

Oromia Support Group submissions concerning human rights to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Ethiopia, 4th Cycle, April 2024.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reviews the human rights records of countries every five years in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Submissions to the UPR are largely based on recommendations which countries agreed to implement in the previous UPR cycle.

This document is a compilation of individual and joint submissions made by Oromia Support Group UK (OSGUK) and Oromia Support Group Australia (OSGA) in April 2024, for consideration by the UPR Working Group 47th Session in November 2024, whose report will be adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in its 58th Session, February – April 2025.

Under the following thematic headings are references to the page and paragraph numbers in the original submissions. Apart from omitting the explanatory opening paragraph from each submission, and the paragraph numbers required by the UPR, the text is exactly as written in the submissions, including recommendations agreed by Ethiopia at the previous UPR cycle in 2019 and recommendations made by OSG at the end of each thematic section. Alterations from the original text are in italics.

Numbers 50 to 65, in brackets at the end of paragraphs, refer to OSG reports which reference and source the information given in the preceding paragraph(s). All of these are published on the OSG website.¹ Other references are given as endnotes.

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Introduction

OSGUK Submission, p.1, paragraphs 2-3.

Recommendations from UPR 2019 which are applicable to the whole of this submission were 163.201, 163.203 and 163.218. Ethiopia agreed to implement 163.203 ‘Investigate and punish human rights violations which had occurred in various regions, in particular Amhara and Oromia, addressing various ethnic, social, economic and political dimensions (Mexico)’ This was not implemented.

Although Ethiopia did not agree to implement [*Recommendations*] 163.201 or 163.218, in response to 163.20, the State wrote ‘Ethiopia is committed to undertake effective and impartial investigations and ensure redress for victims of human rights abuse’ and, in response to 163.218, ‘Ethiopia is committed to the protection of civil and political rights.’ These commitments were not honoured.

Extrajudicial killings

OSGUK and OSGA Joint Submission, pp.1-5, paragraphs 2-21.

Ethiopia agreed to implement Recommendation 163.200 ‘Ensure independent and impartial investigations into cases of extrajudicial executions, and hold perpetrators to account.’ Its own security forces and Fano militia have perpetrated thousands of extrajudicial killings of Oromo civilians with impunity.

OSG reports describe killings and destruction of homes of Oromo civilians by Ethiopian government forces to remove the support base of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) – to ‘drain the ocean to kill the fish’.ⁱⁱ And by Fano militantsⁱⁱⁱ in acts of ethnic cleansing.

OSG has now recorded 5,425 Oromo civilians killed since the end of 2018. This is a small fraction of the total. Where information is more systematically collected, as in five districts of West Wallega zone, many more abuses are reported,^{iv} but even then, data are far from complete.

Most of the recorded killings, over 3,300, were after the beginning of 2022. Of these, over 1,330 were in the four Wallega zones and more than 1,380 were in North and West Showa.

Fano and other Amhara forces were responsible for most of the 740 killed in Oromia Special Zone, Amhara region, from 2021 to 2023, and almost all 960 killed in Horo Guduru and East Wallega zones since January 2022 (see Instigated violence, pp.12-21, below).

The same forces have been responsible for killings and ethnic cleansing in East Showa but the killing there of Karrayyu Gadaa leaders in 2021,^v most of the deaths in North and West Showa, and the majority of at least 1,200 killings in Qellem and West Wallega since early 2020 have been at the hands of federal and Oromia Region security forces, operating from Command Posts in the case of Qellem and West Wallega zones. (65)

Fano forces continue to attack and kill Oromo from the Oromia Special Zone located within Amhara Region, attacking settlements and travellers to and from the enclave, and in zones of Oromia Region which are adjacent to Amhara Region (Horo Guduru, East Wallega, East Showa and Southwest Showa – see Instigated violence, pp.12-21, below).

The killings of unarmed civilians have often been accompanied by extreme cruelty by Fano and by ENDF. Yet, disinformation is spread that Oromo forces are making unprovoked attacks on innocent Amhara populations in and around the edges of Amhara Region. This disinformation emanates from the Amhara diaspora, journalists influenced by them, Amhara academics, and individuals placed in national and international human rights bodies.

Extrajudicial killings of Oromo youth identified as ‘Qeerroo’

Members of the nonviolent Oromo youth movement, Qeerroo, were the prime target soon after Abiy Ahmed came to power and bore the brunt of lethal violence emanating from Command Posts in Oromia Region. Young men in villages, visiting home from university, in homes, on farms, leaving school, attending church or markets or just walking on the streets, were killed in such numbers that so many fled to major towns and cities such as Nekemte in East Wallega and Ambo in West Showa that there were noticeable demographic changes on their streets. Hundreds were taken from prison and summarily executed, their bodies thrown on the street or in the countryside. A few illustrative examples which reveal the pattern and nature of killings of Qeerroo follow:

1. Eight young men identified as Qeerroo were taken by government soldiers from their homes in Mexi Marami village, Nejo district, West Wallega, at night on 14 December 2020, gathered together and shot dead. Names of six were Diriba Tarfassa, Gutu Kumara, Balina Waqikene, Ebaa Mosissa and brothers Yigazu and Balina Kurayu.
2. 12th Grade student Lucho Tesfa was killed by government forces on his way to school to sit School Leaving Certificate examinations in Horo, Gidami district, Qellem Wallega, on 5 March 2021. Tadele Belay, also a 12th Grade student on his way to sit the same examinations on the other side of Wallega, in Jargedda district, Horo Guduru, was shot dead on the same day. (55)
3. Gutu Qalbessa Di’essa, 19, Chalia 01, Guliso, ‘officially elected Qeerroo’ was killed on 24 March 2021. The commander of Chalia military post, Sergeant Ebro Usen, personally killed him. Gutu lay bleeding on the ground for eight hours before he died, during which time he was forbidden help. His body remained for another six hours before his family were allowed to take him for burial. (56)
4. Gemechis Melaku was taken from his parents’ home in Boji Dirmaji, West Wallega, on 16 May 2021, by government soldiers and killed. His body was thrown in the forest, from where he was collected and buried next day. After the burial, soldiers ordered his family to open the grave and retrieve the coffin. Gemechis’ family were weeping as they did this. ‘The soldiers took out the body and threw it aside. Then they forced the mother to sit on the coffin. They made a show of taking a picture of her.’
5. Margaa Admasu Gute, 17, was killed at his parental home in Gimbi, West Wallega on 8 June 2021. Security forces, comprised of federal troops and Oromia and Amhara Special Forces, surrounded his father’s and other houses in Lalisa Sariti at 10.00 AM and began beating the occupants. The beatings continued throughout and after the shooting dead of Margaa, who was picking mangoes up in his father’s tree. The soldiers killed Margaa with nine bullets before cutting off his hands and feet in front of his family. His mother and father were tied together to witness this. When people came in response to hearing gunfire, they were beaten while soldiers took photographs of their dismembered victim. (57)
6. Two young men, Boru Guyo and Dereje Birhanu, were arrested in May 2021, accused of attending an anti-government protest in Hidi Lola town, Borana zone. They disappeared from custody in Miyo police station and were taken to an unknown place in the early hours of 19 July. A report on 15 October included video recording of two young men being taken into the bush in Hidi Lola district of Borana zone and shot dead.^{vi} One of the murdered youngsters was Dereje Birhanu. It is believed that Boru Guyo was the other victim. Several soldiers fired repeatedly at the men for over one minute. One of the victims was pictured on his knees, clutching his head following the

third shot, before he was felled by the fourth. At least 22 shots were fired into the men, many after they were lying on the ground in pools of blood. (58)

7. Four youths were taken out of detention in Nekemte, East Wallega, and executed on 17 December 2021 and their bodies ‘thrown on the fields.’ They were Abubakar Nuree, a resident of Nekemte; Nimona Ijjigu, from Chalia, West Wallega; Amanuel Habtamu, from Gori, West Wallega; and Zakiru (Sanyi) Itana, from Nunnu Qumba, East Wallega. There was a fifth victim, Robsan, from Sasiga, East Wallega, according to another informant. The young men were all active Qeerroo members. Abubakar Nuree was active in leading and coordinating Oromo protests from 2014 to 2018. Nimona Ijjigu was the author of a book ‘Alanfannaa Bishaani’. Abubakar Nuree and Nimona Ijjigu had been imprisoned in 2018 in Finfinnee Police Commission and Kilinto prisons, together with OLF leaders. They were released before being detained again in Nekemte. Their relatives were forbidden burial ceremonies. (59)
8. At least nine young men were abducted from a church in Maleko, Gidami district, Qellem Wallega on 24 November 2023, and killed. These ‘peaceful residents and students’ were separated from girls and women at an evening meeting of fasting and prayer. The soldiers beat the women and girls and took away eleven young men. The bullet-ridden bodies of nine of the young men were found three days later in the forest. Their bibles had been thrown on top of them. (64)
9. Some youngsters were publicly executed. For example, Amanuel Wondimu, a 17-year old Orthodox church trainee deacon, was paraded around Dembi Dollo, Qellem Wallega, with a pistol tied around his neck, before being shot dead at a busy traffic roundabout in the town on 11 May 2021, publicly and falsely denounced as an OLF member. (56)

Extrajudicial killings of persons accused of supporting Oromo Liberation Army (OLA)

Many young and old men and women have been killed because of real or fictitious links to the OLF (now legal) or OLA, or simply because they were Oromo – ‘drying out the ocean to kill the fish.’^{vii} A few examples follow:

1. At 4.00 am on 17 June 2019, soldiers surrounded the home of farmer Bikila Lamesa Nagaho in Homi, Melka Ebicha kebele, Babo Gambel district, West Wollega. They called him to come out from his bed and shot him dead at his gate, in front of his wife and two children. (51)
2. Two prisoners in Chiro Police Station, West Hararge, were taken by soldiers from custody in the police station and summarily executed on 29 August 2020. OLF member Imana Hasan had been held since 2019. His body was later found in the river. Maaaz Muse, a known OLF supporter, had been detained since 26 August before being executed. (53)
3. Four were named (Aliyi, Aba Gutema, Aba Amadin, Abdurahman) of six killed when soldiers burnt houses and fired on their occupants in a settlement of IDPs from Eastern Oromia in Gero Dingaja, Dapho district, Buna Bedele, Illubabor, on 15 April 2020. Two were burnt to death in their homes and two were shot as they ran. (52, 54)
4. On Sunday 15 November 2020, seven church-goers were stopped by soldiers on their way to a service in Shebel town, Anfilo district, Qellem Wallega, and shot dead on the road: Shone Raga, 25, Jorge Barkessa, 25, Isayas Israel, 15, Obsi Adino, 15, Zekiwo Oliqa, 20, Ramata Madad, 30, and an unidentified 19 year-old with them. (55)

