



Update on Developments in Ethiopia, Amhara Resistance and the Abiy Regime’s Military Operation – May 4, 2023

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has verified that on May 4th, 2023, the Abiy regime intensified its war on Amhara. The regime has deployed the Oromo dominated Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) to various parts of Amhara Region as part of a “law enforcement operation” to disarm Amhara Special Forces and Fano (volunteer, non-state militias). Since the start of the operation, there have been mounting reports of human rights violations and mass arrests.

- Five days earlier, Sisay Melkamu, former vice-president of the Amhara Student Association (ASA) and an M.A. student at the Blue Nile College in Bahir Dar, was arrested in Gondar. Sisay’s whereabouts have been unknown to his family.
- Protests have continued in various cities in Amhara Region including Gonder city. Roads have been closed all day from Gonder to Debark.
 - In Gonder, protests were held against occupying ENDF and in response, the army shot and injured at least three youth. At nightfall, an army contingent was then attacked by Fano in front of Fasil Campus.
- Fighting between ENDF and Fano forces took place in various parts of the North

Shewa Zone of Amhara Region.

- Fighting in Shewa Robit resulted in casualties from both sides including ten ENDF soldiers and one Fano member. At nightfall, an entire army contingent/patrol defected in Shewa Robit. The army leaders lost control of the city and were reportedly panicking.
 - Fano were able to take control of Debre Sina (North Shewa Zone) after day-long fighting.
 - The ENDF shelled the Menber Maryam Monastery, located in Amba Wuha Kebele of Antsokiya Gemza Woreda. The ENDF did so using heavy machine guns, mortars and ZU-23.
- On April 17th, 2023, the ENDF and Oromia Special Forces (OSF) arrested at least 8 Amhara civilians in the Tulu Gana town of Abe Dongoro Woreda (Horo Guduru Wollega Zone, Oromia Region).
 - Arrests followed a massacre on April 14th, 2023 carried out by Oromo Liberation Army militants which claimed the lives of 19 Amhara residents, mostly civilians including 22-year-old Alemayew Yirdaw and 20-year-old Abol Tatek. The conflict subsided after local elders intervened to mediate, however soon after the ENDF and OSF returned to disarm the residents.
 - Over 125 legally registered firearms were confiscated. No such disarmament was carried out against non-Amharas, in fact, local Qeerro (ultranationalist youth) were receiving a months-long military training from the Anger Gutin town administration in East Wollega Zone.
 - At least eight residents were subsequently arrested on April 17th, 2023 including:

No.	Victim Name	Sex	Age
1	Aragie Fentaw	M	90
2	Gizachew Tesfaw	M	
3	Yirgedu Belayneh	F	70
4	Yiragu Mebebie	F	
5	Dubie Mengistu	M	
6	Mohammed Mulat	M	
7	Habtie Fentahun	M	
8	Addisie Misgie	M	

- On May 4th, 2023, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) issued a [statement](#) in Amharic regarding the situation in Amhara Region, the federal government’s military operation, clashes between federal forces and Fano, and human rights violations against civilians. EHRC’s Chief Commissioner Daniel Bekele [tweeted](#) that EHRC was following developments. An English translation of the EHRC statement is provided below:

Regarding human rights violations in various parts of Amhara region in relation to the ”law enforcement operation”.

All parties should resolve differences through peaceful dialogue, should refrain from use of actions and words which may inflame the conflict, and should undertake necessary investigations to ensure accountability. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is closely following developments and human rights violations in various parts of Amhara region in connection with the ”law enforcement operation”.

In various parts of North Gonder, North Wollo and North Shewa zones

there are clashes, especially in Shewa Robit, Aremania, Antsokiya, Gemza and Majete, where fighting has been reported between national defense forces and local armed people which includes gunfire exchange, and attacks assisted by heavy artillery shelling, which has caused civilian casualties including death, injury and property damage. It has also been confirmed that the road from Dessie to Addis Ababa is closed. In addition, EHRC has been able to confirm that youth have been mass arrested, suspected to have ties with Fano or have organized protests against the decision to reorganize the special force structure, including members of opposition parties.

EHRC has repeatedly stated that over the past two years, widespread human rights violations were carried out against civilians in the North Ethiopia conflict.

Understanding that conflicts which occur in other parts of the country will lead to serious abuses, all parties should strive to resolve the issue through peaceful means and dialogue, should refrain from actions and rhetoric which may inflame the situation, should undertake all necessary investigations to ensure accountability and the government should ensure all arrests are undertaken lawful and are "essential, proportional and non-discriminatory", respecting human rights.

About Amhara Association of America (AAA)

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) is a non-profit civic organization located in Charlotte, North Carolina that investigates and documents human rights atrocities and repression against Amharas in Ethiopia. AAA seeks to inform U.S. policymakers, international human rights organizations, media, 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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