



## War updates from Amhara Region, Ethiopia – January

**20th to 26th, 2025**

*Updated January 27th, 2025*

### Overview

For the week of January 20th to 26th, 2025, fighting between *Amhara Fano freedom fighters* (Fano) and *Prosperity Party regime joint forces* (regime forces) has continued in various parts of Amhara Region in Ethiopia.<sup>1</sup>

- This week battle events and rights violations were recorded in more than 47 woreda/city administrations across 12 zonal administrations in Amhara Region. These zones included the Wag-Hemra, North Wollo, South Wollo, North Shewa, East Gojjam, West Gojjam, Awi, Bahir-Dar, North Gojjam, South Gonder, Central Gonder and West Gonder Zones. Developments were also recorded in Addis-Ababa city, Gurage Zone (Central Ethiopia Region) and in East Wollega and Horo-Guduru-Wollega Zones (Oromia Region).

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<sup>1</sup>Regime forces are primarily comprised of the *Ethiopian National Defense Force* (ENDF) often with backing from regional riot dispersal, militia and police.

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- Developments were recorded in over 9 urban administrations across 5 zonal administrations in Amhara Region. These urban administrations included Korem, Kobo, Woldia, Alamata, Lalibela, Debre-Birhan, Shewa-Robit, Bahir-Dar and Gonder cities in the Wag-Hemra, North Wollo, North Shewa, Bahir-Dar and Central Gonder Zones.
  - Civilian casualties were recorded in 16 woreda/city administrations across 7 zonal administrations in Amhara Region. These included Raya-Kobo, Debre-Birhan, Berehet, Minjar-Shenkora, Wemberima, Sekela, Dembecha, Quarit, Alefa, North Mecha, South Mecha, North Achefer, Lay-Gayint, Gonder, Tach-Armachiho and Qwara Woredas in the North Wollo, North Shewa, West Gojjam, North Gojjam, South Gonder, Central Gonder and West Gonder Zones.
    - Attacks in many areas were associated with observance of the Timket (Epiphany) religious holiday by followers of the *Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church* (EOTC).
    - Attacks on residents in western Oromia Region have continued with coordinated military operations by Oromia Region Forces including the *Oromia Special Forces* (OSF)
    - Tigray Region Forces including those affiliated with the *Tigray People's Liberation Front* (TPLF) are accused of repressive activities against residents of Raya-Alamata Woreda (North Wollo Zone) and of suspected involvement in the assassination of a prominent civil society figure in Tach-Armachiho Woreda (Central Gonder Zone).
  - Widespread arrests were reported in 8 woreda/city administrations across 7 zonal administrations in Amhara Region. These included Woldia, Mida-Woremo, Debre-Markos, Dembecha, Bure-Zuriya, Bahir-Dar, North Mecha, and Lay-Gayint Woredas in the North Wollo, North Shewa, East Gojjam, West Gojjam, Bahir-Dar,

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North Gojjam and South Gonder Zones. Arrests were also recorded in the Sheger city administration in Oromia Region. In Gurage Zone (Central Ethiopia Region) authorities are accused of prolonged detention of Amhara civilians from last year.

- Drone strikes were recorded in 2 woreda administrations across 2 zonal administrations in Amhara Region. These included Machakel Woreda in East Gojjam Zone and North Mecha Woreda in North Gojjam Zone.
- Reports indicate worsening humanitarian situation with more than 100,000 people facing food insecurity in Wag-Hemra Zone.

### **Wag-Hemra Zone**

- Severe drought and heavy rains have affected over 100,000 people in Wag-Hemra Zone, leading to a critical humanitarian situation.
  - According to BBC Amharic, over 107,000 residents are suffering, with 11,200 children and mothers facing high levels of malnutrition.<sup>2</sup>
  - A study by Woldia University indicated that 35% of the zone’s population (106,600 people) across four woredas are severely affected by drought and food shortages.
  - Authorities have warned that if immediate action is not taken, the situation could escalate into a “77-type disaster.”
  - Urgent humanitarian assistance is needed to prevent further loss of life, particularly among children.

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<sup>2</sup>See January 22nd, 2025 [report](#) from BBC Amharic (English translation available [here](#)).

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### **Sekota-Zuriya Woreda**

- On January 21st, Amhara Fano in Wollo announced a significant victory over regime forces in Hamusit, near Sekota city.<sup>3</sup> The Lasta Asaminew Corps' Hailu Kebede Division, conducted an operation that resulted in severe casualties among the regime's police and militia forces, including 3 deaths, 5 injuries, and the capture of 3 regime troops and military equipment.

### **Korem City**

- On January 26th, an attempt by TPLF factions to organize demonstrations in support of their respective leaders faced opposition from the local population, who have been advocating for joining the Amhara Region and denouncing severe human rights violations spanning over 27 years. Due to public resistance, the factions resorted to using their militia members to carry out the demonstrations.

### **Dehana Woreda**

- On the morning of January 26th, Fano forces launched an offensive against regime militias and police stationed in the strategic town of Dura.
  - The offensive was a joint operation involving the Amhara Fano in Wollo (Bete-Amhara) Lasta-Asaminew Corps' Hailu Kebede Division and the Amhara Fano Unity in Gonder's Zozamba-Nigussu Division.
  - The offensive resulted in significant casualties for regime forces, forcing them to withdraw from the area.

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<sup>3</sup>See January 21st, 2025 [report](#) from the Amhara Fano in Wollo (Bete-Amhara).

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## North Wollo Zone

- On January 19th and 20th, youths celebrating Epiphany and Kana-Zegelila in various woredas and kebeles of North Wollo Zone, expressed support for the Fano struggle and its leaders.
  - This was observed in Woldia, Kobo, Lalibela, and other urban and rural areas.
  - Amhara youths celebrating Kana-Zegelila praised the Fano struggle through traditional dance and music, highlighting leaders like Fano Mihret Wodajo.
  - The name of Brigadier General Asaminew Tsige, known for his support of the Fano struggle and his call for Amhara unity against external threats, was frequently invoked during the celebrations.

