based massacre

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has verified information from survivors, eyewitnesses, and colleagues of victims that militants of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) extra-judicially killed 12 civilians (of which 9 are ethnic Amharas) and injured an additional 6 people in Abadir camp, owned by the Metehara Sugar Factory. The extra-judicial killings occurred in Fentale Woreda, East Shewa Zone (Oromia Region, Ethiopia) on September 30th, 2022. Most of the victims were workers of the sugar factory and they were targeted on ethnically-motivated grounds.

According to AAA's sources, beginning from around 8:00 a.m., the OLA militants roamed the camp and took prisoner any non-Oromo they could find in homes and streets. Local collaborators helped the OLA militants to identify non-Oromo residents who became targets of the attack. After taking 23 people prisoner, of which 22 were non-Oromos, mainly Amharas, the militants gathered the 22 prisoners in a sugar cane farm located just outside the camp. One of the prisoners (the 23rd) was released because he managed to

prove his Oromo identity. Then at around 9:00 a.m., the OLA militants opened fire on the civilians, killing 12 and injuring an additional 9.

The employer of some of the victims, who is now displaced from Metehara town following the massacre, described the context and the ethnically motivated nature of the massacre:

“Workers under myself and my colleagues were killed while they entered the camp from the workplace for breakfast. I was delayed for a little bit to finish off work I had begun. If I had not been delayed, I would have shared their fate. As I confirmed, around 8:00 a.m., they (OLA) began to enter the camp from three directions and searched for non-Oromos across homes and streets. They took many people prisoner in such a way. Then they began confiscating the prisoners’ mobiles and money. Then they took them to a sugar farm located about 40 meters from the camp. (Once in the farm) Then they opened automatic gunfire on them. 12 were killed and 6 were injured. The deceased included 9 Amharas, 1 Hadiya, 1 Gurage, and 1 Kembata. No Oromo was killed or targeted. They released one of their prisoners when he later proved his Oromo identity.”

An eyewitness, who is now displaced from Metehara town, also explained the identity of the perpetrators and their activities at the time of the incident:

“They (OLA) have collaborators amongst those who were living with us. They (the collaborators) used to say us to leave their land because they believed it belongs exclusively to them (Oromos) alone. On September 30th, 2022, they (OLA) entered the camp from three gates. My home is just at the tip of the camp. I saw two of them (the OLA militants). They wore Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) uniforms. They carried guns. Their hair was plaited and too overgrown spread up to their flank. I saw they stopped a taxi driver.

His name is Temesgen Eniyew. There were two others inside the taxi, one was Temesgen's assistant by the name of Yigerem Nigussie and the other was Abiti Dessalegn. Then they (OLA militants) ordered Temesgen to drive to a place they wanted. I eventually heard Temesgen was killed, Nigussie was able to escape and I do not know the fate of Abiti. When I saw that they took them, I hid in a maize farm in the backyard of my home. After a while, I heard automatic gunshots. That was what killed the victims. After that, I was displaced to Metehara town."

A survivor who was one of the prisoners taken for execution but survived miraculously explained what happened at the crime scene:

"I am ethnically Hadiya. I was at home for breakfast. When I saw them I thought they were members of our defense forces (ENDF). This was because they wore the old defense forces' (ENDF) uniform. There were a total of 12 in number. They had guns and one machine gun. They took me and brought me to others who were collected from nearby homes, outside, and the streets. We, the prisoners, totaled 23 in number. Then they took us to a sugar farm and gathered us. Finally, three of them (OLA militants) opened automatic fire on us all. While people in front of me were hit by the bullets they fell over me. Then I became covered in blood and pretended as if I was killed. Two others whose names are Zeleke Anjilo and Atnafu Anjilo were also saved in a similar way. Another guy who was an assistant of a driver (Yigerem Nigussie) ran and escaped moments before the killing. 12 of them died instantly and 6 were injured. Minutes before the execution, a guy whose name I don't know was set free after he talked to them in Oromiffa (language of the Oromo people). I guess he convinced them he is an Oromo."