5. Amanti Garado, about 70 years old, a respected elder and father of well-known Oromo artist, Gadisa, was taken from prison in Garba Guracha town, North Showa, where he had been detained for several weeks, and executed by government forces on 18/19 November 2021. He was detained and then killed with several shots to his forehead because his son, Gadisa's brother, is believed to have joined OLA. Obbo Amanti's body was discarded in the street and his family were not allowed to move him for most of the day. Proper funeral procedures were denied. He had been harassed for many years because of suspected support for the OLF. (58)
6. A father and son, Joonsee Biqila and Qananiisaa Joonsee, were shot dead while in police custody in Qalaaxee town, Abune Gindeberet district, West Showa on 11 March 2022. Joonsee was detained after his son had been abducted by rebel forces and a ransom paid. Qananiisaa presented himself to security forces and his father was released but was requested to attend the security office in the town court next day, whereupon they were both shot. They were dragged while Qananiisaa was still alive, to 'the main road for public view'. Qananiisaa 'didn't die immediately and suffered while people watching afraid to offer help.' They were buried on 12 March in their home town, Kachisi, capital of Gindeberet district. (59)
7. During a six-day period, 10-15 July 2022, 31 residents of a single village, Qondala 01, Begi district, West Wallega, were executed by ENDF Central Command, 7th Division. Two of the executed men, fathers of 3 and 4 children, were promised release on payment of 50,000 and 100,000 Birr (£800 & £1600). These sums were paid but 'they were killed anyway' and thrown on the street. The slaughtered men (all 31 named by OSG) included fathers of up to nine children and a teacher, but were mainly young men. (60)
8. Hundreds of civilians were killed when government forces launched attacks on villages in North and West Showa at the beginning of 2023 (after the signing of the COHA agreement Nov 2022). The campaign began in Fiche and Dera (Darra) districts of North Showa, then about one week later in Warra Jarso district. This was followed by attacks in Daro, Hidabu and Liban Qachame (North Showa), 'Da'ee Selassie' and several attacks in Faji Ejerso (West Showa). Attacks began with drones and heavy artillery and were followed up with ground troops. OSG's informant estimated that the attacks in January killed about 260 people in Liban Qachame, 180 in Faji Ejerso, 45 in Dera, 17 in 'Daro', 17 in Hidabu and 5 in 'Da'e Selassie'.
9. In mid-June 2023, within a single weekend, two atrocities occurred in Oosee kebele, about 25 km from Garba Guracha (Kuyu district) North Showa. A woman bringing home oil from a market was stopped on the road by government forces, accused of feeding OLA soldiers and killed on the spot. Another five women were shot dead while tending their cattle, because 'their husbands were not there' and were therefore presumed to have joined OLA.
10. Also, in Oosee kebele, at around the end of June, a breast-feeding mother was attacked by ENDF. Her baby was taken from her. Her breasts were cut off before she was killed by having her throat cut.
11. In May and June 2023, there were reports of live burials of five persons (two teachers and three students) in Mandi, West Wallega, and of six in Benguwa military camp, a few kilometres away, and the burning to death in their homes of 12 people in Homa, West Wallega, all perpetrated by ENDF who accused the victims of supporting OLA. (63)

12. A government military campaign involving aerial and heavy artillery attacks in North Showa, September to November 2023, killed at least 100 civilians in the last two weeks of October alone. The districts most severely affected were Darra, Warra Jarso, Hidabu Abote, Kuyu and Salalee. (64)

Killings of civilians as reprisal for battlefield losses

Some killings of individuals and groups are in reprisals for battlefield losses.

1. For example, at Wale Kilalo, a small place 15 km from Qaree Goha town (aka Goha Tsion), Warra Jarso district, North Showa, is a school for pupils up to 8th grade. On 24 or 25 September 2023, ENDF soldiers arrived in about seven small military vehicles, entered the school and opened fire, killing one 8th grade student and severely injuring another, in an unprovoked attack following an engagement with OLA in a nearby lowland area. The soldiers shouted that they were shooting at the school-students because they would 'turn into OLA'. (64)
2. Other group killings following military defeats include that of 18 men in Warra Jarso district, North Showa on 3 May 2022. Following military activity with OLA, combined government federal and regional forces rounded up young Oromo men in the district, including those attending wedding celebrations on 1 May, from Jamjam, Male and Aware localities, and detained them in several places. They were detained because they spoke Oromo and were therefore considered supporters of OLA. They were taken to a cliff top at Alante in the Nile valley on 3 May, shot dead while lying on the ground with their hands tied, and then pushed off the cliff. (OSG Report 60 contains this information, retrieved from the sole survivor of the incident.)
3. Between 14 and 16 June 2022, at least 50, probably hundreds, of Oromo residents of Gambella city were killed after OLA and Gambella Liberation Movement fighters attacked a weapons depot in the city the previous day. Oromo were rounded up in house-to-house searches, selected because they spoke Afaan Oromo. Some were summarily executed on the street. Others were beaten to death by Gambella Region security forces and members of the public. Fifteen or more were shot dead by a police officer when taking shelter in a police station in the city. Witnesses saw at least four trucks piled with bodies being taken for burial and estimate that several hundred were killed. Videos show the shooting of Hasan Anbese, with his hands tied behind his back and the beating and stoning to death of at least 12 civilians in a public open space. (60, 62, 63)

Extrajudicial killings carried out to terrify and intimidate the civilian population

Group killings of prisoners are recorded which terrify and outrage the local population who are forced to encounter culturally unthinkable atrocities. For example, the execution of 16 prisoners in Bishoftu, East Showa, was carried out at the end of April 2022. The detainees included men from Wallega and Gindeberet, West Showa, transferred from Finfinnee before being taken to the edge of a gulley, executed and thrown in. (60)

Other killings appear to have been casual and random. For example, mother of two, Yaquta Ahmed, was killed by soldiers when going to buy breakfast for her children on 19 June 2019 in Dire Dawa, East Hararge. Her body was left on the street. Another, Amsalu Gudeta, a mother of four in Kelay Birbir village, Lalo Asabi district, West Wallega, was shot in the neck and killed while working on her farm on 20 May 2019, later reported to be the result of a wager by a boastful soldier demonstrating his marksmanship. (52, 53)

The Karrayyu massacre, December 1, 2021, targeted venerated cultural spiritual leaders. See separate submission by Union of Oromo Communities in Canada.^{viii}

Killings by drone strikes

Killings in drone strikes have been indiscriminate. When groups of up to 40 farmers meet together outdoors to gather their crops communally, they often attract bombardment by drones reportedly because they are “suspected to be gatherings of OLA”. (63) These practices impact food production and harvest where these strikes occur.

1. Drone attacks have killed hundreds of civilians in Oromia since killing over 300 in Tigray between September 2021 and January 2022. Twenty were killed in Abune Gindeberet district, West Showa, on 22 April 2022. Several hundred died in six drone strikes in western Oromia, 20-24 October 2022, including over 150 in Meta Wolkite and Chobi districts, and more in Jeldu and Gindeberet districts, West Showa, Nuna Qumba in East Wallega and Fantale district, East Showa.
2. Further strikes hit Wama-Hagalo and Nuna Qumba in East Wallega on 30 October; Bila, West Wallega, on 2 November 2022, killing over 69; Nejo, West Wallega, on 3 November; Mendi, West Wallega, on 9 November, killing 33; Chobi again, on 14 November; Amaya, Southwest Showa on 22 November; and Begi, Qellem Wallega, on 26 November. Multiple strikes in the last week of November 2022 hit Kombolcha, Horo Guduru zone, and Faji Ejersa, Warra Jarso district, North Showa. About another 80 were killed in Warra Jarso on 2 December. Social media reports were also circulated of airstrikes in the Begi, Gidami, and Togo districts of West Wallega and Qellem Wallega zones on 5 December. (62)
3. On 25 December 2022, eight were killed by drone attack on a church compound in Horo Guduru zone; two died in Dadu village, Kombolcha district, Horo Guduru on 8 January; unknown numbers were killed in an attack on Kombolcha on 10 January and at least two civilians died in several drone and artillery assaults in Dadu, Kombolcha and Sulula Finca’a in Horo Guduru around mid-February 2024. There were two drone strikes in West Showa at the same time. (65)

As well as these drone attacks, heavy artillery bombardment on civilian areas was also reported at Nekemte in East Wallega on 10 November and at Wadessa in Ambo district, West Showa, on 22 November 2022. (62)

War Crime witnessed in Tigray

A nurse who was interviewed by OSG in Cairo in October 2022 told how he was tortured to coerce him to go to the Tigray war front, where he witnessed a war crime committed by ENDF forces against captured, wounded Tigrayan soldiers. Although some were critically ill, all their injuries were recoverable. All the men were conscious and had been interrogated. Nurses were handed pre-filled syringes by their superiors and ordered to inject the wounded soldiers. Between 40 and 50 soldiers were treated this way from January to June 2022. They fell unconscious and died 2-3 hours later. (61)

Deaths from Torture

Tolassa Kiishee, in his sixties and believed to be from Bako, W Showa, was arrested with two others in Gafarsa, Burayu area, Finfinnee, on 21 April, and tortured in Malka Gafarsa police station. Tolassa died from his torture injuries in the first hour after midnight that night, in front of ten other prisoners who were being tortured with him. His body was removed by police at about 5.30 a.m. and taken to an unknown place. (58)

Two interviewees among refugees in Cairo reported close relatives had died in 2021 as a result of torture in Ethiopia. Maftua Mohammed, mother of five and sister of Fu'ad, Interviewee 2, was detained in Chalanko prison, East Hararge, in 2021 and died of torture injuries after two months in detention. Leyla Jawaro, 25 year-old wife of Waliyi (Interviewee 49), was detained with their two month old baby for two one-year episodes between 2017 and 2021 in Adaba, West Arsi, and died from torture injuries in July 2021, five months after release. (61)

Recommendation

We recommend that all civilian deaths caused by ENDF and Fano forces should be investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.

Torture

OSGUK Submission, pp.1-2, paragraphs 4-7.

Ethiopia agreed to Recommendations 163.153 to 163.157, in particular 163.155 'Adopt all necessary measures so that acts of torture are not repeated, by ensuring that those responsible are brought to justice.' These were not implemented.

Detainees are commonly tortured

Four examples are given from Report 58, December 2021:

1. Yohannis Bookaa was severely tortured at Malka Gafarsa police station with several others on 21 April. He suffered a broken arm, leg and three fingers. Finger nails were removed from one hand.
2. Two examples of torture were among five women interviewed in Tullu Dimtu, an unofficial detention centre in Akaki Kaliti sub-city, Finfinnee. They were tortured and held as sex slaves because they were suspected of supporting the OLF. They were forbidden to meet or talk with each other, to be in the same room or eat together. They showed signs of physical and mental distress and reported their 'reproductive organ was the target of torture and they still suffer excruciating pain.' They were denied medical attention. Some became pregnant and gave birth in detention.
3. Sabontu Waliyi was detained in Shashemane police station on 4 July 2020. Police officers beat her severely in Shashemane and tortured her with electric shocks. Her uterus was damaged by repeated blows with a rifle butt. Beatings and sexual abuse caused persistent bleeding and infection for which hysterectomy was advised by hospital consultants. However, Sabontu was transferred to Tullu Dimtu and denied medical treatment.
4. Urji Alamayo was abducted in the Gafarsa area on 15 March 2021 and taken into police detention in Burayu, West Finfinnee. She was forced to strip naked in a room, full of police who jeered as she was hit repeatedly with a metal bar. Despite blows to her head, her skin remained unbroken and she did not bleed. The police joked that she was a 'budaadha', an evil-eyed spirit which kills and eats the dead. One produced a knife to stab her buttocks, to prove she would bleed, but was stopped. The beating continued. The police cut her hair, using a knife. She then felt excruciating jabs of pain as something sharp was repeatedly applied to different parts of her body [possibly electrodes or a taser] until she lost consciousness. Urji remained unconscious for two days and was partially paralysed when she recovered. She still has a stiff and weak right leg, which she cannot bend or straighten properly.