## Woldia City

- On January 20th, regime forces carried out mass arrests of local youths celebrating the Kana-Zegelila holiday.
  - Regime forces targeted the residents as they led traditional dances and music, beginning on the eve of the holiday.
  - Sources reported that security forces stationed near St. Michael's Church infiltrated civil groups, intimidating and harassing youth and bajaj drivers, particularly after 6 pm.
  - Victims were transported to Woldia Stadium which has been repurposed as a military base and detention facility where various abuses have reportedly taken place.

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### **Raya-Kobo Woreda**

- On January 23rd at midnight intense fighting occurred in Keyu-Gariya, an area between Kobo city and Zobel.
  - The clash took place between the Amhara Fano in Wollo (Bete-Amhara) Zobel-Amba Division and regime forces.
  - Regime forces launched at least three indiscriminate heavy weapon strikes into Keyu-Gariya.
  - One civilian was killed during the attack, and a pile of cane was set on fire.
  - It has been reported that Fano forces killed and injured regime soldiers during the confrontation.

### **Raya-Alamata Woreda**

- Political tensions have escalated in several areas of the Alamata city administration, including Muhoni and Chercher, particularly since January 25th.
  - This tension stems from competition between political factions within the TPLF, led by Getachew Reda (President of the Tigray Interim Administration) and Debretsion Gebremichael (President of TPLF).
  - The Raya Wollo Amhara Identity Restoration Committee and other activists in Raya-Alamata have been protesting the planned demonstration scheduled for January 27th, arguing that it does not represent the concerns of the Amhara people.
  - They accuse the Prosperity Party-led command post of organizing the demonstration in support of Getachew Reda, while typically preventing demonstrations organized by the Raya Wollo Amhara Identity Restoration Committee.

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## **Lalibela City**

- On the night of January 24th, a brief clash took place between Fano and regime forces in the Getergie area.
  - Fighting involved the Amhara Fano in Wollo (Bete-Amhara) Lasta-Asaminew Corps.
  - The attack resulted in the death of the personal guards of the ENDF North-East Command, 61st Division, 3rd Regiment Battalion commander, and Command Post Coordinator of Lasta Woreda, Chala.
  - Multiple sources have reported that the Commander was also injured in the attack.

## **South Wollo Zone**

### **Legehida Woreda**

- On January 24th, it has been reported that the Amhara Fano in Wollo (Bete-Amhara) ambushed regime soldiers.<sup>4</sup>
  - The ambush was carried out by the Dagm-Kitet-Wereilu Division under the West Wollo Corps.
  - Regime forces were traveling from Legehida Woreda to Sidre at the time of the attack.
  - The ambush resulted in the death and injury of more than 15 regime soldiers.

### **Amhara-Sayint Woreda**

- A fierce battle erupted on the afternoon of January 24th in the area of Guameda, between Fano forces and regime forces, which were supported by heavy weaponry.

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<sup>4</sup>See January 24th, 2025 [update](#) from the Amhara Fano in Wollo (Bete-Amhara).

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The regime forces initiated the engagement by launching heavy artillery, and in the afternoon, the Fano responded with counterattacks.

## **North Shewa Zone**

- During the Timket and Kana-Zegelila celebrations on January 19th and 20th, youths in Debre-Birhan city and several other urban and rural areas of North Shewa Zone, such as Mida-Meragna, celebrated by praising the Fano struggle and its leaders. Local youth incorporated the names of Fano leaders into traditional dances, expressing solidarity with the broader Amhara movement.

## **Debre-Birhan City**

- On January 22nd, regime forces carried out extrajudicial killings of 22 civilians in Debre-Birhan city.
  - These civilians had been arbitrarily arrested on January 19th, and were subsequently killed on January 22nd.
  - Among the victims, 3 were killed within the regime’s camp, while 19 others were taken to their homes and executed in front of their families and neighbors.
  - Names of eight victims have been identified:
    1. Shifferaw Gashahunegn (resident of Kebele 08, bean seller)
    2. Sahle Wolde-Gebriel (resident of Kebele 03, broker)
    3. Zebene Chebudie (resident of Kebele 08, daily laborer)
    4. Cherinet Asfaw (resident of Urael, broker)
    5. Techale Alamirew (resident of Kebele 03, street coffee seller)
    6. Addis Teklehanna (job seeker)
    7. Aklile Yeshiwas (resident of Kebele 010, construction worker)



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8. Tigist Hailu (clothing vendor, recently moved from Sela-Dingay in Mojana-Wadera Woreda)

### **Minjar-Shenkora Woreda**

- On January 19th, regime forces disrupted the Timket celebrations in the Arenbuti area.
  - The celebration, which was meant to bring together 44 Arks for a peaceful gathering, was violently interrupted when regime forces opened fire, killing at least 2 civilians.
  - Subsequently, 7 civilians were killed by the regime forces on January 22nd.
- On January 25th, the Fano forces ambushed regime forces at a checkpoint in Bolo-Giyorgis.
  - The fighting involved the Amhara Fano in Shewa's Kesem Division.
  - The Fano killed two regime soldiers (one male and one female) and captured four ENDF soldiers including a senior military officer (Meto-Aleqa rank).

### **Efratana-Gidim Woreda**

- On January 21st, intense fighting occurred between regime and forces and multiple divisions from the Amhara Fano in Shewa and the Amhara Fano Shewa Province Command in Efratana-Gidim Woreda.
  - The battle took place in areas such as Korie, Fered-Wuha, Kara-Legoma, and Haderu-Terara.
  - The fighting resulted in significant casualties for regime forces, forcing them to retreat from the area.

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- In retaliation, regime forces reportedly killed cattle belonging to locals and destroyed other properties.

