



Report on ongoing identity-based attacks against the Amhara community in Nono Woreda (West Shewa Zone, Oromia Region, Ethiopia)

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Overview

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has conducted an investigation into reported identity-based attacks against Amhara residents in various kebeles of Nono Woreda (West Shewa Zone, Oromia Region, Ethiopia). The investigation revealed that starting from June 14th, 2024 and in the days that followed at least 19 Amhara civilians were killed and several others were injured and arrested by *Oromia Region Special Forces* (OSF) and allied *Qeerro* (ultranationalist Oromo youth).

Background and Context

For decades, Amharas in various kebeles of Nono Woreda have been subjected to frequent attacks by the *Oromo Liberation Army* (OLA) and *Qeerro* (ultra-nationalist Oromo youth) with backing from federal and regional government officials and security forces.

In recent years, particularly since the ascension of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Oromo Prosperity Party regime, reports indicate that Amhara residents have been confined to limited settlement areas with restricted access to farmland. The situation has been exacerbated by contentious land policies implemented this year by local woreda and kebele administrators. These officials have been confiscating lands from Amhara residents and reallocating them to Oromo investors and Qeerro members.

In particular, Amhara farmers in Nano Halo Kebele, Medalo village in Nono Woreda were completely evicted from their land following a government decision without legal grounds. According to sources from five kebeles, more than 20,000 Amhara farmers were reportedly evicted from their farmlands. This sudden displacement left the Amhara farmers without a means to sustain their livelihoods. In an effort to address their dire situation, some farmers sought to rent land through lease agreements with ethnic Oromo inhabitants of the area, mainly Oromo settlers who came from Hararge with close ties to the government.

Tensions arose when the Oromo landowners, reportedly in collaboration with woreda and kebele administrators, denied Amhara farmers access to the leased land. Despite securing the required payment for the lease agreements, the Oromo landowners prevented the Amhara farmers from cultivating the land, leaving them unable to cultivate crops necessary for their livelihood.

Amidst this tension, a bomb exploded on the night of June 14th, 2024 during a wedding ceremony in Nano Qondala, a kebele neighboring Nano Halo Kebele, Medalo village. The wedding was mostly attended by ethnic Oromo residents, and the explosion resulted in numerous fatalities. Given that the incident occurred at night, the motive behind the attack

and the perpetrators responsible for the bombing remain unclear. Local sources suggest that the attack was executed by unknown gunmen, and they speculate that the motive was most likely due to an individual or personal conflict.

Despite the difficulty of identifying the perpetrators, local government officials concluded that the bomb attack was carried out by Amhara residents without any investigation and disseminated to various media outlets, leading to instigations of further attacks against the Amhara community. Using the incident as a pretext, Oromia Region security officials also attempted to justify ongoing and intensified actions against the Amhara community throughout the country, particularly in connection with ongoing military operations in Amhara Region, Oromia Region, Addis Ababa city and neighboring areas.

According to sources, shortly after the June 14th incident, OSF and Qeerro began engaging in retaliatory actions. These actions included identity-based killings, physical beatings, mass arrests, and burning of properties belonging to ethnic Amhara residents. AAA's investigation revealed that on June 14th and the following days, at least 19 Amhara civilians were killed, with several others injured and arrested. The attacks were carried out in villages predominantly inhabited by ethnic Amhara residents.

Summary of Incidents

- The first incident involved the killing of two civilians in Werabesa village of Gulele Kebele. Two Amhara civilians, identified as Assefa Haile-Giyorgis and Kassahun Demise were taken from their homes and subsequently burned alive.
- Another notable instance is the killing of 68-year-old Aweke Akalu. Ato Aweke was tragically shot and killed on June 16th while he was guarding his farm animals in Werabesa village. Soldiers struck him with three bullets and left him for dead. The late Aweke's family members were initially unable to collect his body, which was

eventually laid to rest at the cemetery of St. Balewold Church three days later.

- The OSF soldiers summoned six militiamen and apprehended three other civilians from the streets. They confiscated their legally registered firearms and detained them for several days. The detained individuals were then dragged from the detention center, executed en masse, and their bodies were left out on the street.
- OSF soldiers shot and killed a farmer named Yeshanew Hailu. After the OSF shot and killed him, they left his body unburied for at least two days and it was reportedly eaten by an eagle.
- Two civilians were brutally killed with bladed weapons. The first victim, identified as Admassu Bekele, was attacked when the OSF encountered him while traveling in a bajaj. According to sources, the soldiers forcibly dismounted him from the vehicle and subsequently took his life with a bladed weapon.
- The OSF soldiers killed another victim, an unnamed resident of Nano Qondala Kebele, with a bladed weapon, accusing him of possessing a firearm.
- A victim, identified as Wubishet Tigabu, was killed while defending his house from being burned by Qeerro. After his death, the OSF soldiers detained his four children and subjected them to various forms of abuse for an extended period.
- An unidentified victim was critically wounded by gunshot and received medical treatment at Black Lion Hospital until recently.

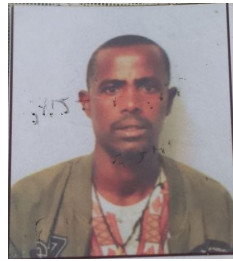
Many of the deceased bodies were buried in Darge St. Mary's Church, located in a neighboring kebele in Gurage Zone (Central Ethiopia Region) where a large number of Amhara IDPs displaced from West Shewa Zone are sheltered.