ENDF soldiers also torture members of the public

1. One example was filmed and posted on social media on 24 February 2024. It was described in Report 65. Ahmed Qasim was a young man, possibly a teenager, from Sarsara village, Goro Adola district in East Guji zone. He is shown lying in a pit, reportedly dug by him as his grave. Throughout the recording, a tall, well-built, uniformed soldier stands over, and often on, the body of Ahmed, who lies supine with his hands tied in front of him, wearing a cloth on his lower body which is gathered around his hips, and a tattered shirt.
2. The soldier taunts him in Amharic. They are surrounded by about 15 uniformed men, several of whom film the event. There is laughter and shouts of encouragement in Amharic throughout the video. The soldier strikes Ahmed on the head with his rifle butt before taking a bullet from his magazine clip and inserting it in one of Ahmed's nostrils. Another soldier whips Ahmed's legs with a stick, kicks him and strikes his left leg with his rifle butt.
3. The perpetrator squats on top of Ahmed and inserts his rifle barrel into Ahmed's mouth. He stands, rips away part of Ahmed's shirt and uses this to clean the rifle. He then bends forward to strike the side of Ahmed's head with his hand before repositioning himself with his booted feet on Ahmed's shoulder, chest and then abdomen.
4. The soldier then stands over Ahmed, with a bayonet attached to his rifle, taunting him and then twisting its point in Ahmed's upper right chest. Ahmed is terrified. The soldier questions Ahmed, holding the bayonet point against his throat before driving it into Ahmed's lower abdomen, thigh or genital area and twisting it repeatedly.
5. The soldier squats on top of Ahmed with a hand-knife poised over his face, then grabs and turns Ahmed's head, extending his neck and holds the knife against his throat, but does not draw blood. He stands on Ahmed's chest and abdomen, holds the knife point over Ahmed's face, before drawing it lightly twice across his chest. The soldier holds the knife as though about to stab him and then stands again on his body before wiping the knife on Ahmed's thighs. He then stands over Ahmed with the knife raised again as though to stab him in his face or upper body.
6. He slaps the flat side of the blade against Ahmed's face and head, all the time accompanied by laughter and taunts from onlooking soldiers. He points the knife at, then holds it against Ahmed's genital area before standing once again on his chest and abdomen. The video ends with the soldier standing over Ahmed with his knife in his left hand.
7. Ahmed was eventually killed. The video does not show Ahmed's death. It is not known what further atrocities were performed before he was murdered.

Recommendation

We recommend that domestic and international laws regarding torture should be fully enforced. All claims must be investigated and perpetrators brought to justice. Law enforcement officers should be adequately trained in human rights obligations and the implications of their breach.

Rape

OSGUK Submission, pp.2-3, paragraphs 8-10.

Ethiopia agreed to UPR Recommendations 163.284, 163.290 and 163.291 concerning sexual discrimination and violence, in particular 163.290 ‘Continue to take measures to prevent and protect women and girls from physical, emotional and sexual abuses and harmful practices.’ This has not been implemented.

Rape of women, girls and boys, by government security forces, security officials and Fano militia, in military camps, offices and prisons, is reported.

1. Eight Oromo girls in Guji, aged 12-18, and a pregnant woman were admitted to Bule Hora hospital for treatment after being raped by ENDF soldiers on 8 February 2019: Ushe Sibiru (pregnant woman); Beza Imush, 18; Hana Desta, 17; Tamire Gameda, 15; Bacho Warqi Agegneu, 13; Roman Abush, 12; Hiwot Safaye, 12; Isiyo Sali Molu, 12; and Zanu Tesfaye, 13. (50)
2. When government soldiers opened fire on 27 July 2019 and scattered men, women and children in Soda Garmama kebele, Melka Soda district, West Guji, they took about 20 women to Melka Soda military camp and raped them. Three were reported on 5 August to be in a critical condition: Dureti Haile, Elemo Dhadacha and Alima Jima. (51)
3. Ebise Eba was arrested in January 2019 by two local security officials who took her to Duqisa Megada administration office, West Guji, and raped her. They threatened to hand her over to ENDF soldiers to be killed if she did not comply. (52)
4. Eight year-old Senate Ephraim was taken from her home in Mandi, West Wallega, on 30 August 2020, and gang-raped by soldiers in the local military camp. She was described as being ‘between life and death.’
5. It was reported in September 2020 that five teenage schoolboys were taken from Jidola district, East Guji, and detained at a nearby military camp, where they were raped by soldiers: Gemechu Turi Bekelcha, 16; Ali Korojo Saqi, 16; Awel Gobena Guduba, 14; Melkamu Waldhabi Abatari, 17; and Tulisho Waldhabi Abatari, 15. (53)
6. Lomitu Dereje, five months pregnant, who was referred from Horo Guduru zone to Ambo Hospital, West Showa, for treatment for a heart problem, was taken to the Ambo Mayor’s Office compound on 20 July 2020 and raped by soldiers. She miscarried and was critically ill in hospital. (54)
7. West Wallega Human Rights Defenders, a local initiative that documents events in that region, named ten – eight girls and two women – of the many raped by government security forces in their report in April 2021. At least five were raped by three or more soldiers, including two sisters and their mother, and at least one was hospitalised. (56)
8. A US-based informant wrote that his 14 year-old step-sister, Bontu, was taken by soldiers from his father’s house along with his niece, Lalise, aged 17, and three other girls under 17 years-old, from Chalia Dano village, Guliso district, West Wallega, on 25 May 2020. Three more were taken from the next village, all to be used as sex slaves and house maids in the military camp. (56)
9. Grade 12 student, 18 year-old Dunge Beliyu Tasisa, from Keta Abakorma, Aira district, West Wallega, was raped by government regional forces on 2 December 2021.

The same forces attempted to rape a 14 year-old girl and a 20 year-old woman in Chalia town, Guliso district, but were fought off. (59)

10. Three girls, two from one kebele of Jardega Jarte town and one from a village near Alibo were so traumatised by gang-rape by Fano that when they found they were pregnant, they ran away from the IDP camp in Shambu to the forest and committed suicide by hanging themselves in 2023. (63)
11. About 10 km from the road between Qaree Goha and Wale Kilalo, North Showa, several Fano members gang-raped a ten-year old girl on around 16 October 2023. They stole 15 cattle from a pregnant woman and were threatening to attack her when they were surrounded by villagers and left. (64)
12. An 18 year-old IDP was repeatedly gang-raped by Fano during two months of captivity after being forced to flee in September 2023 from Jardega Jarte district, Horo Guduru, by the group before arriving in Shambu Hospital where she remained severely traumatised. (65)
13. *Addis Standard* reported there were ‘numerous instances of gender-based violence’ in IDP camps in Oromia. At one camp in Jardega Jarte district, a 32 year-old mother of nine recounted the killing of her husband by Fano when they were fleeing from Harar Jarso village in Amuru district in September 2022. She was gang-raped in November 2023 at the IDP camp. One 20 year-old interviewee was an 11th grade student when forced to flee from Arro village in Kiramu district, East Wallega, during 2023. She was raped after three months in an IDP centre, a former school in Shambu town, Horo Guduru. Many have been raped there. (65)

Recommendation

We recommend that Ethiopia respect its constitution, domestic and international laws by investigating these accusations and bringing guilty parties to justice.

Arbitrary detention – political prisoners in years-long confinement

OSGUK Submission, pp. 3-4, paragraphs 11-20.

Despite Ethiopia’s commitment to civil and political rights (*see Introduction, p.2*) and agreeing to improve prison conditions (Recommendation 163.180), arbitrary detention in atrocious conditions remains common.

Betie (Bate) Urgessa, Political Officer and OLF central committee member, was arrested again on 22 February, with *Africa Intelligence* journalist Antoine Galindo.

He became severely ill in detention in 2022, after being held in foul conditions with OLF colleagues in numerous official and unofficial places of detention, where they were often held incommunicado. He was arrested in March 2021, when visiting OLF leaders in Burayu Police Station.

His release was ordered by Oromia Special Zone Court, Burayu Chamber, later that month, but he remained in detention. His release and that of other OLF officials was ordered by Lideta Federal High Court in May 2021 but they were re-arrested as they left Kilinto prison next morning. They were transferred to Awash Melkasa military training camp near Adama, East Showa, where Betie was brutally assaulted by other prisoners, receiving head and facial injuries.

Betie returned to Burayu Police Station where he joined other OLF detainees in a hunger strike to protest conditions of detention in February 2022. Unsurprisingly, because of the filth

in which they were held, six were flown by helicopter for resuscitation in Lideta Federal Police Hospital after only two weeks. Betie was found to have Hepatitis B. Although he, Mikael Boran and Kenassa Ayana were very ill, all six were returned to Burayu next day, against medical advice.

Requests to test the others for hepatitis were initially refused. Betie and Kenassa attended hospital on several occasions over the following two weeks and Betie was released from detention, on a stretcher, on 12 March 2022. [*Bate (Betie) Urgessa was extrajudicially killed during the night of 9/10 April 2024, a few days after this submission was made.*]

His fellow detainees (see below) were secretly transferred to Dukem, 37 km southeast of Finfinnee, in April 2023, one day before they were to be visited by officials from the National Election Board of Ethiopia. They were later returned to Burayu Police Station. Kenassa Ayana is unable to move without crutches or a wheelchair. He has liver complications from diabetes and developed orthopaedic problems after being imprisoned. Gaada Gebissa has Hepatitis B, for which he should be receiving medication. (65)

Reports 58, 60 and 63 chronicle the continued detention of the seven OLF leaders. Another six members and officials were among those whose detention was reported in Report 59. They were denied adequate food and frequently moved. Since 2020, authorities have detained Abdi Regassa, Dawit Abdeta, Lammi Begna, Michael Boran, Kenessa Ayana, and Gada Oljira, and, since 2021, Gada Gebissa – despite multiple judicial orders directing their release. Gada Oljira has never been formally charged.

Tens of thousands of Oromo remain in illegal detention, suspected of supporting the OLF (a legal party since 2019) or belonging to the peaceful Qerroo Oromo student movement.

Recommendation

We recommend that constitutional guarantees of judicial oversight of detention be met, that court orders for release of detainees be complied with and that prison conditions meet international standards. Detainees must only be held in official detention centres and their names and places of detention kept in registers readily available and accessible to those concerned.

