



OLLAA
Oromo Leadership Legacy & Advocacy Association

HUMANS OF OROMIA



2023 ANNUAL REPORT





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INTRODUCTION



The Oromo Legacy Leadership & Advocacy Association (OLLAA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advocates for the human rights of Oromos throughout the world. As part of its advocacy, OLLAA publishes Humans of Oromia reports on an ongoing basis. These reports help expose the human violations committed against Oromo civilians throughout Oromia under the government's watch and serve as evidence to advocate and advance the rights of the Oromo people on the global stage. Under international law, the State and every State organ has the fundamental duty to observe, respect, protect, promote and fulfill the rights and fundamental freedoms of its citizens. As such, the Humans of Oromia reports highlight the failures of the Ethiopian government, as the primary human rights duty bearers, to protect human rights. These reports, however, also feature noteworthy cases in which armed groups (non-state armed actors) committed human rights violations in the region of Oromia.

Throughout 2023, OLLAA documented a wide variety of human rights violations perpetrated against Oromo civilians, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detentions, torture and inhuman treatment, sexual and gender-based violence and serious injury cases. The following report summarizes OLLAA's Human of Oromia reports in 2023, categorized by the type of human rights violation experienced.



OLLAA exhorts the Ethiopian government to launch prompt, thorough and effective investigations into these allegations of human rights violations, particularly for those cases of extrajudicial executions, and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

OLLAA also calls on the international community to pressure the Ethiopian government to fulfill its obligation to respect and uphold fundamental rights and freedom in accordance with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of which Ethiopia is one of the founding members. We also encourage relevant international bodies to launch independent investigations into these and other credible allegations of human rights abuses.

2023: A YEAR IN REVIEW

The year 2023 has proven to be yet another challenging period for the Oromo people, as the human rights situation in Oromia shows no signs of improvement. With a multitude of grave human rights abuses being committed with impunity, the situation in Oromia remains volatile and deeply concerning.

Throughout the months of 2023, OLLAA received credible reports of attacks against Oromo civilians perpetrated by state and non-state actors. These combatants include Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), Amhara regional forces, Oromia regional security forces (OSF) and Fanno, an Amhara militia group.

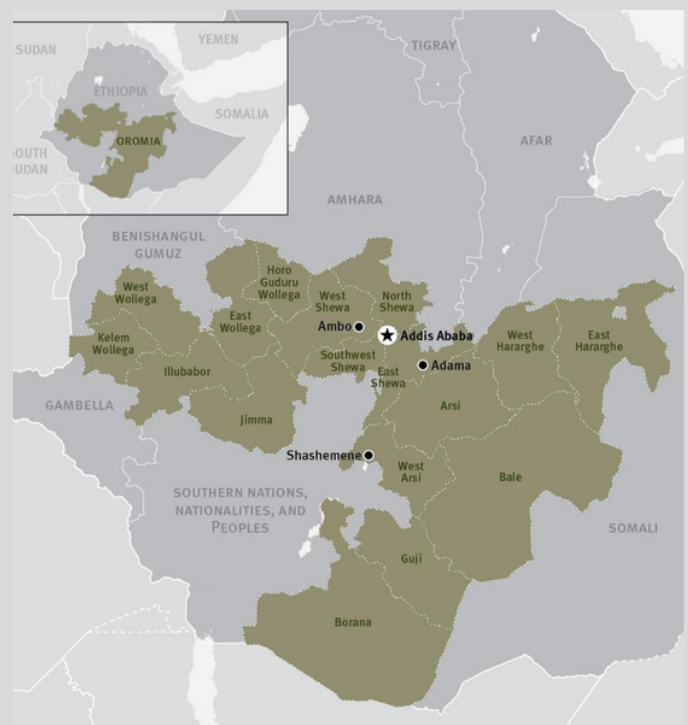
Extrajudicial killings have resulted in the tragic deaths of thousands of innocent civilians, who have been targeted based on their Oromo identity or alleged affiliation with the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). The region has also witnessed indiscriminate airstrikes and drone attacks, causing significant civilian casualties and displacing many from their homes.

