
PRESS RELEASE

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If you want to completely get rid of the fish, you need to dry up the ocean.

Fekadu Tessema, Prosperity Party, Oromia branch.
Oromia Regional Parliament meeting, Adama, 27 February 2021.

This catchphrase of dictators and perpetrators of abuse was used by the Oromia Prosperity Party head to justify ongoing, systematic elimination of Qeerroo, OLA and OLF supporters - to 'overcome resistance in East and West Wallega, Guji and Borana zones of Oromia'.¹

While the world's attention has focussed on the horrors in Tigray since last November, a campaign of extra-judicial killings and ethnic cleansing has been exercised in Oromia and other regions since October 2018.

Report 57 of the Oromia Support Group, published today, continues the relentless body count of Oromo targeted for killing by pro-government forces. Over the last three years, OSG has documented **2393 extra-judicial killings of civilians** by forces loyal to the Ethiopian government (excluding Tigray and Afar Regions).

1612 were Oromo; 924 were killed in West Oromia, mostly Wallega. Killings were particularly prevalent from September to December 2020. When Federal forces, Eritrean soldiers and Amhara Region militia became more engaged in Tigray, the rate of killings in Oromia dropped. Nonetheless **417 are recorded killed this year**. In the first twenty years of EPRDF-TPLF rule (1992-2012), OSG recorded 4498 killings - less than twice the number killed by Abiy's regime in 15% of the time.

Report 57 includes the targeted killing of politicians (e.g. Mallasa Chala, p.6) and activists (e.g. Sena Ragassa, p.5; Mosisa Lama, p.7; Game Mosisa, one day after his wedding, p.17; Jiregna Gutu, p.18), the killing of parents of Qeerroo and OLA members (e.g. Adunya Amante, p.5; Wako Jilo, p.21) and the burning of their homes and farms.

Ethnic cleansing by federal forces and Amhara militia is not limited to Tigray. At least 150 Oromo in Wollo, Amhara Region, are named as killed in ethnic cleansing by Amhara Region militia in March and April 2021; 358,000 remain displaced (p.10). Thirteen were killed and 47 homes burned before Amhara militia were driven from E Wallega by Oromia Special Forces in April. 3000 hectares were set ablaze. When Amhara fighters returned in August, they burned down over 100 homes and killed at least ten civilians before being driven off by Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) fighters (pp.19-20).

¹Quoted in HRLHA submission to UN Human Rights Council 48th session Sept/Oct 2021.

Amhara Regional militia have also been engaged in killings and ethnic cleansing in Metekel zone, Benishangul-Gumuz Region (p.20), where the UN reports over [538,000 displaced](#), and most recently, they have attacked Karayu Oromo in E Showa, Oromia Region (p.9).

However, when Amhara Regional militia are repelled by civilians, as in Wollo, or by OLA fighters, as in E Wallega, it is Oromo who are accused of aggression. Over 100 Amhara militia were killed when they attacked OLA fighters in KIRAMU, E Wallega, on 18/19 August. They had been wreaking havoc in the area, burning Oromo homes and driving farmers away (p.19). The *National Movement of Amhara*, in Ethiopia, and the Amhara Association of America accused OLA of unprovoked attacks against Amhara civilians.

The writing is on the wall for PM Abiy Ahmed. Universally condemned for atrocities in Tigray and his use of Eritrean troops and Amhara Regional militia elsewhere, he is desperately clinging to power, forcibly recruiting prisoners, returned migrants from Saudi Arabia and schoolboys from across Ethiopia to fight his wars (p.23): he is detaining Tigreans, seeking them out in foreign missions and NGOs, and imprisoning Tigrean returnees from Saudi Arabia.

This cauldron of ethnicised hatred and violence sits against a backdrop of runaway (20+% inflation and unemployment, a collapsing judiciary and court system, closure of Ethiopia's diplomatic missions abroad, removal of staff from foreign posts, a National Defence Force liable to fragment along ethnic lines, now at least in part antagonistic to Oromia Special Forces (p.31), and a deluded leadership, supported only by opportunists and fossils with a 150 year-old ideology of Amhara supremacy.

Meanwhile **OLA is in control of large areas** of West, Central and Southern Oromia, according to a leaked EU document (pp.2-3).² **In an encouraging note from the EU delegate** 'It was reported from some rural areas how OLA enters villages, calls village meetings in order to explain its objectives and policies to the local population and afterwards just asks the Prosperity Party administrators and security forces to leave peacefully - which in some cases happened.'

The **deplorable treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers** is universal, crossing cultural, financial, religious and racial boundaries. In contrast to the kindness of individual strangers, governments and others wielding power abuse refugees and asylum-seekers in rich and poor countries alike. In this report is described the cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of detained migrants in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya, Switzerland and USA, and the hostility to refugees in Djibouti and Somaliland (pp.26-30).

A broad coalition of [Oromo human rights and advocacy groups has agreed recommendations](#) (pp.23-24) for an inclusive Dialogue with the aim of establishing peace and stability in the region, according to the wishes of all of its peoples. Several initiatives have already begun. The age of hegemonic domination of any one group over any other is coming to an end.

The sacrifices of the Oromo youth movement, Qeerroo, are about to bring their dividend of peace. The zero-sum mould of Ethiopian politics is about to be broken for good.

Dr Trevor Trueman - Galato, Chair, OSG.

² <https://www.tghat.com/2021/08/24/a-leaked-document-delegation-of-the-european-union-to-ethiopia/>