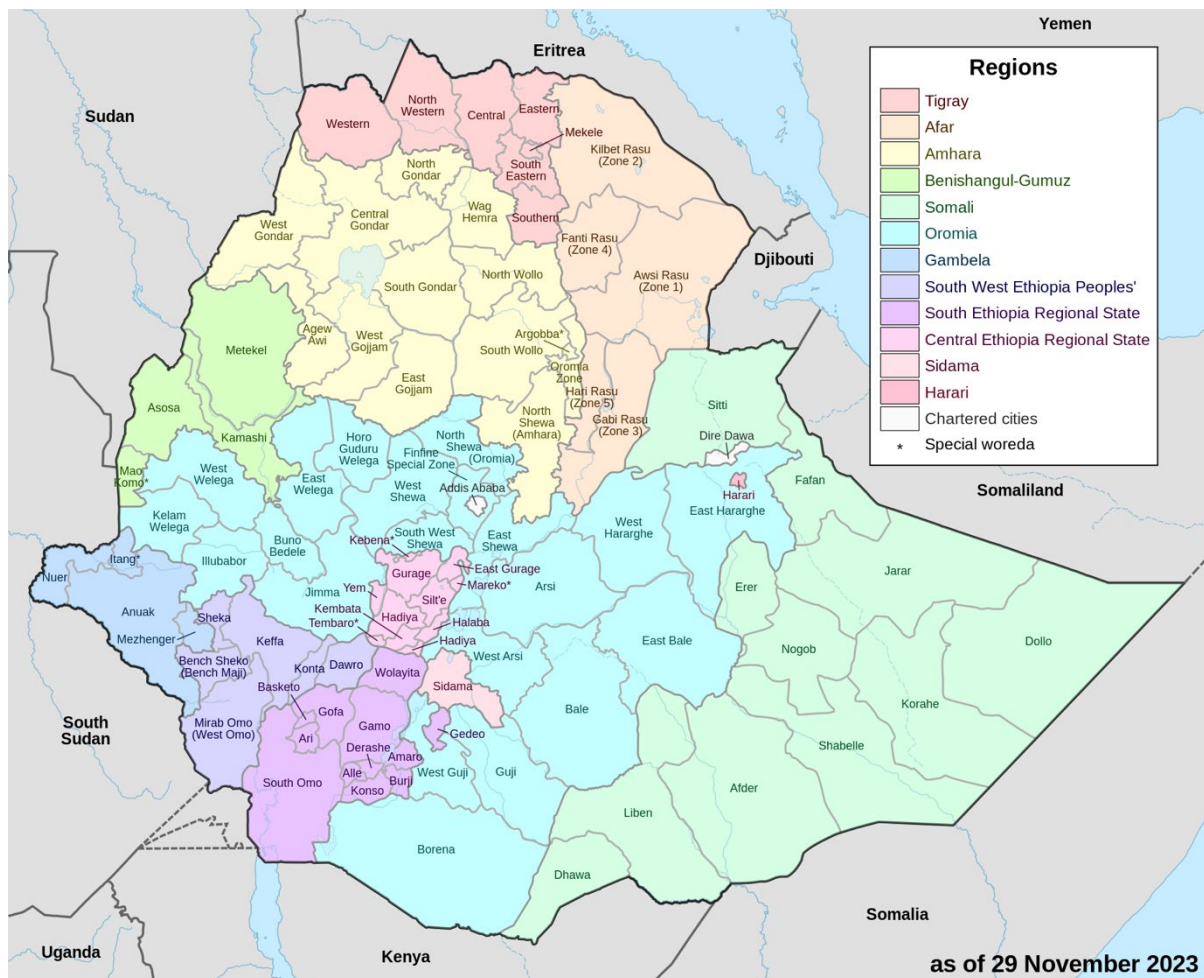
Instigated (‘Interethnic’) violence^{ix}

OSGA and OSGUK Joint Submission, pp.1-9, paragraphs 2-13.

Ethiopia agreed to implement Recommendations concerning reconciliation between communities, the prevention and reduction of instigated ‘interethnic’ or ‘intercommunal’ violence, and intervention to protect civilians from such violence (163.94, 163.181-183, 163.209-213, 163.216, 163.320-324) in particular 163.1183 ‘Protect individuals across the country against rising inter-ethnic violence, guarantee respect for human rights in the regions, and promote conditions allowing security forces to intervene to ensure the protection of populations in the event of threats.’ Ethiopia has failed to implement these recommendations.

The Ethiopian government has colluded with and encouraged violence between ethnic groups in Ethiopia, especially between Amhara and other nationalities living in Amhara Region (Oromo, Agaw and Qimant) and in neighbouring regions of Tigray, Oromia, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella. Beginning in early 2021, incidents of ethnic cleansing – mass killings and burning of property – occurred in Western Tigray, and increasingly throughout western and central Oromia, affecting Oromo communities in Amhara Region (in Oromia Zone – ‘Wollo’), all zones of Wallega and Showa in Oromia Region, in Benishangul-Gumuz Region (together with Gumuz communities) and in Gambella Region.

Territorial expansion of Amhara into Oromia carried out as ‘reclaiming lost land’



The justification given by Amhara forces is that they are ‘reclaiming ancestral Amhara lands.’ These claims are anti-historical^x and are accompanied by hate speech calling for Oromo to be expelled from Wallega and Showa and for Oromia to be ‘removed from the map.’^{xi} The Federal Government has not provided protection for civilians subject to these violent attacks.

1. The Ethiopian government is directly responsible for pitting some regional forces against each other and for standing by without intervention when Regional boundaries were violated. For example, in March 2022, when Southern regional forces were involved in killings in Benishangul-Gumuz Region (see below) and in January 2023, when forces from Benishangul-Gumuz Region were involved in the killing of 27 civilians in Begi, West Wallega, in Oromia. (62)
2. Fano Amhara forces have been particularly vindictive toward Oromo, performing heinous acts against civilians. Decapitation and flaying of living prisoners, mutilation of the dead and displaying heads on poles held high above parading Fano members have been photographed and filmed on social media. Fano members have preened themselves for selfies in front of piles of burning bodies and heads. Fano members are portrayed on 5 November 2022 in front of the severed heads of two Oromo, killed in Jardega Jarte, Horo Guduru zone, and circulated on social media in early December. Distressing footage of a botched attempt to decapitate a living prisoner by a Fano member in Salaal Kulla village in Darra district, North Showa, was circulated on 23 December 2022. Hundreds of Oromo were killed in a gruesome manner in the last five months of 2022. (62)

Amhara Region: Attacks on Oromo and in Oromo Special Zone

1. Early incidents of violence targeted specifically toward Oromo occurred in 2019 when Oromo students were injured, besieged on campus, beaten to death and made to disappear from Amhara Region universities in Debre Berhan, Gondar, Injibara University in Gojjam, Bahar Dar, Waldia, Desse campus of Wollo University and Debre Markos. (50, 51)
2. When police stopped Ali Moti when driving on business through Gondar city on 12 July 2020, they asked for his ID. When they saw he was Oromo, they shot him dead. (53)
3. Eight civilians were killed by Amhara forces in Artuma Fursi district of Oromo Special Zone, the Oromo enclave in Wollo, Amhara Region, in November and December 2020. 84 Oromo were reported as imprisoned in Metekel, Gojjam, in December 2020. (54)
4. Another Oromo was killed in Wollo in February 2021 before major, heavily-armed attacks were made by Fano and Amhara Region militia on Oromo in Ataye, Bate, Senbete and Makana towns and surrounding farming villages in Artuma Fursi and Jilli Dhumuga districts from 19-27 March and 10-15 April 2021. Many villages were razed including homes and crops. The school at Wasen Qurqur was one of the first buildings to be burnt to the ground. Overall, at least 200 were killed, over 1900 buildings destroyed and 77,000 displaced. (55, 56, 57)
5. Ten to twelve of those injured in the Jilli Dhumuga attack were dragged from an ambulance in the grounds of Yifat Hospital, Showa Robit, and beaten to death by Fano youths on 21 March. The incident was recorded and posted as a video. (56, 63).
6. 358,000 were reported displaced by June 2021. (60)
7. Oromo teacher Dereje Gerba was killed in North Gondar on 13 August 2021.
8. Oromo student at Bahar Dar University, Tadele Tebebu, was killed by Amhara vigilantes on 14 August. (57)
9. When OLA joined forces with the TPLF and marched toward Finfinnee from the north, they briefly controlled Wollo. Air and ground attacks by ENDF were followed by brutal recriminations on the population from November 2021 into early 2022.
10. A resident of Bate town said 37 civilians were killed and 42 wounded, in early November. Soldiers were heard shouting 'Kill them all' in Amharic as they fired on innocent civilians, according to a resident of Dawa Chaffa district. An elderly khat seller was shot dead on the street. The Bate resident reported nine women and girls were killed around a water pump by an airstrike. (58)
11. Killings, looting and rape were reported. Drones killed over 70 in Harxuma, Kemisse and other cities. Reprisals continued well into 2022, with hundreds killed and buried in mass graves. Thousands were imprisoned in makeshift prisons. Hundreds were taken from prison or in house-to-house searches and executed. Bodies were left for prolonged periods before being bulldozed into large pits. (58, 59)
12. Mass executions of persons singled out as Oromo were reported by residents in the districts of Jille Dhumuga, Artuma Fursi, Chafa Dawa and Chafa Robit. 'Up to eight family members of an alleged OLA member were deemed guilty by association. A 13 year-old boy was beaten to death because his father was allegedly a member of OLA.' (59)
13. A widely-circulated video of a dozen or more young men being beaten off a truck and shot on the road with their hands tied, which was broadcast on social media in June 2022, was reported by OLA and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission to have been recorded in Artuma Fursi district in December 2021. (60)

14. In April 2022, Fano militia killed 10-12 Oromo civilians in Kolash, which lies between Showa Robit, North Wollo, and Wasan Qurqur, Oromia Zone. (62)
15. Eighteen more were reported on 30 June to have been taken from two prisons in Wollo – Karipho, Dawe Harawa district, and Intale, Artuma Fursi district – by ‘Amhara Fano extremists’ and executed.
16. In June and July 2022 1546 persons were detained, including farmers, artists, clergymen, teachers and youngsters, and according to reports, 713 held in Kemise ‘for their Oromo-ness alone.’ Families of detainees were too destitute to provide food (60)
17. Another spate of attacks by Fano and Amhara militia on at least seven sites, including Wasan Qurqur again, in Jilli Dhumuga district, burned hundreds of properties, killed over 76 and wounded at least 52 on 15 and 16 January 2023. Amhara Region government vehicles and heavy Russian DShk artillery were used, according to *Addis Standard* interviewees.
18. Another two were killed in Itu on 20 January 2023 and 14 more were killed in Wasan Qurqur on 22 January. Unknown numbers were killed elsewhere in Jilli Dhumuga district and in Artuma Fursi and Senbete districts. The violence spread to the towns of Ataye and Jawa in Elfiratana Gidim district and to the North Showa zone of Amhara Region, including Showa Robit, where another 16 were killed after showing their ID cards which identified them as Oromo when they were stopped on their way north from Finfinnee on 23 January.
19. Another 65 were killed between 20-24 February 2023, more houses were burnt and the injured were refused treatment in Amhara regional health facilities. (62)
20. On 5 November 2023, 18 were killed when Artuma Fursi district was again attacked by Fano, claiming the attack was in revenge for their recent losses against ENDF around Majate town in Amara Region, because the ENDF was fighting for ‘an Oromo government’. (64, 65)
21. Fano executed eight Oromo civilians who were traveling to Kemise from Finfinnee on 23 February 2024, after taking them from buses near Showa Robit and detaining them for several days.
22. Farms were set on fire in attacks by ‘neighbouring Amharas’ armed by Amhara Region government on 4 March 2024. Fano killed nine women and three children in a single home in Naannoftuu Nageesso village, Wollo, on 11 March and a teenage boy, two children and a woman in Batu on 12 March. (65)
23. OSG received an eye-witness report on 26 March 2024, yet to be published, of another series of attacks beginning on the first day of Ramadan, 10 March, in which Fano and Amhara militia razed to the ground two kebeles in Bate area, near Senbete town, killing 94 civilians, burning down 200 or more homes, displacing at least 2000, burning crops, and stealing or killing livestock. 1000 cattle and several hundred camels (one house would have 3-4 cows and a camel) were either stolen or shot if they could not be taken away. More than half of all properties were stolen. Fano reportedly intend to settle the area but it is still a battleground as local civilians are fighting back. The roads are closed so no aid can get through. Federal government troops came but after being repulsed by Fano, they turned on the Oromo population, ‘because their commander is an Amhara’, killing 25 civilians.

