



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

06/17/2022

ETHIOPIAN SECURITY FORCES ARE TARGETING OROMOS FOLLOWING CLASH WITH ARMED GROUPS IN GAMBELLA CITY

Falls Church, Virginia (06/17/2022) – At approximately 6:30am on June 14, 2022, it was [reported](#) that there was a clash between the Gambella Liberation Front (GLF) and the OLA and Ethiopian government forces in Gambella city. General Gatluak, the leader of the GLF issued a [statement](#) noting that the two armed groups were “targeting only security forces institutions, PP leaders and government’s armed forces.” Early reports suggest that between [2](#) and [10](#) Ethiopian security forces were killed during the attack, and that some members of the armed groups also died. In total, the fighting [lasted](#) about four hours, and ended after the regional forces recaptured part of the city.

Following the attack, the Gambella regional government announced that they would take further measures to “clear” and “totally eradicate” the members of the armed groups who remained in the city. The government then [imposed](#) a curfew in Gambella city, and the Gambella region chief administrator called for citizens to “report any suspicious behavior in Gambella city and to assist security forces in maintaining the city's tranquility.” Since that time, it has been [reported](#) that security forces have been searching residents’ homes for “Shane” (a term frequently used by the Ethiopian government to refer to the OLA), and have been targeting Oromo civilians. One resident spoke with the Addis Standard about seeing government forces shoot a man in the leg, noting that, “I’m not sure whether or not he is a member of the armed groups,” but claiming that, “security forces were shooting at anyone who runs away from them, men whose hair is braided and those who can’t speak Amharic or Gambella language, especially those who speak Afaan Oromo, are shot at. The government forces suffered massive losses in the attack so they were shooting victims at random.” In another incident, a [video](#) was taken of government security forces repeatedly shooting a man who had his hands tied behind his back, and another resident told the Addis Standard that, “Eleven people that we know were rounded up. Only one survived. The one you saw in the video was taken from his home and shot down,” and noted that, “He was raised in Gambella city by his sister. He lived here all his life.”

OLLAA is gravely concerned about the reports of Oromo civilians being targeted on the basis of their language and ethnicity by Ethiopian security forces following the attack on Gambella city, and particularly the reports of extrajudicial killings and government forces “shooting victims at random.” As the primary duty bearer under international law, the Ethiopian federal and Gambella regional governments have a duty to protect civilians and ensure that their rights, including the right to life and due process rights, are respected without discrimination based on race, nationality, or ethnic origin. More must be done by all actors to raise awareness to this incident, including

members of the Oromo diaspora community, who we urge to speak with their representatives about this developing situation. OLLAA calls on the Ethiopian government to launch an independent investigation into reports of government forces targeting Oromo civilians in Gambella city, and to ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice. We also call on the international community to consider launching independent investigations into these, and other, allegations of human rights abuses throughout Ethiopia.

OLLAA is an umbrella organization that represents dozens of Oromo communities around the world.