



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OLLAA CONDEMNS THE KILLING OF KARAYU RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND CIVILIANS,  
AND THE CONTINUED BOMBINGS IN OROMIA**

**Falls Church, Virginia (12/03/2021)** - OLLAA is gravely concerned over reports of an attack on Karayu Oromo community members in Baru Nura village, Fantaalle District by Ethiopian federal forces on December 1, 2021. According to a family member from the Karayu community who spoke to OLLAA, 40 people were abducted following an important traditional Gada ceremony. Of those, 14 bodies were found dead some 10 kilometres away after shots were heard. It is believed that two people escaped, while 24 are still missing. OLLAA calls on the international community to hold the Ethiopian government accountable for this horrific incident and calls for the immediate release of any of these individuals still held captive.

OLLAA is horrified by the targeting of religious and community members during such an important religious ceremony, which gathers together Karayu regional and community leaders. This traditional event, which is largely ceremonial, includes the two most important figures in the community; the Abba Gada, who is the chief, and the Abba Boku, who is the military chief. These individuals are selected every eight years and are considered as a sort of priest or Iman for the Karayu.

According to the witness who spoke with OLLAA, Ethiopian federal forces came to the area in search of individuals they alleged were supporters of the OLA. When they could not find these individuals, they burned down several houses before heading over to the place where they knew they would find Abba Gadaas and community leaders were gathered for the ceremony. Once there, at around 5:30pm, they took 40 individuals stating they wanted to discuss some matter, including the Abba Gada and Abba Boku, who were later found amongst the 14 dead bodies but security were refusing to allow proper burial as well.

The Karayu are a small pastoral community who have faced escalating attacks from Amhara regional forces in recent times. They have also been experiencing severe drought and food shortages. However, according to our witness, this is the first time in Karayu history that the Abba Gada and Abba Boku have been targeted - leaving the community reeling and rudderless in the wake of such a heinous crime. This attack took place following an earlier incident, on November 30, 2021, where members of the Karayu community had refused to join the military. During the altercation, several police officers were killed, however, according to our witness, the community does not know who fired these shots. According to the source, it is likely that the December 1 events are revenge killings for this incident and for refusing to join the war.

Since the opening of a military training center in the region, our witness says that community members have been frequently harassed and the youth have been accused of supporting Oromo Liberation Front or OLA.

# Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association



OLLAA expresses our profound sympathy to the Karayu Oromo for their loss, and unequivocally condemns such actions. OLLAA believes this should be considered religious targeting and the UN Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Religion or Belief and on Minority Issues should issue a communication to the government of Ethiopia regarding this incident, and calling on them to conduct an independent, thorough, and impartial investigation into the reported killings. We further call on the international community to consider launching special independent investigations into these allegations, as well as all other allegations of human rights abuses perpetrated against civilians throughout Ethiopia.

OLLAA has also been deeply disturbed by the reports it has received from witnesses on the ground regarding the continued bombing of civilians by the Ethiopian National Defence Forces since early November. There have been reports of such incidents in the [Wollo Oromia Special zone](#) of the Amhara region and in the [East Wollega zone](#) of the Oromia region, including a bombing that may have killed dozens of civilians on November 29, according to several sources. OLLAA condemns these attacks, and calls on the Ethiopian government to protect the lives of its civilian populations. While we recognize that it has been difficult for mainstream media to verify these incidents due to internet shutdowns, we call on them to investigate and report on these allegations. Finally, we call on the international community to publicly condemn these attacks.