Amhara Region: Attacks on Agaw and Qemant

Representatives of the Qemant Advocacy group, Qemant Democratic Party, Agaw Human Rights Advocacy Group and Agaw National Congress Party report that they have been subjected to political repression, detentions and disappearances in attempts by Amhara Region government to eradicate them from the region. One hundred Qemant were reported

killed and hundreds detained in 2020. Thousands were reported killed since 2015. (52, 57, 58)

Killings of Oromo by Amhara in Oromia Region

Horo Guduru and East Wallega

Throughout 2020 and 2021, well-trained Amhara Region militia agitated Amhara farmers, who had been settled by the Derg in East Wallega, to attack Oromo villages, with whom they had lived peacefully hitherto.

1. The first reported major incursion occurred in Lalistu Angar, Gida Ayana district, East Wallega, on 15 February 2021, when ‘dozens’ were killed. On 15 April 2021 Amhara militia drove out Oromo farmers and burned their crops again in Lalistu Angar. Homes and over 3000 hectares of farmland were burned. Militia then attacked Agamsa and Kiramu towns, killing 13 civilians, destroying 47 homes and 18 other buildings. Posters displayed in Gutin town ordered Oromo out of the ‘ancestral home of the Amharas’. (55, 57).
2. The day after regional government forces left the area, on 13 August 2021, heavily-armed Amhara militants returned from Amhara Region and attacked villages in Kiramu, Agamsa, Haro, Amuru, Sire Doro and Gida Ayana districts, razing villages and driving away residents. When OLA fighters drove them back, Amhara militants killed at least seven Oromo civilians by slitting their throats and beat to death at least three more. At least 100 homes were burned. (57)
3. On 12 October 2021, at least 25 Oromo villagers of Haro 01 kebele were killed in Kiramu district, East Wallega, and Jardega Jarte district, Horo Guduru, by heavily-armed Amhara militia, shortly after government Oromia Special Forces were withdrawn against the wishes of local elders. They ‘killed randomly, looted what they could and burned what they couldn’t carry’. Amhara flags were hoisted in towns after the killings, in which, at least 18 had their throats cut. Hundreds of houses were burned down. Shops, crops and hundreds of cattle were taken or destroyed. Dozens more were killed in Nole and in Lugo town, Guto Gida district. Most of the 19 kebeles in Gida Kiramu woreda were affected, leading to the displacement of about 56,400 people. (58)
4. Two major incursions occurred in February 2022. Before mid-February, at least 29, including women and children, were killed by Amhara militia and Fano in Botoro Bora village, Abay Dongoro district, Horo Guduru, looting and burning at least 64 homes. On 22 February, at least six were killed by the same forces in Abuna Gudina, Horo Buluk district, Horo Guduru. Another 23 were killed in Boko Jima, Sibu Sire district, and 50 were reportedly killed earlier in Limmu district. Over 30,000 cattle were taken. At least 128,000 persons were displaced from Guto Gida district and 27,000 from Sibu Sire and Limmu districts. (59)
5. In April 2022, 36 Oromo civilians were killed by government forces in Kiramu district, East Wallega, on 16th and four more on 26th. Eleven farmers were shot and killed by Fano in Jardega Jarte, Horo Guduru, in the last week of April. A farming family and their 20 year-old student son were killed in Jardega Jarte on 11 May. Fourteen farming villagers were killed in Ababo Guduru, Horo Guduru, on 24 May and 27 were killed by Fano in a mass killing in Biftuu Nuuf Batee, Hababo district, Horo Guduru, on 25 May. A 12 year-old boy and his farming parents were killed by Fano in Jardega Jarte on 30 May. (60, 63)
6. Fano militia, ‘cooperating’ with government forces, attacked a village in Amuru district, Horo Guduru, on 4 August 2022. The Fano brigade ‘looted more than 100

- horned cattle and 50 sheep from the people and drove them away’. They killed an 8-month pregnant woman and her 3 year-old child ‘while they were fleeing in the forest.’ Agamsa town residents were beaten and disarmed on 29 August by government-sponsored militia under the leadership of Faqada Abdisa (a group known to impersonate OLA when committing atrocities against Amhara communities in Oromia, including a Church massacre in Jarte district in March 2021).
7. Children and the elderly were among those killed when Fano militia attacked Agamsa town, next day, 30 August 2022. Some hid in surrounding crops as Fano militia members killed indiscriminately: a child of five years was among the dead.
 8. Shops and banks were looted: goods and furniture were loaded into the assailants’ vehicles and taken away. Over 5,000 cattle, corralled in the town from surrounding areas, were stolen. Next day, at least 12 villagers of Bonee Abuna, Horo Buluk district, Horo Guduru zone were killed and more were injured by Fano.^{xii}
 1. A detailed report of the Agamsa massacre compiled by Agamsa residents and their relatives was compiled in response to disinformation from the Amhara Association of America.
 2. It revealed that 12 (10 Amhara, 2 Oromo) were killed by government troops masquerading as OLA on 29 August followed by 105 Oromo killed by heavily-armed Fano and Amhara militia the next day, or died later from wounds.
 3. The dead included 88 year-old Awaqe Jalata and 97 year-old Zalalam Temesgen, who was ‘burned in his home’.^{xiii}
 9. 20,000 persons fled from Agamsa (62).
 10. Out of 21 kebeles in Amuru district, 16 were under control of Amhara forces by 2 September ‘with the full approval of the regime.’ The Fano forces were trained in Birsheleko Military Training Camp, near Bure, 50 km from Agamsa, ‘an initiative overseen by Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen’ according to an OLF-OLA Press Release on 2 September.^{xiv} (62)
 11. In September 2022, at least 110, mostly women, children, infirm and elderly, were killed in Fano attacks on civilians in at least 19 locations in Jardega Jarte and Amuru districts, and at other locations in Abe-Dongoro and Horo-Buluk districts in Horo Guduru.
 12. At least another 8 were killed and 300 cattle stolen in Amuru district on 7 October and over 30 were killed and at least 50 homes burnt down in four villages in Kirama district, East Wallega on 15 October. Sporadic killings continued through October.
 13. Fourteen died when Fano opened fire on a church congregation in Sorga, Nekemte, East Wallega, on 6 November and at least another 14 were killed that month before attacks in Kiramu district on 25 and 29 November killed at least 244 and burned down 500 homes. After these attacks, almost the whole 350,000 population of Kiramu district became displaced. Only one kebele, Wasti, was left with any Oromo residents. Government security forces in Nekemte did nothing to protect the civilians of East Wallega and Horo Guduru. (62, 63)
 14. Unknown numbers of civilians were killed and displaced in further fighting on 3 and 4 December. Twenty civilians were extrajudicially executed by Fano in Hangar Gutin, East Wallega, on 4 December 2022. (62)
 15. By June 2023, there was no unaffected kebele in Jardega Jarte district of Horo Guduru. 52,000 IDPs had fled to Alibo town and another 58,000 were living outdoors, eating wild fruit, unable to return to their farms and homes because of insecurity.
 16. Apart from the kebele of Wasti, almost all of Kiramu district had fled to Kiramu town, Nekemte, or Gida Ayana in East Wallega or to Horo Guduru zone, where 90-100,00

had sought safety in Shambu and Agamsa towns. Most from Jardega Jarte district, Horo Guduru, had gone to Shambu.

17. One woman who was interviewed in a displacement camp in Shambu was barely able to tell her story. She was gang-raped when pregnant, and unable to relate to her baby when born. Her husband, the baby's father, was killed in a Fano attack in a village near Kiramu town. He was tied to a chair and forced to witness the gang-rape of his wife. She was then forced to witness him being killed, decapitated and dismembered, his body parts remaining in their house. (63)
18. Attacks again intensified in June and July 2023. On Wednesday 7 June, Fano forces, operating from a training base 50 km away in Haro, Kiramu district, East Wallega, attacked and killed Oromo civilians in Agamsa town and surrounding villages in Amuru district again, looting, burning homes and destroying property. Government security forces and Federal Police who were in the town took no action. Five were killed and many injured.
19. Three more farmers were killed in Kiramu district at the beginning of June 2023. Another 27 were killed, 13 injured and 15 went missing when Wasti kebele, the last kebele with a significant Oromo population in Kiramu district, was attacked on 16 June. Ten remaining villages were attacked and over 3000 cattle were taken from Wasti, Jirma Dongorro and Ajana in Kiramu district.
20. The Kiramu District Communication Officer told *Addis Standard* that Fano had opened permanent military bases in Kiramu and was operating in four of its ten kebeles, Bagil, Caffee Gudina, Haro and Marga Jireenya. 'What this group is doing is similar to what is happening in the Horo Guduru zone' he said. Fano is armed with heavy weapons 'Brens' and 'Dshk' and trained in Amhara Region and now in Kiramu district.' Fano were 'working to change the demography of the area by displacing Oromo farmers and settling Amhara natives on their lands' he said. (63)
21. Another eight were killed in late June and July 2023 in Horo Guduru and East Wallega. ENDF soldiers executed an elderly couple in Sasiga district, East Wallega, on 25 August and three Qeerroo from the same village on 26th, on suspicion of feeding OLA fighters. Another was killed in Nekemte on 31 August, and another in Sire district, East Wallega, on 1 September.
22. Seven more farmers were killed in Amuru district, Horo Guduru, and five were abducted by Fano from Abee Dongoro town, Horo Guduru, on 1 September, after ENDF withdrew from the town to allow them access. ENDF beat Danuu Malkaamuu to death 'in front of the people' in Sibu district, East Wallega, on 9 September, 'and his body was eaten by animals'. (63)
23. In Dicho, Gida Ayana district, East Wallega, 31 to 34 mourners travelling by bus were killed by Fano on 15 September. At least five persons were killed in the same area by Fano on 28 February 2024. (64, 65)

North and West Showa

Twenty-eight kebeles in three districts of North Showa, Oromia Region, have been incorporated into Amhara Region since 1991. (62)

1. Amhara militia killed 23-29 villagers in Nono, West Showa, on 19 November 2021. Incursions increased in 2022. Burning of Oromo homes in the town of Kare Goha, North Showa, a town jointly inhabited by Amhara and Oromo people was reported on 26 February 2022. (58, 60)
2. In late April 2022, 21 farmers and their families were burnt to death in their homes by Fano in Mettu Selassie village, Nono district, and another 13 villagers were killed by Fano in Deno, West Showa. The execution of 18 in Warra Jarso, North Showa on 3

May was directed by government and regional troops, more than Amhara region militia or Fano but their criteria for selecting victims was that they spoke Oromo. They were selected on the basis of their ethnicity.