### **Merhabete Woreda**

- On the night of January 22nd, members of the Amhara Fano in Shewa's Nadew Division ambushed the camps of regime forces in Alem-Ketema town. The attack resulted in the killing, injury, and capture of several regime militia members.

### **Berehet Woreda**

- On January 23rd, regime forces launched artillery shelling on civilian residences killing 3 civilians and injuring another in Terie Kebele.
  - The victims were identified as Priest Tegegn Mulugeta, Belete Zenebe, and Yigoshem Zina. A fourth victim was severely injured.
  - The regime also destroyed their collected yield, which is estimated to be up to 50 quintals.

### **Mida-Woremo Woreda**

- The Amhara Fano Shewa Province Command Amde-Tsion Corps' Atse Dawit Division has issued a warning to the regime to release individuals arrested as of January 25th. In recent weeks, a significant number of youths were arbitrarily detained in the area in connection with the Timket (Epiphany) celebration. Regime forces had accused residents of vocally praising Fano leaders and opposing the Prosperity Party regime and its forces.

### **Shewa-Robit City**

- Since January 26th, a battle has taken place in areas surrounding the Shewa-Robit city administration including Kobo and Mengs, starting in the morning and

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continuing until 3 pm.

- The conflict was between the Amhara Fano Shewa Province Command and regime forces, involving the use of heavy weapons such as cannons, ZU-23, mortars, and other artillery. The regime forces launched these heavy weapons from the town into the surrounding areas.
- The clashes began after regime forces travelled into areas such as Kobo.
- As a result, regime forces gained control of 06 Kebele, which had been under the control of Fano forces for more than six months.

### **East Gojjam Zone**

- Between January 18th and 21st, regime joint forces have initiated widespread detentions across various towns and cities.
  - Reports indicate physical abuses against civilians accompanying these detentions. AAA sources have received instances of such abuses and arrests particularly from Debre-Markos, Dembecha, Bure, and Bahir-Dar cities.
  - This arrest campaign occurred during and after the Timket (Epiphany) ceremony, under the pretext of addressing youth who were allegedly chanting supportive slogans for the Fano movement and its leaders. Further investigations into the reported arrest campaign are ongoing.

### **Machakel Woreda**

- On January 21st, strong fighting took place between Fano fighters and regime forces.
  - The fighting was initiated by the regime, which deployed a large contingent and began long-range artillery shelling from nearby bases.

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- This mobilization targeted the Girakidam area in an attempt to suppress the Belay Zeleke Fano Brigade in the area.
  - In turn, the Fano mounted intense resistance in the Yenech area to impede the regime’s advance. The fighting persisted for an extended period, inching closer to Girakidam.
  - Reports indicate that the Fano inflicted substantial casualties on regime forces during this exchange.
- On January 21st, the regime conducted a drone strike in the Girakidam area which resulted in four casualties.

### **Dejen Woreda**

- On January 22nd, heavy gunfire exchanges took place in the small town of Gubiya, initiated by the Zambera Fano Brigade.
  - They infiltrated Gubiya and attacked a regime camp where militias and riot dispersal police were stationed.
  - According to sources, there was one confirmed death from the Fano side, while over 14 riot dispersal police were killed, and several others were injured during the exchange of fire.

### **Gozamin Woreda**

- On January 22nd, a gunfire exchange took place in the Fendika area, initiated by the Amhara Fano in Gojjam’s Jibela-Mutera Brigade targeting recently deployed regime soldiers. While the exact number of casualties remains unclear, Fano fighters claimed to have killed and injured several regime militia and riot dispersal police members in the confrontation.

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## **Debay-Telatgin Woreda**

- On the night of January 24th, intense fighting occurred in Yedama Kebele.
  - The fighting was initiated when Fano fighters ambushed regime forces who were mobilizing from Quyi town towards Fano’s strongholds.
  - Forewarned about the regime’s mobilization, the Debay Choke Fano Brigade launched a preemptive attack in Yedama Kebele, leading to a gunfire exchange.
  - Sources reported 2 deaths among Fano fighters, while casualties among regime soldiers were described as numerous. Fano fighters also captured an unspecified number of firearms.

## **West Gojjam Zone**

### **Bure-Zuriya Woreda**

- On January 19th, fighting took place in the Quchi neighborhood.
  - The fighting was initiated by regime forces, who attempted to ambush Fano fighters positioned at strategic locations. Anticipating the regime’s preparation for ambush, the Fano fighters launched a preemptive attack in an area known as Quant, resulting in an open exchange of gunfire.
  - While specific casualty figures remain unconfirmed, sources suggest that Fano fighters inflicted significant losses on regime soldiers, forcing them to retreat back to Quchi town.
  - In a separate development, the Dejach Asibo Brigade, part of the Amhara Fano in Gojjam’s Ras-Bitwedded Mengesha Atikem Division operating in the Bure area, announced the completion and graduation of new Fano recruits in the past week.

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## **Wemberima Woreda**

- Between January 19th and 20th, intense fighting took place in Shindi town and the surrounding area.
  - The fighting was launched by regime forces in order to assert control over the area and suppress Fano fighters present there. The regime reportedly deployed large numbers of troops and heavy weaponry during the conflict.
  - In response, Fano brigades from the Amhara Fano in Gojjam's Ras-Bitwedded Mengesha Atikem Division mounted a fierce resistance to prevent the regime's advance into Shindi.
  - Both sides endured significant casualties, with reports indicating at least 6 Fano fighters killed, although the number of regime soldier casualties remains unknown.
  - By January 20th, regime forces managed to enter Shindi town. Following the engagement, the regime reportedly committed human rights violations against civilians in Wemberima Woreda, including killings, injuries, home burnings, mass detentions, and physical abuse.

