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## PRESS RELEASE

4 April 2022

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### **Beware genocide; Ethnic cleansing; Qeerroo deliberately targeted by Abiy Ahmed; Hate speech; Wallega report; OLF detainees**

OSG Report 59, released today, documents continuing human rights failures in Ethiopia.

Although the execution of Karrayyuu Gadaa leaders on 1 December (pp.15-17) was not genocidal in extent, the ethnic cleansing and expansion of Amhara territory which preceded and followed the massacre is part of a process which is approaching genocide in its ideology and, arguably, in its practice.



It is evident within Amhara Region as the mass graves from retaliatory killings in Wollo (p.14) attest, as do previously reported killings of Agaw (Report 57, p.23) and Kemant (Report 58, pp.17-18).



The process of killing and razing villages of non-Amhara is evident around Amhara Region too - mass killings in East and West Showa (pp.9-10), East Wallega and Horo Guduru zones, Oromia Region (pp.21-22), and in Metekel zone of Benishangul-Gumuz Region (pp.28-29).

These killings are preceded, justified and followed by hate speech aimed at the victims (pp.5-7). False claims of atrocities attributing them to OLA (p.22) are another form of hate speech - designed to increase hostility and hatred.

Civilians are also killed throughout Oromia in scorched earth campaigns in West Wallega (pp.19-21) and in East and West Guji zones (p.30). **Government soldiers are told 'to do whatever they want be it legal or illegal including murders'** (p.27).

On taking power, Abiy Ahmed's top priority, however, was the elimination of the very group which enabled his ascendancy, the Qeerroo non-violent pro-democracy protestors. Former Minister Milkessa Gemechu confirmed that the observed trend was deliberate policy (pp.3-4).

The devastating local effects of the civil war in Oromia are revealed by the third report from the Human Rights Defenders Group, based in West Wallega (pp.24-28).

OLF political prisoners remain in filthy, secret dungeons (pp.10-13) after the release of a few OFC leaders on 7 January. Bate Urgessa, OLF Public Relations head, was released from prison on a stretcher and remains severely ill.

Opposition leaders together with civil society and grassroots organisations, must be the drivers of any dialogue to navigate Ethiopia out of its multiple crises and must be released.