3. Although the majority of killings and other atrocities in North and West Showa were perpetrated by ENDF in 2023, Fano fighters came to North Showa in June. They killed about 200 cattle and stole another 100 in Warra Jarso district. (63)
4. In Chawa Murassa, a village at some distance from the road between Qaree Goha and Wale Kilalo, North Showa, on 16 Oct 2023, five Fano members terrorised the villagers and razed to the ground all 32 properties, rendering 150-200 men, women and children homeless and destitute. As they roamed through the village, they chanted in Amharic that they were 'getting rid' of 'Galla', a derogatory name for Oromo, and 'Oneg-shane,' a derogatory term for OLF or OLA. They stole 18 cattle from another farmer and destroyed crops.
5. This behaviour was reported by a local informant to take place 'all over North and West Showa resulting in massive numbers of IDPs.' (64)
6. In two days of attacks on 25 and 26 December 2023, Fano killed 18 and injured six in the villages of Godima Sosorka and Kara Mitikora in Dara district, North Showa. Illu Goda Chafe and Denu Wobenso villages were also attacked, using heavy artillery. 50 cattle were stolen. Fano entered the district the previous month and set up base in Illu Goda Chafe. The militants established themselves in 10 of the district's 41 villages, resulting in the shutting of all schools in Dara, except in the district administrative centre, Gundo Meskel.
7. Fano attacked three kebeles in Dara district on 7 March 2024. Nine villagers, including an 11 year-old girl, Shetaye Dubale, were killed and many houses were burned in Manketa Wario. Houses were destroyed and those unable to flee, children and elderly, were abducted from Woren Gabro. Homes were razed and over 400 cattle were taken from Jiru Deda, from where many fled into 'a desert area called Abote'. (65)

East Showa

The Karrayyu Oromo in East Showa have lost 10 kebeles to Amhara Region. (62)

1. Amhara militia invaded in August 2021 and after the killing of Karrayyu Gadaa leaders in December 2021, Amhara settlers took over their village in Fantale district and confiscated land in the areas projected to control lucrative supply routes to and from Djibouti and potentially other sea ports. (57, 59, 65)
2. Fano attacked the kebeles of Haroo Qarsa and Halaka, Fantale district, on 20 February 2024, killing at least four villagers who were unable to flee. Over 1000 were displaced as 233 homes and the place of worship, 'the house of Waaqeffanna' were burnt down. (65)

Benishangul-Gumuz Region

Amhara people were brutally resettled by the Derg regime in Metekel zone of Benishangul-Gumuz Region, during the 1980s. Oromo and Gumuz people are now being cleared from Metekel zone by ENDF and Amhara forces.

1. ENDF killed at least four Oromo on 14 November 2020, five on 4 March 2021 and an Oromo activist and teacher in Dibate district on 16 June 2021.
2. Amhara militia burned down Chalia village on 28 March 2021 and killed three Oromo women and a baby on their way to market in Chancho kebele on 19 June 2021. (55, 57)

3. Between June and October 2021, 14 Oromo, including a 2 year-old girl, and one Agaw man were killed by Amhara militia and Fano, at least three in Chancho and four in Dibate district. Two were young boys killed when Amhara forces went along the road from Zigeh to Dibate, burning all Gumuz villages on their way. Five were members of two families killed ‘by gun, knife and machete’ in Jajaba Gisa village, near Galessa town, in September. (59)
4. At least another 15 were killed in September and October 2021 by Amhara forces, including a Gumuz family of four with 3 year-old and 8 month-old children, and two brothers aged 13 and 14 while watching their animals. Three were dragged from their homes in Dibate district and shot in the head. Another three were taken from vehicles in Kamashi district, Kamsahi zone, and shot ‘multiple times in the chest’. (58)
5. Five Oromo were killed in Dibate district in January to April 2022, three by Amhara militia using swords and machetes. (60)
6. On 3 March 2022, after an attack on a convoy of workers on the Renaissance Dam the previous day, 11 civilians, nine Tigrayans and two Gumuz, were killed by federal forces, Amhara Region militia, SNNPR Special Police and Fano, in Aysid town. One of the Tigrayans was still alive when put on a pile of burning bodies. Onlookers laughed and made derogatory comments in Amharic about ‘burning vermin’. (59)
7. At least 15 Oromo were killed by Amhara region militia and Fano in Benishangul-Gumuz Region in the last week of April 2022 (60)
8. A local informant reported in September 2023 that many Oromo and Gumuz were killed in Metekel in the last 3 years and the majority of Oromo villages cleared of Oromo. Six out of 28 kebeles in Dibate district have been cleared completely of Oromo, including the kebeles of Yamp and Sirran.
9. At least 24 kebeles in Metekel, especially those bordering Amhara Region, have been cleared of Gumuz villages. The residents who survived had for the last year been living without shelter, medicine and regular food, in the forest.
10. The local informant had records of 66 killings of Gumuz people and of 78 Oromo in the last three years. He estimated that more than 3000 Gumuz people had been killed in that time and believed this was probably a gross underestimate. Federal and regional special forces from Sidama Region and Amhara Region were deployed in Metekel but were perpetrators rather than protectors from abuse.
11. He described Gumuz civilians being burned alive in their huts, including the first of the following incidents which had not previously been recorded by OSG.
 - a. A building was burnt down in Dangur district with 56 individuals inside in 2021. Only two boys escaped. They had been castrated.
 - b. At least eight Gumuz people, including several children, were killed in Delbanja kebele, Dangur district, in early 2021.
 - c. At the beginning of 2021, Doben kebele in Dibate district was cleared by Amhara forces and Federal police. A 55 year-old woman, named Beke, had been bed-ridden for two years and stayed at home. Her husband came from the forest to feed her but was seen and pursued. He escaped, killing one of his attackers. On 7 February 2021, security forces entered her hut, cut her throat and removed both of her hands, which they hung on a tree for one week in Berber city (next to Dibate district in Metekel zone).
 - d. Two young men from Chalcho village in Dibate district were executed by security forces in January 2022. They had been detained in Galessa town police station for two days before being taken to Gipo forest and shot in the back of the head. A video of the men being walked into the forest with their hands tied behind their backs and then being killed is on the OSG website.^{xv}

Agence France-Presse fact-checked the video and confirmed it had been taken in Metekel zone of Benishangul-Gumuz region.^{xvi}

- e. On 29 April 2023, Adunya Galata, from Amuru village, Korke kebele, Dibate district, was executed in public at Galessa town market, to where he had travelled for market.
- f. On 18 May 2023, Abebe Beyene Seifi, from the same village, was taken from his home and killed in the forest at a place called Laku in Chalia kebele. Another man from Amuru village was executed the same day at home in front of his family.

Gambella Region

Between 14 and 16 June 2022, at least 50, probably hundreds, of Oromo residents of Gambella city were rounded up because they spoke Afaan Oromo and killed (see Extrajudicial killings, above).

A video, possibly taken during the same incident, posted 16 March 2023, shows government security forces, aided by some residents of Gambella city, beating to death at least 12 civilians in a public open space. The distressing 2 min. 20 sec. clip shows victims being enthusiastically kicked, jumped upon and struck with sticks and large rocks until dead.^{xvii} (63)

Recommendation

We recommend that Ethiopian government forces, the ENDF, protect civilians from the ethnic cleansing being perpetrated by Fano militants within and surrounding Amhara Region. The extent of the killings and destruction is not acknowledged by the Ethiopian government or by international bodies. UN Special Rapporteurs should be allowed to visit the affected areas to make an impartial and thorough investigation.

Establishment of Military Command Posts: systematic abuses by ENDF forces

OSGUK and OSGA Joint Submission, pp.5-7, paragraphs 22-31.

Military Command Posts were not long established before the 2019 UPR and there were no specific Recommendations concerning them and the abuses associated with them. None-the-less, Ethiopia agreed to comply with Recommendations concerning extrajudicial killing (163.200), torture (e.g. 163.155), rape (e.g. 163.290), food security (e.g. 163.238) and access to health care (e.g. 163.159 and 163.160). In addition, Ethiopia agreed to ‘Hold accountable security forces that commit human rights violations’ (163.198), and ‘Investigate and punish human rights violations which had occurred in various regions, in particular Amhara and Oromia . . .’ (163.203). Although Ethiopia did not agree to implement Recommendations 163.201 or 163.218, in response to 163.201, Ethiopia ‘committed to undertake effective and impartial investigations and ensure redress for victims of human rights abuse’ and in response to 163.218, Ethiopia ‘committed to the protection of civil and political rights.’

The actions of ENDF and especially those operating under the Military Command Post system have abrogated each of these commitments.

Military Command Posts were established in Oromia Region at the end of 2018 and in early 2019. Unlike the establishment of military rule in Amhara Region in August 2023, no permission from Parliament was sought or granted for Oromia, making the condition on the ground deniable. In effect, every ENDF military camp is a Command Post. There is no village or town in Oromia without checkpoints and road blocks in and out. People do not leave their homes in the dark. No-one goes out into the countryside. Farming is inhibited.

Almost every OSG report since 2019 includes instances of destruction of homes, property and crops in Oromia Region by ENDF, to deter support for OLF, OLA or the Qeerroo youth movement.

Examples of abuses and a brief first-hand description of life under the rule of a Military Command Post follow.

1. In the second half of 2019, over 580 cattle were stolen, crops were destroyed, over 250 homes were burnt down and over 500 civilians were detained in ENDF attacks in West Guji zone. (51)
2. ENDF burnt and destroyed 193 homes in Warra Jarso, North Showa, 3 May 2022; and 22 more on 11 May. They burned 38 homes in Abuna Gindeberet, West Showa from 1-6 June 2022. (60)
3. In January 2023, over 60 families in North Showa fled from Haro to Qaree Goha (also known as Goha Tsion), 40 km from the Amhara Region border in Warra Jarso district, after being attacked and having their homes burnt down by the ENDF. (63)
4. At least 100 civilians and a large number of livestock were killed, crops and many homes were burnt during attacks by ENDF in North Showa in the last two weeks of October 2023. Affected districts included Darra, Warra Jarso, Hidabu Abote, Kuyu
5. Information was sent to OSG on 1 November 2023 reporting the killing of at least 13 people when a bomb was thrown by government forces at civilians living in Dirree Giccee village, Ifata district, West Showa. (64)
6. A local informant wrote on 15 January 2024 that in Horo Guduru, ‘all maize, cows and houses are being fired by this government’. Government troops attacked many villages, burning at least 25 homes, in reprisal for losses against OLA in Horo Guduru zone in February 2024 in the kind of operation described above, eventually carried out systematically through the Command Post structure. (65)

Command Post conditions

Schools and other buildings are commandeered to serve as Command Post bases, as all life is interrupted and overseen. For example, the Gudina Tumsa Foundation school in Fantale, East Showa, was turned into a military base. (63)

A group of human rights defenders in West Wallega zone documented and reported the following to OSG.

1. ‘On 29 January 2021 one higher army official came to Chalia military camp from Addis Ababa (Finfinnee) and awarded the commander in chief’ . . . Sergeant Ebro Usen, a gold award . . . ‘for killing 14 civilians around Chalia, burning and destroying houses’ and causing injuries. The document details destruction and looting of 79 households, 74 in Guliso, two in Aira, two in Boji Cholorsa and one in Genji. Crops and coffee plantations were burnt. Household furniture, televisions, solar panels, money - 4000, 7000 and 11000 Birr - and in one case in Wayu Manie, Guliso district - the contents of a whole shop, were stolen by government forces.
2. In West Wallega and Qellem Wallega, even government employees do not visit their families in the countryside because ‘if the security forces meet them they just say you have connection with OLF troops and arrest them or shoot them.’ When describing the destruction of property, the authors noted ‘it is also very difficult to take a picture because if they see someone taking a picture they just shoot’.