In addition to these extrajudicial killings, widespread cases of arbitrary arrest and detention have occurred. Thousands of Oromo individuals find themselves in detention facilities, some in undisclosed or unofficial locations, where they face inhumane living conditions, lack of access to medical care. Disturbingly, Oromo detainees are often held incommunicado, without legal support. Most shocking are the reports of Oromo political prisoners being unlawfully detained after court-ordered releases, a blatant violation of the right of due process.

To compound these issues, reports of sexual violence against Oromo women have also continued in 2023. Although severely underreported, OLLAA has documented numerous cases of sexual violence, including rape, with victims often targeted due to their perceived association with the OLA or their family members' alleged affiliations.

Furthermore, the report highlights cases of torture, ill treatment, and serious injury inflicted on individuals in detention or during conflict, further underscoring the grave human rights violations in Oromia.

This report delves into the harrowing details of these human rights violations, emphasizing the need for immediate action, accountability, and international attention to address these pressing concerns within Oromia.



KEY VIOLATIONS DOCUMENTED IN 2023



The following section of this report contains a summary of Humans of Oromia reports published during 2023, grouped by the type of human rights violation the subject experienced. In order to develop these reports, OLLAA relied on a variety of sources, including victims and their families, reports from human rights advocates on the ground, and reports by media and other human rights organizations.

It should be noted that, in many cases, the victims highlighted below experienced multiple, overlapping human rights violations in addition to the ones that they are grouped under in this report. For example, in cases involving arbitrary arrests and detentions, there have often been complaints that prisoners experienced torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. Those victims who were reported as being extrajudicially executed by Ethiopian security forces often first faced enforced disappearances or arbitrary arrests and detentions.

1. RIGHT TO LIFE



The right to life is a foundational principle enshrined in international law, universally protected by instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This fundamental right unequivocally prohibits arbitrary deprivation of life and safeguards individuals against extrajudicial killings by state or non-state actors. International law mandates that every person has an inherent right to life, and this right must be respected and protected by all governments. Extrajudicial killings—unlawful or deliberate executions without legal process—violate this fundamental right and constitute severe violations of human rights law. States are obligated to investigate such incidents promptly, impartially, and transparently, holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring justice for victims and their families. Upholding the right to life is paramount in ensuring the protection and dignity of every individual, irrespective of circumstances or affiliations.

CASE STUDIES

JEMILA GEMEDA DIDO & ISNINO MAKO SAKETA: THE CASE OF TWO MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN MURDERED BY ETHIOPIAN SECURITY FORCES

Ethiopian security forces brutally killed two mothers, Jemila Gemedo Dido and Isnino Mako Saketa, along with Dido's nine-year-old son and Saketa's one-year-old child in an attack in Wadera Woreda, Hanchoka Boko District, Guji Zone. The victims were two of Abiyu Gare Galmo's four wives. The area has been plagued by ongoing conflict between the OLA and Ethiopian security forces for three years, leaving the local community desperate for peace.

Three days before these murders, a conflict between the security forces and OLA militants ended in a draw, leading to an indiscriminate heavy-weapons assault by the Ethiopian forces in various directions, including the Handoya Hanchoka area where the tragedy occurred. During the attack, Isnino was breastfeeding her child, and Jemila was inside the house with her son when it was hit by an RPG launcher fired by security forces. The assault caused the collapse of the house and the tragic loss of all lives within. This incident is devastating for Abiyu Gare, who simultaneously lost two wives and two children. According to the OLLAA informant, Ethiopian security forces are taking similarly reckless actions against other civilians in the area.

BONSA FAYISO: UNQUESTIONABLE MURDER BY GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES



Mr. Bonsa Fayisoo Bajiga, a 42-year-old farmer and a father of four children, has been supporting his family through farming in the rural village of Tuchii Sumaya, located in the Dugda District of East Shoa, Oromia region. The village has been plagued by ongoing clashes and fighting between government forces and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). On June 16, 2023, after the usual fighting, the government army took control of the area and the sound of gunfire subsided for a while. Mr. Bonsa then left his home to visit his farm accompanied by his neighbor, a young man named Keranti Golje.

