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Open Letter To Secretary General of Amnesty International Agnès Callamard
Copied to: Nairobi Hub of Amnesty International International Secretariat

15 March 2026

Re: Accusing the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) of war crimes in Research Briefing *'No one came to my rescue'* 5 March 2026. 10 March 2026

Dear Secretary General,

I write as a devotee, activist, campaigner and member of Amnesty International to complain about the publication of the misinformed and misleading Research Briefing *'No one came to my rescue'* on 5 March by the Nairobi hub of the International Secretariat.

I have been an active member of Amnesty International since 2007 and continue to act as a speaker in schools about Amnesty International, human rights and the unfair treatment of refugees in the UK and elsewhere.

I am also the author of 72 reports on human rights abuses in Ethiopia published by the Oromia Support Group.[1] Reports 50-72 have been written since the Prosperity Party government of Ethiopia was established by Abiy Ahmed in 2018.

In September 2022, I complained about the under-reporting by Amnesty International of abuses in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia to Fisseha Tekle, researcher for Ethiopia at the International Secretariat Nairobi hub (copy attached). Since then, I have remained disappointed in Amnesty's reportage. I was pleased to learn of the publication of the above report when advanced notice was given on 4 March.

When it was released next day, I was horrified when I read it. As the chairman of a human rights organisation, I have always looked up to Amnesty International. After reading the Research Briefing, I felt that I had been stabbed in the back by an older sister.

The Research Briefing was not only poorly researched, its reckless publication is, at best, evidence of anti-Oromo bias within the International Secretariat. At worst, it reads as a deliberate attempt to single out the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) as the major perpetrator of abuses in Oromia Region. This is a gross misrepresentation.

As I pointed out to Fisseha Tekle in 2022, the Oromo youth (*Qeerroo*), whose pro-democracy demonstrations opened up the political space which gave Abiy Ahmed the opportunity to seize power, were by his own admission the prime target for the new prime minister. Abiy's intent was documented by former minister, Milkessa Gemechu,[2] and is evident in Reports 50-

[1] https://oromiasupport.org/osg-reports/

[2] Milkessa Midega Gemechu, *How Abiy Ahmed Betrayed Oromia and Endangered Ethiopia.* Foreign Policy, 25 January 2022; Also at the mid-term Oromo Studies Association conference, on 27 March 2022 (from 1hr 4m to 1hr 31m of the 2 hr recording) *Catastrophic Victory: How politics of betrayal against the Oromo youth thwarted democratic transition in Ethiopia*.

72 from the Oromia Support Group, all of which have been sent to Fisseha. However, there has been no documentation of this targeting of Oromo youth by Amnesty International.

The massacre of 14 *Gadaa* leaders of the Karrayyu Oromo on 1 December 2021,[3] an event of immense significance to all Oromo people, was not reported by Amnesty International. The killing of Oromo civilians by government forces and Amhara Fano militants in Horo Guduru and East Wallega zones, which has proceeded since 2021 and been reported by the Oromia Support Group in almost every report since then,[4] has likewise gone unreported by Amnesty International. Indeed, the killing by Amhara Fano militia of dozens of villagers in Abee Dongoroo district of Horo Guduru has continued over the last week, in March of 2026, without a murmur from Amnesty International.

The well-publicised intention of Amhara Fano forces to rid Wallega and Showa zones of Oromo civilians has never been reported by Amnesty International, nor have massacres of Oromo such as that of more than 100 in Agamsa, Horo Guduru, by Fano on 30 August 2022.[5]

There has been no acknowledgement by Amnesty International of the false flag operations of Ethiopian government forces in Ethiopia. Fighters, sponsored and supported by federal and Oromia Region governments, have been known to masquerade as OLA to commit atrocities against Amhara and Oromo civilians for the purpose of tarnishing the name of OLA and to instigate hatred and hostility between Amhara and Oromo people. Similar forces masquerading as Fano militants are believed to have been responsible for some of the worst atrocities in North Showa, but these 'Government-Fano' attack Oromo civilians in common cause with regular Fano forces.[6]

Government forces which masquerade as OLA, so called 'Government -Shane', were responsible for massacres of Amhara people at Guliso in November 2020[7] and in Qellem Wallega[8] and Tole,[9,10] in Southwest Showa, in June 2022. Shortly afterwards, OLA published a video of Amhara residents testifying to their being protected by OLA rather than being in fear from them in Qellem Wallega.[11] The existence of these clandestine government forces which masquerade both as OLA and as Fano has been reported by a government whistle-blower in June 2024,[12] and on several occasions by the Oromia Support Group (OSG).[13] For example, in OSG Report 71, it is reported that residents in three villages in Dandi district, West Showa, were terrorised by fighters with braided hair and ostentatiously shouting 'Jaal, jaal' to each other ('comrade' in *Afaan Oromo*) in September 2025.[14] Yet the well-known and widely-acknowledged existence of these impersonators is not even mentioned in Amnesty reporting.