3. The commander of Chalia military camp, Ebro Usen, told a public gathering on 29 March 2021 that he intended to kill OLF supporters, that he would kill anyone moving around after 6.00 pm, and that permission was needed to attend health facilities. More than 90% of Oromo farmers are now disarmed, unlike in Amhara Region.
4. Ebro Usen has seized televisions, refrigerators, honey, private cars, sheep and cattle. He slaughtered 14 cows of people who had been arrested and sold another seven at markets, three in Chalia, and four at Aira market. ‘Even you can’t look at the security forces while they are passing by. If they found you looking at the security forces, be it an old man or woman, they say ‘kneel down’ and kick [you].’ (56).
5. Sergeant Ebro Usen was personally responsible for killing 96 people and burning down 170 farms by August 2021. (57)
6. He shot off fingers and hands of people after ordering that they be placed on or in the barrel of his rifle. Under the Command Post, there is no transportation, no markets, no farming and no coffee grown. (58)
7. At least eight homes were burnt down, including five in Wayu Koli, Aira, on 13 August 2021. The home of Kenasa Itefa, farmer and father of Qeerroo members, in Maru village, Guliso, was burnt down previously. It was burnt down for the second time on 23 December 2021, when he was shot dead. His wife was forced to flee. Commodities were stolen or taken with only token payments from shops in Maru village in August and Kusaye village in December. Items such as cigarettes, soap and biscuits have been taken. Oromia Special Forces robbed ‘Amanuel’ of 6000 Birr in Sanki Dano, also in Guliso district, when he was on the way to market. Soldiers behave with impunity and flaunt this. They commandeer private cars and other vehicles, including ambulances. The defenders wrote ‘When the peoples ask them why they do like this they say that it is the instruction from the government that they are authorized to do whatever they want be it legal or illegal including murders.’ (59)
8. In addition to properties burnt down and deserted, and farms and coffee plantations left to ruin, small businesses have been closed. In October and November 2021 alone, eight small businesses were shut down in just two kebeles in Guliso district. Wora Dalle and Sanki Dano lost three shops, two tea-houses, two tej houses and one small clinic - closed because its owner was suspected of supporting OLA. Government forces are preventing the rebuilding of homes. Access to health care is no longer possible for pregnant women. Internet is not available [except in large towns]. Mobile phone service is intermittent at best. Even solar powered charging devices are confiscated by security forces, because they may be used by OLA. (59)

The West Wollega human rights defenders group recapped the above abuses in its most recent report in February 2024, reiterating, for example, such Command Post behaviours: that ambulances had only been used for soldiers for the last four years, private vehicles continued to be commandeered or stolen, and that public transport was very limited. In addition, the human rights defenders reported that only small amounts of money can be taken from banks; businesses are impoverished because motor cycles are only permitted in limited areas; media are jammed; medical supplies are scarce; and bribes are extorted for permission to take vehicles out of towns, even for sick people and pregnant women to attend clinics to deliver their babies.

In Chalia town, money raised from the Oromo diaspora had been used to renovate the former residence of a famous lawyer and turn it into a museum and centre for training youngsters in

computer technology but ‘the security forces took the centre by force. They took all the computers and use the centre as a military camp.’ (65)

Recommendation

We recommend that the Military Command Post structure be dissolved, civilian rule be resumed across Oromia Region, that abuses by federal and regional Ethiopian security forces be investigated by UN Special Rapporteurs and that perpetrators of abuse be held to account.

Judicial independence

OSGUK Submission, p.4, paragraphs 21-23.

Ethiopia agreed to ensure independence of the judiciary (Recommendation 163.186). It has not done so. Court orders for release have been ignored (see Arbitrary detention, above).

In Ethiopia, judges have immunity from arrest and detention, unless caught in the act of committing a crime or decided otherwise by the Judicial Commission.

1. Nonetheless, judge Adola Chuluke was detained in Finfinnee on 15 May 2020 (52).
2. In September 2020, widespread harassment of judges, prosecutors and lawyers for either alleged leniency to political prisoners or informing them of their rights was reported. At least 20 judges had been arrested and detained in Western Oromia since 2018, especially in Qellem Wallega. Three judges, two prosecutors and two lawyer were among those recently arrested.
3. President of Oromia Region Supreme Court Dassa Bulcha and Vice-President Mohammed Nure were arbitrarily removed in March 2020 and replaced. A District Prosecutor and a lawyer involved with the trial of OLF detainees at Sululta District Court were detained briefly. Judge Kamil Siraj, Gindhir district, Bale zone, remained in custody, along with an attorney and a prosecutor, for ‘supporting’ detained protestors.
4. Two judges in Adama Tullu District Court criminal bench (East Showa) Judges Nuri Abiyo and Ahmed Seid, were arrested on 14 July 2020. They were criticised the day before their arrest, for releasing suspects on bail and thereby ‘creating problems for the police and prosecutors’, releasing prisoners before police had time to build cases against them and for informing prisoners of their rights. When they appeared at East Showa High Court on 22 July, the judges were accused of ‘supporting enemies of the government’ and kept in detention. (53)
5. On 24 May 2021, Judge Wabii Tasfaa Jofaa Godoo from Mida Qany district, West Showa was detained and held in a ‘special prison’ around Dalati, Finfinnee.
6. High Court Judge of East Wallega zone, Dinqa Abdissa, was also detained in late May. He was said to be held in Kumsa Moroda palace, Nekemte, without charge or court appearance. (57)

Recommendation

We recommend that judicial independence be ensured and that judges be immune from arrest, within limits set by the Ethiopian Constitution.

Freedom of the press

OSGA Submission, p.1, paragraphs 4-5.

Ethiopia agreed to implement Recommendation 163.219 ‘Ensure that journalists and human rights defenders undertake their work in a free environment that guarantees the rights to freedom of opinion and of expression (Chile).’ It has not implemented this.

1. Staff of the *Oromia News Network* were among 29 detained by police on 5 September 2020 after their arrest during a New Year programme at Kaku Mame restaurant, Arada, Finfinnee. Seven were released. The remaining 22 were charged with inciting violence in collaboration with the Oromo Liberation Army (53).
2. On 15 July 2021, the Committee to Protect Journalists reported the suspension by the Ethiopia Media Authority of the licence of the news website *Addis Standard*, prompting its closure that day. CPJ wrote that the website version of the magazine had continued after the print magazine ceased publication in 2016 due to government restrictions which led printers to refuse to publish it (57).
3. During 2021, 46 journalists and media staffers were detained in Ethiopia (59).
4. *Africa Intelligence* journalist Antoine Galindo was arrested on 22 February 2024 and detained for one week until February 29. He was in Finfinnee to cover the AU Summit and had been granted permission to interview politicians and diplomats in the following week. He was interviewing Betie Urgessa, Political Officer of the OLF, which has been a legally registered political party since renouncing violence upon returning to Ethiopia in 2018. Nonetheless, the journalist was accused of ‘gathering information about Ethiopia’s internal politics.’ Betie Urgessa was also detained with him and not released until March 9, 2024 (65).

Recommendation

We recommend that journalists and staff of press organisations are allowed to work in their legal pursuit of truth.

Freedom of political opinion

OSGA Submission, pp.1-2, paragraphs 6-8.

Regarding recommendation 163.218, which Ethiopia did not agree to implement in full, the State responded ‘Ethiopia is committed to the protection of civil and political rights.’ This commitment is not apparent in state-sponsored extrajudicial killing and detention of legal opposition political party members, closure of their offices and coercion of voters.

Members of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) now a legal party, have been extrajudicially killed by government security forces based on their affiliation.

1. For example, Mohammed Amin was abducted by soldiers when going to his office in Babile town, East Hararge, on 14 May. 2020. Next day, his body, partially eaten by hyenas, was found in the town. (52)
2. In April 2021, 884 senior OLF officials and members were in detention. Over 300 candidates, officials and members of the Oromo Federalists Congress (OFC) were in detention. At least 103 OLF offices had been closed and looted by December 2020 and 195 OFC offices were closed. A 39-day hunger strike by OFC politicians Hamza Borana, Bekele Gerba and Jawar Mohammed and others failed to secure the release of political prisoners. (55)

3. In the 2021 elections, members of the public were coerced into voting. Access to subsidised oil and sugar and being allowed to travel were contingent, at least in some areas of Oromia, on having voter registration cards. One man was issued with four, including three for his children who were too young to vote. One man reported ‘In Oromia even if you argue to be registered they just shoot you and say we have shot shane [OLF].’ (56)
4. Human rights defenders in West Wallega wrote in February 2024: There is no freedom of assembly, the right to demonstrate or to support any political party other than the Prosperity Party. At a public meeting on 4 July 2023 in Chalia Eka, Guliso district, the PP terrified the local community not to support OLA. ‘Otherwise we will kill you’ they said. (65)

Recommendation

We recommend that the Ethiopian government must genuinely guarantee freedom of expression in accordance with its Constitution. Its Electoral Code of Conduct should be observed and freedom of expression encouraged.

Health – pollution of drinking water

OSGA Submission, p.2, paragraphs 9-12.

In response to Recommendation 163.218: ‘Ethiopia is committed to the protection of civil and political rights’ (see Freedom of political opinion, above). This commitment is not apparent in Ethiopia’s lack of response to the contamination of drinking water in the Awash river basin.

Industry is poisoning Ethiopia’s rivers and lakes and depriving many populations of the right to clean drinking water.

1. Effluent from leather tanneries is dumped in the Awash River and its tributaries such as the Little Akaki River and the Mojo River arising in East Showa.
2. Heavily polluted water has devastated Karrayyu land in Fantale district, East Showa, where the Metahara sugar plantation complex has poisoned and expanded the lake. The effluent from the sugar factory has also penetrated to make water at bore holes undrinkable for the livestock on which the Karrayyu depend.
3. Toxic waste has destroyed Oromo farmland around Lake Koka.
4. Pollution with toxins, especially heavy metals, is associated with the tanning process. These threaten human and animal health and longevity, as well as significantly damaging ecosystems. New life – foetus or baby – is particularly vulnerable to significant organ damage from heavy metals.
5. Despite being the source of drinking water downstream, dangerous levels of pollutants have been found in the Little Akaki River, which ‘failed all major water quality tests’. Oromo scientists pointed out that tanning caused the release of heavy metals – chromium, cadmium, lead; other metals – zinc, copper, iron, nickel; and compounds such as phosphates and nitrates in amounts beyond ‘international regulatory levels.’ The Mojo River is one of the most polluting tributaries of the Awash River.

The Awash is a major river which runs 1200 km entirely within Ethiopia, from the west of Finfinnee, south to Lake Koka and then northeast by Adama, Metahara, Awash National Park

and the town of Awash in Afar Region before entering a lake system on the border with Djibouti, with no outlet to the sea.

1. Scientists have presented evidence of pollution including by heavy metals (mercury, arsenic, cadmium and chromium) of several river systems in Oromia, especially those around Finfinnee (Addis Ababa). The Koche river, which runs into the Awash in Burayu, west of Finfinnee, has dangerously high levels of copper, manganese, zinc and iron, as well as the heavy metal chromium.
2. As one presenter at a conference in August 2023 said, ‘Oromia is considered a garbage site for Finfinnee.’ (63)

Recommendation

We recommend that Ethiopia protects its population by regularly testing vulnerable water sources and bringing to account industries which do not observe international standards regarding pollution of the environment.

Food insecurity

OSGA Submission, pp.2-3, paragraphs 13-15.

Ethiopia agreed to improve and sustain food security by complying with Recommendations 163.238, 163.239, 163.240 and 163.241. It has not implemented these recommendations but has been responsible for deteriorating food security in the country.