Eleven of the deceased victims, who are followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Chris-

tian faith, were buried in a mass grave in Addis Ketema Medhanialalem Church graveyard, located in the same woreda (Fentale), while a Muslim victim by the name of Yasin Siraj was buried in a Muslim cemetery located in the town. Regarding the injured ones, four of them (Belayneh Baburie, Fentahun Mekonnen, Negash Bekele, and Masresha Awoke) are receiving treatment in a hospital owned by the sugar factory in Metehara town located in the same woreda (Fentale). Whereas two gravely injured victims (Gashaw Melese and Kebede Alemu) were referred to Nazreth city for further medication and treatment.

Below is list of victims (killed and injured) of the attack perpetrated by OLA militants in Fentale Woreda (East Shewa Zone, Oromia Region) on September 30, 2022.

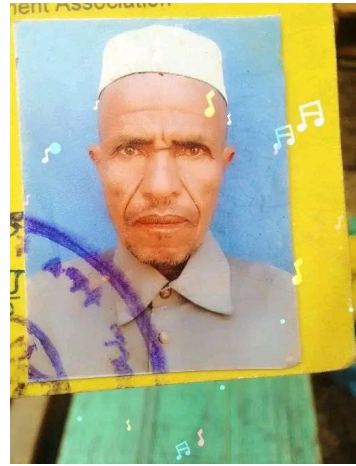
No.	Name of victim	Age	Sex	Outcome of the attack	Ethnicity
1	Reta Semon	40	M	Death	Amhara
2	Fisseha Debalkew	21	M	Death	Amhara
3	Atnafu Yohannes	26	M	Death	Hadiya
4	Shambel Mekonnen	35	M	Death	Amhara
5	Abraham Addisie	34	M	Death	Amhara
6	Temesgen Eniyew	31	M	Death	Amhara
7	Kebede Dessalegn	28	M	Death	Amhara
8	Teshoma Sepa	31	M	Death	Kembata
9	Fentahun Asmare	33	M	Death	Amhara
10	Alemayehu Dessalegn	28	M	Death	Amhara
11	Yasin Siraj	41	M	Death	Gurage
12	Belayneh Baburie	54	M	Injury	Kembata
13	Fentahun Mekonnen	38	M	Injury	Amhara
14	Negash Bekele	24	M	Injury	Amhara
15	Kebede Alemu	46	M	Injury	Kembata
16	Masresha Awoke	30	M	Injury	Amhara
17	Gashaw Melese	24	M	Injury	Wolayta



(a) Abraham Addisie



(b) Reta Semon



(c) Yasin Siraj



(d) Temesgen Eniyew



(e) Fisseha Debalkew



(f) Shambel Mekonnen



(g) Atnafu Yohannes



(h) Kebede Dessalegn

Figure 1: Photographs of some of the deceased victims.

Internal displacement following the massacre

Survivors, mainly workers of the Metehara sugar factory, and their families recounted to AAA that they were displaced to different areas from the camp and that the camp is vulnerable to another round of attacks by the OLA. Around 2,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are currently taking shelter in Merti Public School, located in Metehara town, Fentale Woreda (East Shewa Zone, Oromia Region). The IDPs had also complained to the government that they are neither provided with security guarantees to return home nor provided necessary aid such as food, mattresses, and other basic needs. According to the IDPs, the government refused to administer aid because they wanted the IDPs to return home, where they would be unsafe and vulnerable to more attacks by the OLA. For instance, aid that was made ready by the Ethiopian Red Cross was prohibited by local authorities from being disbursed to IDPs.



(a)



(b)

Figure 2: Photographs of IDPs displaced from the massacre staying in a temporary IDP shelter in Merti Public School (located in Metehara town, Fentale Woreda, East Shewa Zone, Oromia Region).

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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