

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

04.17.2023

UN EXPERTS WRITE TO ETHIOPIA REGARDING KARAYU MASSACRE

Falls Church, Virginia (4/17/2023) – On February 13, 2023, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions sent a [communication](#) to the Ethiopian government regarding the December 2021 Karayu Massacre. This communication, which became publicly available on May 15, 2023, was based on a [submission](#) made by OLLAA to the United Nations Special Procedures in the weeks following the incident, and calls on the Ethiopian government to respond with details about the alleged violations of human rights, as well as steps taken to investigate the allegations and to ensure “the protection and promotion of the identity of the Karayu Oromo community in Ethiopia.”

As previously [reported](#) by OLLAA, on December 1, 2021, Ethiopian security forces removed 39 leaders of the Karayu community from a traditional Gada ceremony. Of those, 14 were extrajudicially killed by security forces that same day, while 24 were imprisoned for months. The only reason the world was able to learn about what happened to them was because 2 of those captured managed to escape and tell their story. Unfortunately, since the incident occurred, the Karayu continue to [report](#) that they have not received justice for these unlawful killings. It is important to note this community continues to be targeted and suffer at the hands of various groups, including Amhara fano and the government security forces. For example, in March, it was [reported](#) that one of the survivors of the massacre had been killed during a clash between members of the Karayu community and Amhara militias, while another survivor [died](#) after being beaten by Ethiopian security forces.

In their communication, the UN Experts raised concerns about reported violations of the right to life, the prohibition of enforced disappearances, and the prohibition of arbitrary arrest and detention. They also noted their concerns that the attacks on leaders of the Karayu—an ethno-religious minority—constitute a violation of article 27 of the ICCPR and article 1 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. In addition, they noted their concerns that the attack on the Karayu constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law, which prohibits the use of violence against individuals who are not participating in directly in a conflict. Finally, they issued

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several calls to the Ethiopian government, including, among other items, a request to provide them with:

- Information regarding any investigations into “the alleged enforced disappearance, torture and killing of 14 Karayu Oromo individuals” and sanctioning of perpetrators;
- Information regarding the alleged enforced disappearances of 39 Karayau Oromos, and information regarding the “factual and legal basis” for the arrest of the individuals detained by the Ethiopian government.
- Information on steps being taken by the Ethiopian government to ensure “the protection and promotion of the identity of the Karayu Oromo community.”

OLLAA thanks the various UN Experts for their acknowledgment of the Karayu massacre and for writing to the Ethiopian government regarding this incident. OLLAA will continue to work to raise awareness of this case with all relevant parties and to advocate for justice for the victims and their families. We hope this communication will serve as a crucial step towards achieving justice, and that it will inspire other members of the international community to condemn this incident, as well as all credible allegations of human rights abuses in the country.

OLLAA is an umbrella organization that works in collaboration with dozens of Oromo communities around the world.

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