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[3] https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Karrayyu-Massacre-Report-14-January-22.pdf
[4] See for example OSG Report 69, pp.22-23; Report 70, pp.33-35; Report 71, pp.29 and 32-35; Report 72, p.36.
[5] https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/The-facts-behind-the-Agamsa-massacre-30-August-2022.pdf
[6] OSG Report 68, pp.3-10.
[7] OSG Report 54, p.17
[8] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/05/villagers-massacred-western-ethiopia-says-state-appointed-body
[9] https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Tole-Massacre-Reporting-on-Ethiopia_6-July-2022.pdf
[10] https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Press-Release-Slaughter-and-Slander-of-OLA-5-July-2022.pdf
[11] https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Amhara-Testimonials-Eng-subtitle.mp4
[12] OSG Report 67, p.11-13.
[13] For example, OSG Report 60, pp.14-17.
[14] p.13, OSG Report 71. https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/OSG-Report-71-20-November-2025.pdf

The apportioning of blame to OLA, accepting false claims made for the purpose of propaganda against OLA is damaging and irresponsible. The first line of the report by Amnesty International on the Guliso massacre in November 2020, for example, reads 'Amnesty International can reveal that at least 54 people from the Amhara ethnic group were killed in an attack late on 1 November by suspected members of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) armed group.'[15] The subtitle of the report by Amnesty International on the massacre in Tole, Southwest Showa, on 18 June 2022,[16] is a quote from Regional Director Deprose Muchena: 'These horrific killings in Tole, allegedly at the hands of the Oromo Liberation Army, reveal its perpetrators' utter disregard for human life.' Throughout the report it is claimed that OLA fighters killed Amhara civilians. The implications of 'suspected' and 'allegedly' are never followed up by Amnesty, whose officials assume certainty.

It is shocking to see that today when entering on Google 'Amnesty International Ethiopia', the second highlighted article, concerning this Research Briefing, reads '4 days ago — Since 2019, members of Ethiopia's Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) have subjected women and girls to sexual violence in the Oromia region.'

Thus, without any caveat or qualification, OLA is repeatedly singled out and portrayed as if it is the major perpetrator of abuses in Ethiopia.

This is unjustified and indicative of institutional bias within the International Secretariat of Amnesty. This appears intentional. The organisation's report on the Guliso killings was published within 24 hours of the atrocity, which was in fact perpetrated by 'Government-Shane'. The immediacy of the issuance of the Amnesty report indicates a premeditated plan to attack the reputation of OLA, premeditation which involved Amnesty International staff.

Not only is OLA tarred with the same brush as Fano and Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF), OLA is singled out as the worst perpetrator of human rights abuses in Ethiopia – despite no active pursuit of evidence that the genuine organisation has been involved in any atrocities at all.

Amnesty International does not understand the basic concept of *Safuu* which is the moral and ethical code engrained in Oromo society from the *gadaa* system. OLA fighters are expected to adhere strictly to this and any diversion from this strict code would be severely punished.

Thus, the Research Briefing *'No one came to my rescue'* fits a well-rehearsed pattern of blaming OLA for atrocities committed by other forces, especially those perpetrated by 'Government-Shane', the clandestine force which masquerades as OLA.

The International Commission of Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) carefully interviewed victims of abuses in Ethiopia using meticulously orchestrated security protocols before the enquiry was prematurely terminated at the request of the Ethiopian government. It was not their conclusion that OLA fighters were perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence. Admittedly, there are many pitfalls and difficulties in obtaining reliable testimony in an environment which is not safe for victims and human rights defenders. But, this does not excuse the blanket and vague description of 'interlocutors,' nine 'experts' (not identified nor described according to credentials or selection criteria) and the ten victims in the recent report, which does not allay our suspicions that the report was designed and executed without concern about smearing the reputation of OLA.

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[15] https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2020/11/ethiopia-over-50-ethnic-amhara-killed-in-attack-on-village-by-armed-group/

[16] https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/ethiopia-authorities-must-investigate-massacre-of-ethnic-amhara-in-tole/

The report contains factual inaccuracies which were pointed out in OLA's response (attached). The ability of 'nine experts' to comment on the research, given the inaccessibility of Qellem Wallega zone, casts serious doubt on the report's veracity. The report does not state language(s) utilized in the telephone interviews – *Afaan Oromo* or Amharic or some other.

The report is biased and inaccurate. It should not have been released without asking for comments from OLA. It should be withdrawn. At the very least it should be accompanied by a caveat stating that its conclusions are robustly challenged by OLA and at least one human rights defender. I doubt that I will be the only one to object to this careless release.

Amnesty International should be part of the solution to the atrocious human rights abuses in Ethiopia, not part of the problem. It should not be a mouthpiece which amplifies and gives credibility to propaganda from the Ethiopian government and Amhara Fano forces.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Trevor Trueman, Chair, Oromia Support Group