As they made their way to the farm, they encountered a group of government forces who knocked them down without any question and shot them from behind. Mr. Bonsa died instantly while Mr. Keranti miraculously survived the attack, although sustaining severe injuries. However, instead of receiving proper medical treatment, Mr. Keranti found himself detained in Maqi prison, enduring the punishment for his survival. Such practices are not uncommon in that area. By being falsely accused of supporting OLA, the local community are often killed, arrested and subjected to beatings by government security forces.

Unfortunately, Mr. Keranti remains detained in Maqi prison with his wounds as punishment for surviving his attack.

CASE STUDIES

WARQINA BEKA: THE STORY OF A SLAIN FARMER

Warqina Beka Galeera, a successful farmer, loving husband and father of six in Diki Kebele, Ambo, West Shewa Zone, was tragically targeted. On March 22, 2023, he was forcibly taken from his home by an OSF member who assaulted him and left him in the forest. Early in the morning three days later, as Warqina was at home recovering from the assault, the security officer returned. This time, however, he came with reinforcements, including additional members of the OSF as well as members of local militias. They again forced Warqina from his home and walked him five kilometers into a forest known as Hobora. There, according to our source, Warqina was murdered by approximately five members of the security forces.

Despite having no affiliation or involvement with any political group, Warqina was targeted and killed based on the false accusation that he had hosted OLA members in his home. Reportedly, when community members went to Hobora to collect Warqina's body, the security forces initially refused them access to his corpse. Eventually, Warqina was buried at the location of his extrajudicial killing, denying him and his family the proper funeral customary in the Oromo community's culture.

Since Warqina's murder, our source reports that his family has been frequently threatened by security forces. In one instance, OSF combatants threatened Warqina's 80-year-old father, Beka, with a gun and told him, "We will shoot; you are Shane, too."* Warqina's sister-in-law has also been beaten by government forces.

Warqina's tragic story is emblematic of the many Oromo civilians who endure extrajudicial killings by Ethiopian security forces operating with impunity within Oromia.

* Note: Shane is a term frequently used by the Ethiopian government to refer to the OLA.



CASE STUDIES

NAGAWO GUDISA: A SEVERE BEATING LEADS TO MURDER BY GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES

Nagawo Gudisa, a 60-year-old man, lived in the Liban Jawi District, West Shewa, a rural area of Oromia. He was a farmer who played a vital role in his community, participating in the construction of schools and the development of infrastructure through community participation and organization. He was known in the community for reconciling conflicts and helping the needy.

However, five years ago, his young children joined the OLA. As a result, on May 20, 2022, the OSF burned down his house along with all of his property. Fortunately, with the help of villagers, Mr. Nagawo and his family were able to rebuild their home and resume their lives.

On August 7, 2023, Ethiopian security forces and the Liban Jawi District Administration conducted a targeted operation at Mr. Nagawo's home. They beat him severely, detained 46 individuals and families from the village, and transported them to Babicha Town, where the villagers were beaten further. Mr. Nagawo was then separated from the others and subjected to additional beatings that ultimately led to his death. Government security forces refused to return his body to his family, burying him in an unknown location. Several of the villagers, suffering from ill treatment, remain in detention.



CASE STUDIES

YOUNG 8- YEAR- OLD BOY KILLED BY ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL DEFENSE FORCES

On July 29, 2023, at around 8pm, 8-year-old Usman Hussein, a playful and sociable child, was killed by a stray bullet when ENDF forces fired from close range into his chest. The killing occurred while he was inside his parent's compound located in the following the 2020 assassination of a well-known Oromo artist Hachalu Hundessa. According to a credible report, intense fighting broke out that evening between the OLA and the recently deployed ENDF within the residential area of Fincaawaa Town.

After his burial the following day, bereaved locals staged a mass protest to condemn the continued extrajudicial killings of innocent civilians within the area. The local government responded by shutting down the internet.

The photo above displays members of the public gathering during the burial ceremony of late Hussen Godana and followed by protest.



TARIKU WANA AND SOLOMON MOKONEN: KILLED BY DRONE STRIKE

Tariku Wana was born and raised in Boke Kebele, Mana Sibü District, West Wollega Zone of Oromia Region. Tariku was a husband, father to a son, and a pastor. He was recognized as the most humble and cheerful person in the community.