## **Dembecha Woreda**

- On January 20th, regime forces executed mass detentions and inflicted physical abuses in connection with the recent epiphany celebrations in town.
  - Over 5 civilian youths were among those detained, facing severe beatings after being accused of chanting slogans in support of the Fano movement and its leaders.
  - The detained individuals were subsequently released, following the regime militias received threats of attacks from Fano fighters operating in the area.

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- On January 21st, the Kiber Temesgen Fano Brigade unexpectedly infiltrated Dembecha town and launched an attack on regime forces, primarily targeting militias and riot dispersal police, as the ENDF camp was situated on the outskirts.
    - Following the Fano assault, regime forces dispersed throughout Dembecha were forced to regroup at the ENDF camp in the Mulalem-Chigign area.
    - Sources indicated that the motivation for their assault in Dembecha was to assist comrades engaged in battle in Machakel Woreda and to prevent reinforcements from Dembecha.
    - Reports suggest that the Fano inflicted numerous casualties, especially among regime militias and police, and captured over 30 firearms alongside a substantial amount of ammunition.
  
  - On the evening of January 23rd, heavy gunfire was reported in Dembecha town.
    - The gunfire was involving heavy artillery fire attributed to regime forces aiming to prevent Fano infiltration.
    - The exchange reportedly lasted for two hours, with the outcome and casualties remaining unknown.

### **Quarit Woreda**

- On January 21st, brief fighting was conducted in the border area between Quarit and Gonji-Qolela Woreda.
  - The conflict began when regime soldiers infiltrated Sheba village, where Fano fighters were participating in a social gathering. This confrontation resulted in the deaths of 4 Fano fighters, one of them reportedly being in a command position.

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- The extent of casualties among regime soldiers remains unclear. During their retreat, regime soldiers reportedly killed at least 11 civilians from two families.
  - Further details regarding this incident are currently under investigation.
  - Additionally, the Amhara Fano in Gojjam announced the killing of former spokesperson Fano Yohannes Alemayehu on January 21st.

### **Dega-Damot Woreda**

- On January 21st, a heavy gunfire exchange took place in Dama-Markos Kebele.
  - The clash began when regime forces mobilized troops from Feres-Bet towards Dama-Markos to suppress Fano fighters in their stronghold.
  - The Dega-Damot Fano Brigade mounted a fierce resistance in response to the attack, ultimately repelling the regime forces and forcing them to retreat to their bases.
  - The Fano fighters reported inflicting significant casualties on the regime soldiers.

### **Jabi-Tehnan Woreda**

- On the evening of January 22nd, Fano fighters executed a successful operation in Jiga town.
  - Sources indicate that nearly 20 regime riot dispersal police and militias were gathered for a meeting that night.
  - The Arenza-Damot Fano Brigade's Jiga Battalion received intelligence of the meeting's location and timing, infiltrated the area and initiated an attack using bomb explosions.



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- This assault resulted in the deaths of at least 11 riot dispersal and militia soldiers. Additionally, Fano fighters targeted regime soldiers attempting to flee, killing several and capturing over 10 firearms.
  - On January 25th, Fano fighters carried out an attack in the Hodanshi area.
    - The attack targeted regime forces who were enroute from Finote-Selam city to Jiga town.
    - The Fano fighters reportedly caused casualties among regime soldiers, compelling them to return to Finote-Selam city.

### **Sekela Woreda**

- On the night of January 24th, fighting took place in the rural area of Sekela Woreda.
  - The fighting was initiated when regime soldiers mobilized overnight through rural kebeles where the Fano were located.
  - Fano fighters reportedly confronted the regime forces, with the outcome and casualties remaining unknown. Sources reported Fano inflicting significant casualties among regime soldiers, compelling them to retreat to Gishabay town.
  - Sources also reported the killing of two civilians.

### **Awı Zone**

#### **Jawi Woreda**

- On the morning of January 17th, Fano fighters executed an operation in Fendika town.

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- Sources indicate that a few members of the Amhara Fano in Gojjam’s Jawi-Metekel Division infiltrated the town, where the regime had established its main base.
  - The attack specifically targeted militias and police officers gathered at a checkpoint.
  - This sudden assault resulted in a brief exchange of gunfire, leading to casualties on both sides. Confirmed reports indicate regime 3 soldiers killed and 2 more wounded and 1 Fano fighter killed during the confrontation.

### **Banja-Shikudad Woreda**

- On January 21st, intense fighting was conducted in the Injibara neighborhood, initiated by Fano fighters targeting regime forces stationed there.
  - The gunfire was prolonged and resulted in casualties on both sides, with numerous injuries reported among regime soldiers. Two confirmed casualties were reported from the Fano side, while the number of casualties among regime forces remains unidentified.
  - Fano fighters reported discovering 24 bodies left behind by regime soldiers during their retreat. Reports also indicate that Fano fighters captured at least 80 firearms along with ammunition.

### **Fagita-Lekoma Woreda**

- On the night of January 22nd, an exchange of gunfire occurred in Gezahara village.
  - The fighting began when Fano fighters ambushed regime forces mobilizing from Chiguali towards Fagita Kebele.
  - Upon regime forces reaching the Gezahara area, the Fano launched a sudden attack, resulting in a gunfire exchange.

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- Reports indicate that the Fano inflicted casualties and successfully repelled the regime’s advance. Sources indicated 9 regime forces were killed.

### **Dangila Woreda**

- On January 25th, at least five regime soldiers, militias, and riot dispersal police were reported to have defected from the military and then joined the Fano group operating in the area. Sources claimed that one of the defected soldiers was a key officer and brought firearms, logistics, and a considerable amount of money.

### **Bahir-Dar City**

- On the night of January 19th, Fano fighters from the Bahir-Dar Brigade launched a surprise attack in the Sebatamit area, a suburb of Bahir-Dar city. This assault targeted regime militias and riot dispersal police, resulting in over 20 casualties among the soldiers.