(a) Wubishet Tigabu



(b) Yeshanew Hailu



(c) Deresu Guremes



(d) Fetene Tsegaw



(e) Gezahegn Teke-tel



(f) Firde Waga



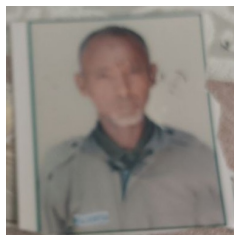
(g) Mogese Geletaw



(h) Kassahun Demise



(i) Aygefam Damtew



(j) Beyene Tilahun



(k) Aweke Akalu



(l) Dawit Gule

Figure 1: Photographs of 12 victims killed in Nono Woreda on June 14th, 2024.

Names of Victims

AAA was able to identify names of 16 victims who were killed on June 14th, 2024 and in the days following:

No.	Victim Name	Age	Comment
1	Wubishet Tigabu		had 4 children

2	Abush Gulilat	21	
3	Yeshanew Hailu		
4	Aweke Akalu	68	had 6 children
5	Assefa Haile-Giyorgis		had 1 child
6	Kassahun Demise		had 3 children
7	Admassu Bekele		
8	Mogese Geletaw		
9	Gezahegn Teketel		
10	Dawit Gule		
11	Firde Waga		
12	Fetene Tsegaw		
13	Deresu Guremes		
14	Beyene Tilahun		
15	Aygefam Damtew	18	
16	Henok Dejene		

Property Loss

Besides human casualties, reports confirmed that OSF soldiers and Qeero committed extensive property pillaging and destruction. According to sources, assessing the exact toll was difficult as many residents left their homes. But sources estimate that over 217 residential homes, along with 5,000 quintal of grain, large amounts of farm animals and other properties belonging to Amhara residents, were looted or destroyed. In Werabesa village alone, an eyewitness confirmed that more than 150 residential homes were set on fire and destroyed. This widespread destruction has led to large-scale displacement of Amhara residents into Silkamba town, (the administrative center of the woreda), the neighboring Gurage Zone (Central Ethiopia Region), and Alem-Ketema town in

Merhabete Woreda (North Shewa Zone, Amhara Region).

An evacuee who took shelter in Silkamba town gave a statement to AAA that more than 50 families are sheltered there, with many others having fled to the neighboring Gurage Zone and remaining abandoned. These evacuees reported not receiving any humanitarian aid, and not receiving any outright from charities, government offices or any other institutions. The residents also expressed their fear of impending hunger as the crops they planted have been abandoned and left unattended due to the lack of freedom of movement in their home villages.



(a)

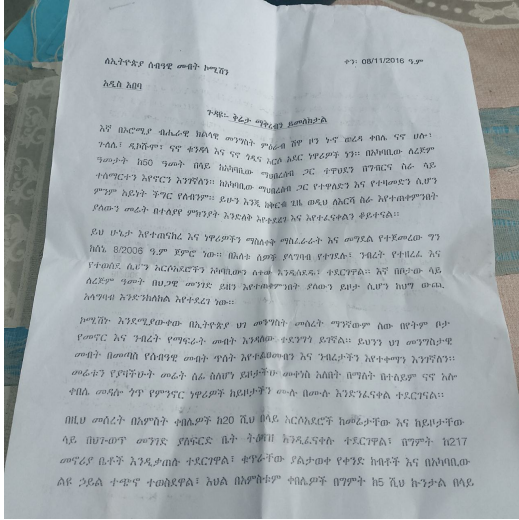


(b)

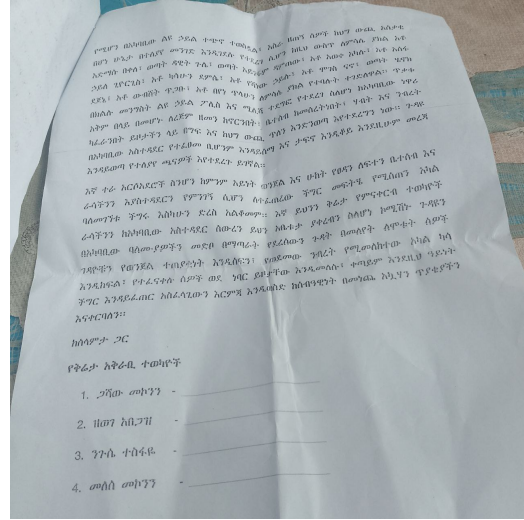
Figure 2: Photographs of property destruction in the June 14th, 2024 attack in Nono Woreda.

Lack of Coverage by Media and Human Rights Organizations

Regarding media coverage, while the alleged bomb attack on ethnic Oromo residents received attention and wide dissemination, the brutal killings, arrests, and property destruction of Amhara residents following the attack were largely overlooked by media outlets. The neglect of the atrocities committed has resulted in displaced Amhara residents not receiving necessary humanitarian aid and is expected to affect the response of human rights organizations, as none have attempted to reach out to victims and address the existing problem or condemn the ongoing violations thus far.



(a)



(b)

Figure 3: Photographs of a letter written by victims and submitted to the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

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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