In August 2023, the UN reported there were 1.2 million children in Ethiopia with severe acute malnutrition. The report also revealed the following:

1. In Borana and Guji zones of Oromia Region more than one in six children are moderately or severely acutely malnourished. There is a Global Acute Malnutrition rate of 19%. Half of those over 60 in Borana are malnourished. Cholera, a disease of destitution and malnutrition is reported from Amhara, Oromia, Sidama, Somali, Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz and SNNP Regions.
2. Food aid was withdrawn amidst the scandal of corruption and only began to be resumed in September 2023. USAID and WFP withdrew their help in March in Tigray and early June elsewhere, in response to ‘widespread and coordinated’ diversion of food aid to ‘federal and regional government officials, private traders, and the army’ in seven of Ethiopia’s nine regions. (63)

Recommendation

We recommend that food security is given priority and that government and humanitarian agencies give aid to all affected areas including those mired in conflict.

Health infrastructure

OSGA Submission, p.3, paragraphs 16-20.

Ethiopia agreed to implement Recommendations 163.259 and 163.260 to increase access to health care and agreed (163.322) to ‘Fully uphold humanitarian principles by ensuring that humanitarian actors have unhindered access to those in need . . .’ This has not been implemented. Due to policies restricting access to areas in need, health care has drastically deteriorated.

Health care services in Oromo have been withdrawn or health care infrastructure not maintained since 2018.

1. In at least the four Wallega zones of Oromia, there has been no preventive health care for mothers and babies nor any vaccination programme since 2018. Children and lactating mothers are particularly badly affected. A measles epidemic ravaged the area in 2023 because of the low vaccination rate. Control of mosquitoes by spraying, normally two or three times each year, has not been done for five years.
2. Hospitals are lacking life-saving drugs and equipment. Health Centres are designed to cater for 15-25,000 people. Under each of these are meant to be 3-5 health posts (one per 3,500), from which public health measures are maintained, including antenatal and maternal health and vaccination programmes. Visitors report that now, facilities are destroyed, commandeered as military quarters or without resources. (63)
3. In December 2023, it was reported that in West Wallega, 20% of health centres and 61% of health posts were closed and 36 ambulances destroyed or commandeered by ENDF operating from Command Posts. In Qellem, 42% of health centres and 41% of health posts were closed and 12 ambulances destroyed or unavailable. Health centres and health posts which were open had insufficient supplies and staff.
4. Local sources and visitors report that a large population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is exacerbating the health situation and the shortage of resources. There are 1.4 million IDPs in Oromia Region, 83% of whom are in the four Wallega zones. There were 183,000 in West Wallega, especially in Gimbi, Mana Sibbu, Begi and Qondala districts, of whom 80% were hosted by community members in rural areas. Another 61,000 IDPs were transferred to West Wallega from Benishangul-Gumuz region in early October 2023, increasing the number of IDPs in the zone to 244,000, almost one quarter of a million. Another 84,000 IDPs are in Qellem, especially in Dembi Dollo and Sayo districts.
5. The IDPs are destitute. One in Begi district told an OSG informant that his family was given 5kg of maize which was expected to last seven months. (64)

Residents report not being reached by international, national or local NGOs until social media campaigns encouraged and empowered local NGOs and the Oromo Physicians Association to provide help.

There has been and is deliberate government prevention of information reaching international attention and there is evidence that the Oromia Health Bureau and the UN agency, OCHA are bowing to this pressure. It is a government decision to withhold the publication of accurate death rates and it is noticeable that many of the health professionals and officials quoted in *Addis Standard* requested anonymity, presumably because of the danger of reprisals. (64)

Recommendation

We recommend that government, national and international humanitarian agencies be given unrestricted access to areas of need.

Unreported malaria epidemic in 2023

OSGA Submission, pp.3-4, paragraphs 21-26.

Ethiopia agreed to implement Recommendations 163.259, 163.260 and 163.322 (see Health infrastructure, above). The devastating 2023 malaria epidemic demonstrates its failure to do so.

Malaria claimed thousands of lives in a man-made disaster in Western Oromia which lasted several months and which has been largely ignored by national and international agencies and

media. Eye-witness, media and NGO reports gave a much clearer picture of the disaster than was apparent from government spokespersons and the UN humanitarian agency, OCHA.

1. The OCHA report for Ethiopia on 31 October 2023 stated ‘Malaria cases in the Oromia [*Region*] reached its peak with a reported more than 774,500 cases with 180 deaths between January and September.’ The 1 December report stated ‘Fifty percent of malaria cases are reported from Oromia, with a large proportion from Western Oromia, followed by Amhara and Southwest. About 2.9 million malaria cases were reported between 1 January and 29 October 2023, an increase of 25 percent from the previous month and higher than the number of malaria cases reported in the same time period in seven years.’ Deaths from malaria were not however reported on 1 December.
2. On about 19 November, the Program Section Minister in the Ministry of Health, Dr Dereje Duguma, who had previously worked in West Wallega, stated on Ethiopian state television that, although the incidence of malaria in western Oromia had slightly increased, there had been no increase in mortality.
3. However, an eye-witnesses interviewed in early October recalled that in a single small village in Begi district, West Wallega, consisting of only 70 households, 61 of those households had lost one or more family members to the disease. Some had lost three and some had lost four. The Oromo Physicians Association, after visiting the area, stated that death rates were very high and substantially under-reported.
4. A Begi district official stated on 30 September, that all necessary measures, including spraying, distributing mosquito nets and providing treatment were being taken. However, according to the Oromo Physicians Association, more than half the deaths at Begi hospital were due to lack of adequate treatment.
5. Less than half of the deaths were in health facilities; because they were inaccessible and because treatment was simply not available at most. Farmers were traveling up to 150km and were leasing their land to buy treatment for as much as 45,000 Birr.
6. Visitors reported four deaths each day for four months in Nejo hospital in West Wallega and 14 deaths within two days in October in a single location in Begi district. With eight hospitals in West Wallega and four in Qellem, and acknowledging the majority of deaths occurred outside health facilities of any kind, it is most likely that over 5000, probably twice that number, died. The published figures grossly underestimate the number of deaths.
7. Particularly badly hit were the most western districts of Qellem and West Wallega. In the whole of Oromia Region, 70% of cases were in these two zones. Begi and Qondala districts of West Wallega which host over 60,000 IDPs, were the most severely affected of all with malaria and with malnutrition, according to the Oromo Physicians Association.

There are many reasons for such a high rate of mortality, including the insecurity of living under Command Post rule and the freezing of commerce, business and farming activity. This was blamed by the government and OCHA on the conflict with OLA. But Command Posts appeared first in West Wallega, at the beginning of 2019, when OLA had not yet started to be active. The effect of Command Posts on local economy and infrastructure was well underway before there was significant resistance from OLA.

Now, there is starvation in Western Oromia, an area which has traditionally helped to feed other areas affected by food shortage.

High rates of severe malnutrition, especially in children under five years old, and severe anaemia, both reflect government-induced destitution across the four Wallega zones and partly explain the impact of the malaria parasite in 2023. It is hard to know if drug-resistance or chronic ill-health is responsible for the poor response to treatment which has been reported by Oromo health professionals. (63)

Recommendation

We recommend that government, national and international humanitarian agencies be given unrestricted access to areas of need and be given the freedom to report on their findings.

Cooperation with UN bodies

OSGA Submission, p.1, paragraphs 2-3.

Ethiopia agreed to implement Recommendation 163.53 ‘Continue cooperation with the United Nations system in order to comply with reporting obligations (Dominican Republic).’ It has not implemented this. Ethiopia has not allowed UN Special Rapporteurs or the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) to carry out interviews in the country (64).

We recommend that Ethiopia allows UN Special Rapporteurs unlimited access to investigate allegations of human rights abuse while guaranteeing the safety of victims.

ⁱ <https://oromiasupport.org/osg-reports/>

ⁱⁱ Fikadu Tessema, Prosperity Party leader in Oromia Region addressing the regional parliament at the end of February 2021. <https://dhalootaqube.wordpress.com/2021/03/01/fikadu-tesema-one-of-the-top-government-officials-in-ethiopia-declared-war-against-the-oromo-people-saying-the-following/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Fano is the name given to nine armed paramilitary Amhara nationalist militia operating out of Amhara Region.

^{iv} Human rights defenders in West Wallega recorded 124 killings in five districts from October 2018 to April 2021. See https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Violations-in-West-Oromia_-Abuses-in-five-districts-October-2018-April-2021-2.pdf. OSG had only recorded 19 of those killings. See Report 56, pp.9-14, https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Violations-in-West-Oromia_-Abuses-in-five-districts-October-2018-April-2021-2.pdf

^v OSG Report 59, p.15. <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Report-59.pdf>

^{vi} 1 minute 34 seconds to 4 minutes 40 seconds into Finfinnee News Network broadcast available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFEbLPEcf08&rco=1>

^{vii} See Endnote iii above.

^{viii} UOCC was unable to make this submission. See Endnote v, above, for details of the Karrayyu massacre.

^{ix} The term interethnic violence is opposed by anthropologists because it implies primordial hatred and passions based on cultural and ethnic outlook rather than violence perpetrated to instigate division. The term ‘interethnic’ plays into notions of ‘African tribalism.’ This endnote was not in the original document.

^x M.H. Ali, 2022. Genocidal Conquest, Plunder of Resources and Dehumanization of the Oromo in Ethiopia. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 24, 1, pp.109-118. Published online 28 October 2021 at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14623528.2021.1992925>

^{xi} Report 58 includes links to Mekonnen Kebede, a US citizen, in uniform, recruiting for Fano in Ethiopia. He is seen calling for Oromo to be expelled from Wallega and Showa and for Oromia to be ‘removed from the map’ in a clip which was broadcast by FNN news on 30 October 2021, 2m31s-4m38s into the item at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1Im6I3-t4o>

^{xii} Press Release on 8 September 2022, at <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/OSG-Press-Release-8-September-2022.pdf>

^{xiii} <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/The-facts-behind-the-Agamsa-massacre-30-August-2022.pdf>

^{xiv} [https://qbo-abo-wbo.org/2022/09/02/regarding-the-agamsa-massacre-committed-by-fano-olf-ola-press-release/#:~:text=Qeerroo%20Bilisummaa%20Oromoo-.Regarding%20the%20Agamsa%20Massacre%20Committed,\(OLF%20DOLA%20Press%20Release\)&text=On%20August%2030th%2C%202022%2C%20Fano,several%20towns%20in%20this%20area.](https://qbo-abo-wbo.org/2022/09/02/regarding-the-agamsa-massacre-committed-by-fano-olf-ola-press-release/#:~:text=Qeerroo%20Bilisummaa%20Oromoo-.Regarding%20the%20Agamsa%20Massacre%20Committed,(OLF%20DOLA%20Press%20Release)&text=On%20August%2030th%2C%202022%2C%20Fano,several%20towns%20in%20this%20area.)

^{xv} <https://oromiasupport.org/video/two-young-men-from-chalcho-village-in-dibate-district-metekel-zone-benishangul-gumuz-region-were-executed-by-endf-in-january-2022/>

^{xvi} https://factcheck.afp.com/doc.afp.com.33JC4CA?fbclid=IwAR0QA_tu-I-ghWLog5XjLFwU85TPJp4lr_uoX6QmjQ0o-FliqZ7tGMNfXPk

^{xvii} <https://oromiasupport.org/video/this-video-shows-gambella-region-security-forces-and-other-residents-of-the-city-killing-at-least-12-civilians-in-a-public-open-space-the-victims-are-enthusiastically-kicked-jumped-upon-and-struck-w/>