### **North Gojjam Zone**

#### **North Achefer Woreda**

- On January 23rd, Fano fighters conducted an operation in Liben town.
  - The Bitwedded Ayalew Brigade, part of the Amhara Fano in Gojjam’s Gojjam-Agew-Midir Division, was involved in this operation.
  - Fano fighters reportedly left the area shortly after killing and injuring some regime soldiers, claiming to have captured additional soldiers and firearms.
  - In response, regime forces began indiscriminate shelling with heavy weaponry in the direction from which the Fano fighters had departed.

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- The fighting then spread to Sankara village as regime forces, aided by heavy artillery, mobilized from Qunzila and Liben to pursue and suppress the Fano fighters
  - Reports indicate the fighting extended for a considerable duration, with the eventual outcome remaining unclear. There were also reports of civilian casualties and property destruction due to retaliatory actions taken by regime forces.
- On January 25th, fighting took place in the Yismala area.
    - The fighting was initiated when regime forces mobilized from Liben towards Yismala to suppress Fano fighters.
    - Forewarned about the regime mobilization, Fano fighters carried out a preemptive attack before the regime forces reached the Yismala area.
    - Consequently, regime forces were compelled to return after encountering fierce resistance from Fano fighters.

### **South Achefer Woreda**

- On January 22nd, in the afternoon, Fano fighters infiltrated Durbeti town and unexpectedly opened fire, resulting in the deaths of 2 local police officers.

### **Gonji-Qolela Woreda**

- On January 23rd, heavy fighting took place in Washera Kebele.
  - The conflict began when forces under the Amhara Fano in Gojjam's Tefera Damte Division infiltrated the area where regime soldiers were encamped. The Fano launched an attack on the encamped soldiers, leading to intense gunfire.

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- Reports indicate casualties on both sides, with significant losses reported from regime soldiers. According to Fano, the operation was conducted in memory of Fano leader Yohannes Alemayehu, who was recently killed in the area.
  - Sources reported at least 46 regime soldiers were killed and another 47 were injured.
  - The fighting that began earlier in the Washera area continued into January 25th. Sources confirmed 3 injuries from the Fano side, while the casualties on the regime side remained unidentified.

### **North Mecha Woreda**

- On January 21st, a regime drone strike targeted a residential home in Enashenifalen Kebele, causing destruction but no reported human casualties. The residence is believed to belong to a Fano commander.
- On January 25th, Fano fighters executed an ambush on regime forces in the Qutquat area.
  - The attack occurred around midday targeting regime forces enroute to Bahir-Dar city for logistical support, but the outcome remains unclear.
  - In retaliation, regime soldiers killed an elderly civilian, and sources reported that the body of the victim was left unattended for an extended period as soldiers prevented residents from retrieving it.
- On January 26th, heavy fighting took place in the Aguga area, initiated by regime forces attempting to suppress Fano fighters.
  - The Fano mounted a fierce resistance to halt the regime’s advance, but sources could not confirm the casualties from this confrontation.

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- Additionally, on January 26th, Fano fighters opened fire in Merawi town to disrupt a regime meeting aimed at propaganda through state-affiliated media.
  - Sources reported that the Fano dispersed the gathering and inflicted casualties among regime soldiers, although details of the outcome remain unknown.
  - In the aftermath, regime soldiers reportedly detained a bank security guard from his workplace and took him to a military camp.

### **South Mecha Woreda**

- Between January 23rd and 24th, regime forces tortured and subsequently killed a civilian in Mehal-Genet (Gerchech town)
  - The victim was identified as Aderaw Shasho.
  - Regime forces accused him of affiliation with Fano fighters and killed him after removing one of his eyes.

### **South Gonder Zone**

#### **Fogera Woreda**

- On January 22nd, Fano fighters initiated an offensive operation targeting regime forces in the vicinity of Wej town.
  - Wej is strategically located in Fogera Woreda, positioned between the towns of Wereta and Alem-Ber.
  - The Fano's attack was reportedly launched as a surprise, catching regime forces off guard.
  - As a result of this operation, at least 9 militia members serving the regime were either killed or sustained critical injuries.

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## Lay-Gayint Woreda

- Mass detentions have emerged in Lay-Gayint Woreda, with regime forces engaging in widespread arrests of civilians across all rural kebeles and in Checheho town.
  - On January 22nd, a significant number of individuals were apprehended, including vulnerable members of the community such as an 83-year-old man receiving medical treatment in a hospital, as well as numerous women.
    - \* These detainees were subsequently transported to Nefas-Mewcha town. With official prison facilities and police stations already operating at full capacity and unable to accommodate the influx of new detainees, government institutions are now being repurposed and utilized as makeshift detention centers.
    - \* Reports indicate that in this woreda alone, more than six heavy trucks filled with detainees have been transported to Dangila town, and none of those individuals previously taken have ever returned, raising serious concerns about their well-being and fate.
  - On January 22nd, a number of regular soldiers suspected of plotting to defect from regime forces were executed in a military camp located in Mekuabiya Kebele.
    - \* Their bodies were reportedly found near the perimeter of the camp. It is significant to note that all of the executed soldiers were of Amhara ethnicity.
    - \* In contrast, Oromo soldiers who were also suspected of planning to defect were spared execution and instead taken into the military camp for further investigation or other disciplinary measures.
    - \* This disparity in treatment raises concerns about ethnic bias and targeted persecution within the regime's military.

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- \* There have been additional reports of defections from regime forces, with nine soldiers in Titira town confirmed to have joined the Fano on January 22nd, bringing their full military equipment with them, indicating continued support for Fano and further erosion of the regime's military strength.
  - On January 24th, a group of regular soldiers stationed in Barmeda Kebele, attempted to defect from the regime forces.
    - However, their escape was unsuccessful, as they were apprehended by militia forces before they could travel far from their military camp.
    - These captured soldiers were then handed over to the military officer in charge of Barmeda. Afterwards soldiers of Amhara ethnicity were ordered to dig their own graves. Three of these soldiers were then executed in the graves they had been forced to dig. In stark contrast, soldiers of Oromo ethnicity, who were also captured for attempting to defect, were not subjected to the same treatment.
    - This differential treatment based on ethnicity highlights a deeply troubling pattern of discrimination and raises serious questions about the regime's policies and practices, further suggesting a systematic bias in their treatment of soldiers from different ethnic backgrounds.

### **Estie Woreda**

- On January 23rd, regime militias launched an incursion into the Gindatemem and Licha Kebeles.
  - Their actions were marked by systematic looting, targeting the agricultural resources of the local farming communities. The militia forces raided



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granaries, seizing the farmers' stored grain and transporting it in numerous heavy trucks to Debre-Tabor city.

- Beyond this act of theft, they also engaged in wanton destruction, burning down houses and other properties belonging to residents.
- These actions were reportedly incited by regime political cadres, who allegedly instructed the militia forces to impoverish local farming communities by stealing their stored grains, reasoning that this would deprive the Fano of food supplies and support from the local population.
- While it was previously common for riot dispersal forces and regular soldiers to engage in petty theft, including stealing cash, mobile phones, and other readily transportable valuables from residents, the militia forces have escalated the scale of these criminal activities. They were involved in large-scale looting, stealing not only cash and movable property but also livestock, including cattle that farmers rely upon as farming oxen, along with essential equipment and stored crops, leaving the farmers destitute and severely undermining their ability to sustain themselves and their families.

## **Central Gonder Zone**

- The administrator of Central Gonder Zone Ato Awoke Asfere was abruptly removed from his position on January 19th and reinstated three days later on January 22nd.
  - He was informed of the decision to terminate his six-month tenure as the zone's administrator by high-ranking regional officials Yirga Sisay and Arega Kebede, who were present in Gonder city for the Timket holiday celebrations.
  - The official reason cited for his removal was that his brother is reportedly an active Fano member. Furthermore, authorities told him that they have a recorded phone conversation between Ato Awoke and his brother as

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documentary evidence, claiming it demonstrated his affiliation with the Fano insurgency.

- Ato Awoke reportedly protested his removal, arguing that he had been instrumental in defending Gonder city from being overtaken by Fano forces and therefore, did not deserve such treatment.
- However, he was allegedly informed by the authorities that his position and power were deemed relevant only insofar as they benefited the ruling Prosperity Party. He was further told that when that benefit ceased, his power would also be terminated, revealing the transactional nature of his appointment and the emphasis on loyalty to the party over competence or past service.
- Ato Awoke was later reinstated on January 22nd under unclear circumstances.
  - \* This abrupt reversal of fortune was reportedly triggered by a single phone call from Lt. Gen. Birhanu Bekele, the highest-ranking military commander in the region.
  - \* Lt. Gen. Birhanu Bekele allegedly issued a stern warning to the regional authorities, reprimanding them for their audacity in dismissing Ato Awoke Asfere, whom he described as a "well-trusted servant" of the regime. He further cautioned them against repeating such actions involving serving officials, implying a potential overreach of their authority.
  - \* Rumors have surfaced suggesting that Lt. Gen. Birhanu Bekele's intervention was not solely motivated by loyalty or principle, but rather by financial gain. Informants have estimated that Ato Awoke Asfere provided Lt. Gen. Birhanu Bekele with a substantial sum, allegedly around 2 million ETB, in exchange for his intervention to pressure regional authorities to reinstate him.
  - \* This series of events illustrates the fragile state of civilian governance in

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the region and suggests that the area remains effectively under the control of a military dictatorship. Civil officials, while holding formal positions within the government structure, appear to be relegated to a largely symbolic role, with real power and decision-making authority residing firmly with the military.

### **Alefa Woreda**

- On January 20th, regime forces launched a brutal and indiscriminate offensive attack against a gathering of civilians in Amchiwiha Kebele, a locality near Delgi town.
  - The civilians were assembled to observe a traditional 40th-day commemoration and prayer for a deceased individual, known as “*Tezkar*,” a deeply significant religious practice common among Orthodox Christians throughout Amhara Region. This practice is a cornerstone of their faith and community life, and the gathering was a somber occasion of mourning and remembrance.
  - The regime forces, however, unleashed a sudden and unprovoked barrage of mortars, machine guns, and ZU-23 anti-aircraft guns upon the unarmed civilian population. This act of violence resulted in the massacre of a large number of civilians.
  - The regime forces justified their actions under the pretext that Fano fighters and their leadership would be in attendance as highly respected figures.
  - However, no members or leaders of the Fano were present at the 40th-day commemoration. Despite the absence of their purported targets, regime forces proceeded with the deadly attack.
  - As of the latest reports, the indiscriminate shelling has resulted in the deaths of at least 36 civilians, underscoring the regime’s disregard for human life and

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willingness to inflict violence on civilians under false pretenses.

### **West Dembiya Woreda**

- On January 21st, Fano fighters took decisive action against a group of imposters who were falsely presenting themselves as Fano members and engaging in criminal activities, specifically targeting travelers along the main road connecting Chuahit and Gorgora towns.
  - These individuals had been severely impacting the local community, as they repeatedly robbed travelers of their personal belongings under the guise of being legitimate Fano fighters.
  - Their conduct had not only caused significant distress and financial losses for the travelers but also damaged the reputation of the genuine Fano movement.
  - The Fano, upon identifying these impersonators, confronted them in Ayla-Sefera village while they were in the act of committing robbery. During the confrontation, the imposters were killed.
  - The local population in these affected areas expressed immense relief and gratitude following the elimination of the criminals.

### **Gonder City**

- On January 23rd, regime forces extrajudicially killed 2 civilians in Dirmara-Awdba village, located near Azezo sub-city.
  - The incident began when regime soldiers approached a man, accusing his son of being a Fano member. The man's younger brother, witnessing this encounter, questioned the soldiers, stating that if his nephew was indeed a Fano member, what could his father do about it, and how could a father be held responsible for his son's actions.

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- The question provoked a violent reaction from the regime forces. They were reportedly enraged by his response and, without any legal process or justification, summarily executed him. The soldiers shot him four times in the head, killing him instantly.
  - Furthermore, and without any provocation or involvement, his elder brother was also murdered by the same regime forces, who made the allegation that his son, the nephew of the two men, was a Fano member.

### **Tach Armachiho Woreda**

- On January 21st, a significant number of regime militia members defected to the Fano in several areas.
  - In Jansuma Kebele, a substantial number of militia forces were apprehended by the Fano, effectively removing them from the regime’s control.
  - A number of other militia members in the area willingly defected to the Fano.
  - A similar situation developed in the region situated between Tach Armachiho and Metemma Woredas, particularly in the kebeles of Mesha, Tagur, and Achera (Tagur and Achera Kebeles are located in Metemma Woreda). Six militia members in these kebeles chose to join the Fano, bringing their full military equipment with them.
- On January 21st, intense combat took place between Fano fighters and regime forces in Jansuma and Mesha Kebeles.
  - The fighting resulted in over 14 casualties for the regime, including fatalities and critical injuries.
  - In an act of reprisal, regime forces also massacred 4 civilians and intentionally destroyed a number of homes.

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- On January 22nd, Ato Wereta Azanaw, founder of the *Welkai-Tegede Amhara Identity Restoration Committee*, was assassinated in Sanja town.
    - Wereta was traveling from Gonder city to Welkait when he was attacked and killed by unknown assailants.
    - He dedicated his life to the cause of re-integrating the Amhara population of the Welkait-Tegede area back into their historical homeland. His commitment to this cause was well-known, and he had previously suffered persecution for his activism, having been arrested and tortured by the TPLF during their rule.
    - Given his history and the current climate, suspicion surrounding his assassination has centered on the TPLF sponsored *Kibrit* kill squad, a group known for targeting members of the committee and others seen as opposing the TPLF's agenda.

## **West Gonder Zone**

### **Qwara Woreda**

- On January 21st, a significant defection occurred as 32 regular soldiers serving in the regime's military forces chose to abandon their posts and join the ranks of Fano fighters operating in Qwara Woreda.
  - The soldiers brought their full military equipment, including a substantial quantity of heavy weaponry and small arms, representing a considerable gain in resources for the Fano.
  - Recognizing the vulnerability of these defecting soldiers during their transition, the Fano provided crucial support by deploying a protective cover of gunfire as they left their former military camp.

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- This action was executed by the Nebro Brigade, part of the Omedla Division, shielded the defectors from being harmed, captured, or killed by regime forces during their movement to a Fano military camp.
  - Once safely under the protection of the Fano, the newly defected soldiers were officially integrated into the Omedla Division, further bolstering its strength and demonstrating the continued erosion of support within the regime’s military ranks.
  - Since January 24th, intense and sustained fighting has been raging between Fano fighters and regime forces in multiple areas in Qwara Woreda.
    - The conflict has been particularly fierce in several key locations, including Dubaba-Megenteya, Ferefend-Megenteya, and the Merhum desert.
    - The regime forces suffered significant losses in this ongoing battle, with at least 80 soldiers killed or critically injured.
    - During the intense battle, the Fano killed both the regime’s military commander and the police commander who were stationed in the area. Further investigation revealed that the regime military officers killed in the fighting held the rank of colonel. In illustration of the regime’s hierarchical structure and the value it places on the lives of its higher-ranking officers, a clear distinction was made in the treatment of their remains. While regular soldiers killed in action were buried at the site of the fighting, the bodies of the colonels were evacuated by helicopter, presumably to be afforded a more dignified burial in a different location.
    - Furthermore, a substantial number of regime soldiers, approximately 90, have chosen to defect and join the Fano, further depleting the regime’s fighting capacity. The defected regime soldiers joined the Nebro, Tewodros, and Aysheshim Fano Brigades, bringing their full military equipment with them.

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- In addition to manpower losses, the Fano fighters have managed to capture a considerable amount of military equipment from regime forces, including more than 100 small arms and heavy weapons.
  - In a desperate attempt to regain the upper hand, regime political cadres have resorted to inciting ethnic-based conflict in the area, specifically attempting to turn the Agew and Qemant ethnic militia groups against the Fano. These cadres have been spreading propaganda claiming that the Fano forces are hostile to these ethnic groups. Despite these divisive efforts, the incitement of ethnic conflict has proven largely ineffective in undermining the Fano’s operations.
  - As reprisal for their battlefield losses and the defections, regime forces have engaged in indiscriminate acts of violence against civilians, killing 11 civilians in Senseredin Kebele. Five of these civilians were killed by heavy artillery shelling while they were gathered in a residential home for a social event.

### **Metemma Woreda**

- In Meqa town the highest commanders of the regime’s military forces, including Lt. Gen. Birhanu Bekele, and key Prosperity Party officials have effectively ceded control of the town to armed Qemant groups.
  - This arrangement reportedly began approximately two months ago with the arrival of around 200 Qemant militants in Meqa town (November 19th, 2024).
  - Seizing the opportunity, the regime’s military commanders and political officials engaged in discussions with these armed groups, ultimately forging an agreement.
  - Under the terms of this agreement, the Qemant militants were granted de facto authority over Meqa town, including the right to collect taxes and revenues



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directly from local residents. In return, the Qemant militants would share a portion of these revenues with the regime military commanders and party officials and, crucially, were obligated to actively fight against Fano insurgent groups operating in the area.

- Since this agreement, the Qemant militants have established numerous checkpoints throughout Meqa town and its surrounding areas, extorting money from residents and travelers alike, causing widespread resentment and hardship.
- Simultaneously, they are reportedly misleading Lt. Gen. Birhanu Bekele by falsely claiming that they are actively engaged in combat against Fano forces.
- Furthermore, there are deeply concerning reports indicating that these armed groups have engaged in heinous acts, including the sexual assault of women within the community.
  - \* To date, at least 18 cases of rape committed by these groups have been confirmed.
  - \* Drivers passing through the checkpoints are allegedly forced to pay exorbitant sums, reportedly around 10,000 ETB per vehicle.
  - \* Furthermore, a staggering 20 million ETB has been demanded as a “*contribution*” from residents of Meqa town. This money, according to informants, has been systematically distributed among the regime military commanders and West Gonder Zone’s political authorities, further highlighting the corrupt nature of this arrangement and the exploitation of the local population for personal enrichment.

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## **West Armachiho Woreda**

- On January 24th, Fano fighters executed a successful ambush against regime forces in the vicinity of Musebamb town, specifically in the area of Feres-Megriya village. This carefully planned attack caught the regime forces completely by surprise, resulting in significant casualties with a considerable number of regime forces were confirmed killed in the ambush, including a high-ranking police commander and his personal bodyguards, all of whom perished in the attack.

## **Addis-Ababa City and Surrounding Areas**

- Amhara civilians, originally from Oromia Region (particularly from the Wollega sub-region) have faced arbitrary detentions in Addis-Ababa city and surrounding areas.
- According to Fact News on January 19th, four youths were arrested by regime forces in the Burayu area of the Sheger city administration.<sup>5</sup>

## **Gurage Zone (Central Ethiopia Region)**

- Reports have emerged of severe mistreatment of Amhara civilians detained in Gurage Zone over the past seven months.<sup>6</sup>
  - Detainees held without charges reported suffering physical abuse including beatings by security forces.
  - Sources indicate that more than 100 Amhara residents were arrested in Wolkite city last summer, with many being released after paying bribes of up to 50,000 ETB to investigators and police officers.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>See January 21st, 2025 [report](#) from Fact News.

<sup>6</sup>See January 21st, 2025 [report](#) from Wazema Radio.

<sup>7</sup>See May 21st, 2024 [report](#) from the Amhara Association of America (AAA).

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- Over 80 detainees remain in custody, with reports of ongoing abuses and neglect.
  - Families of those arrested have expressed concern, as detainees face serious physical harm while being held without due process.

## **East Wollega Zone (Oromia Region)**

### *Statement from the Amhara Fano Bizamo Command (January 24th, 2025)*

- On January 24th, the Amhara Fano Bizamo (Wollega Province) Command issued a letter congratulating Fano forces in Wollo (Bete-Amhara) and Gonder on recent unification efforts. They expressed their happiness and called on other Fano members to join the unified forces.

## **Gida-Ayana Woreda**

- On January 23rd, heavy gunfire took place in the Waja area.
  - Sources indicated the confrontation followed a regime military mobilization aimed at disarming local Amhara farmers.
  - In response, volunteer Amhara fighters, reportedly part of the Bizamo Command, launched a counteroffensive to repel the regime's attack. This led to a direct gunfire exchange, resulting in regime soldiers suffering casualties.
  - Reports indicated at least 6 militia members were killed and 3 were captured by the volunteer fighters, with no casualties on their side.
  - Tensions escalated in the area as the regime began renewed troop mobilization to reinforce their forces in Waja.
  - Below is a partial list of regime militias killed in this incident:
    1. Dejene Bekele

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2. Getachew Kaba
  3. Aba Shitu
  4. Disa Sherifo
- On January 24th, intense fighting broke out in Endoche Kebele between Oromia Region Forces, and local volunteer fighters.<sup>8</sup>
    - The conflict was triggered by an order from the Oromia Region to displace residents near the Anger River, under the pretext of constructing a dam. However, this is widely believed to be an attempt aimed at forcibly removing the Amhara population from fertile lands.
    - The operation was led by Oromia Regional Forces (including the Gachena-Sirna, Herpie, and other units) under the command of Oromia Region President Shimelis Abdisa, who is accused of orchestrating this campaign with the intent of displacing local Amhara residents.
    - The Oromia Region Forces clashed with local volunteer fighters in the area, who were determined to resist the forced displacement.
    - The local fighters mounted a strong defense, inflicting significant damage on the regime forces. They successfully destroyed at least three regime vehicles and caused numerous casualties among the regime forces.

## **Horo Guduru Wollega Zone (Oromia Region)**

### **Abe-Dongoro Woreda**

- On January 26th, ENDF and OSF soldiers infiltrated the Chalte area.
  - Upon entering, OSF soldiers began abusing Amhara residents under the pretext of disarmament.

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<sup>8</sup>See January 25th, 2025 [report](#) from Ethio Focus News.

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- In response, organized volunteer fighters, in collaboration with the Bizamo Fano Command, launched a surprise attack against the OSF soldiers.
  - After a brief exchange of gunfire, the regime soldiers retreated, and the volunteer fighters captured two OSF soldiers.

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## About the Amhara Association of America (AAA)

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) is a non-profit civic organization based in Charlotte, North Carolina that investigates and documents human rights violations in the context of conflict, violence and political repression in Ethiopia. AAA seeks to inform U.S. policymakers, international human rights organizations, journalists, researchers, and all Ethiopian stakeholders to pressure Ethiopian leaders to change laws, policies, and practices in Ethiopia so perpetrators are held accountable and victims receive justice. AAA also collaborates with Amhara organizations in the U.S., supports independent Amhara organizations in Ethiopia, and provides humanitarian aid for Amharas impacted due to targeted ethnic attacks. AAA's funding comes directly from members and supporters; the organization is not affiliated with any Ethiopian or American political or governmental entities.

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