Solomon Mokonen was born in Togir Haro Gambi Kebele, Mana Sibü District, West Wollega Zone of Oromia Region. Educated through the eighth grade but unable to continue his education due to a lack of funds, Solomon worked as a driver to support his family.

On November 9, 2022, a mid-day air strike took place in a marketplace in Mendi, West Wollega. Local sources told OLLAA's staff that although the repeated drone attacks targeted a specific vehicle, reportedly belonging to the OLA, more than 30 civilians were killed in the airstrikes on a busy commercial site. The sources confirmed to OLLAA that Tariku Wana and Solomon Mokonen were among the people killed by the airstrike.

CASE STUDIES

MUHAMMED AHMAD SHU'EEYBII: ETHIOPIA'S SECURITY FORCES OPENED FIRE ON A PASSENGER CAR KILLING TWO CIVILIANS

Muhammed was a physician and father of three sons. He was born and raised in Dodota Mojo Village, Bedeno District, East Hararghe, Oromia Region. He graduated from Afran Qalloo College with a degree in nursing and began his professional journey at Gara Muleta General Hospital. After serving for more than five years, he had the opportunity to advance his education by enrolling at Haramaya University. He subsequently moved with his family to Awwaday, a town near the university. After three years of hard work and numerous challenges, he earned his degree in 2023. Following graduation, Muhammed travelled to Finfinnee (Addis Ababa), hoping to secure a promotion from the Oromia Health Bureau to return to his former hospital. However, while on his journey, tragedy struck when he was killed by federal police forces on June 6, 2023.

One of the survivors narrates the incident as follows:

“We started our journey from Harar to Finfinnee with a group of people by public transport. Unfortunately, the journey did not turn out as we had hoped. Everything changed when our car was stopped by three armed Federal Police forces when we reached Western Hararghe Zone, Xulo Woreda at a special place called Dhaga Cabsa. The police requested 10,000 Birr from the driver after pulling over the vehicle. As it was illegal, the driver refused to pay the money and sped off. Following the driver’s action, [the police officers] opened fire towards the vehicle from behind and shot two of the passengers. Muhammed Ahmad Shu’eyyii was one of the two victims. The second victim, who has not yet been identified, died instantly. However, though Muhammed was badly injured, he was still alive at the time, begging the passengers to rush him to the hospital for medical treatment. The driver was forced to stop the car and have a look at the damage caused by the police officers. But the police officers, who were pursuing them from behind, caught up to them. The driver and passengers who spotted them approaching ran barefoot to the land of the nearby farmers and hid themselves to protect their lives.”

The local community, witnessing the incident, came to offer help. An unnamed individual, citing security concerns for remaining anonymous, recounted:

“When we came to the rescue, two passengers had fallen in the car of which one of them died. The second victim was still alive, and his clothing was fully washed by blood. Even if we attempted to use a bajaj to hasten him to the hospital, the cops would not permit it. He was shouting at the community members who were begging the policemen to save his life, saying, ‘I am a physician. I know I can be healed if you take me to the hospital.’ He passed away within two hours, nonetheless, due to the absence of medical care.”*



OTHER HUMANS OF OROMIA REPORTS

- Degefu Abata: Extrajudicially Executed (January 17, 2023)
- Xaxo Jarso: Extrajudicially Killed (March 14, 2023)
- Ciibsa Olana: Killed at Home (March 21, 2023)
- Amme Aliyi: Killed in Wollo (April 25, 2023)
- Sida Talila: A Farmer Imprisoned (May 2, 2023)
- Ahmed Abdurahman: Killed by Extremist Forces (May 23, 2023)
- Tragic Situation: Two Family Members and Others Brutally Murdered (June 13, 2023)
- Wasihun D: Extrajudicially Killed (July 11, 2023)
- Gadafa Daraje: Killed by non-state Armed Group (July 27, 2023)
- Killed in a bus: The Story of Argeessa Baggajja (August 1, 2023)
- Hashim Idris: Unlawfully Detained and Later Extrajudicially Killed (August 2, 2023)
- Sora Abdeta: Emerging Oromo Comedian Found Dead in Hotel (August 4, 2023)
- Robe Bedho was Killed in a Senseless Conflict that claims innocent lives daily (August 8, 2023)
- Assistant Professor Tadesa Ababa, Tragically killed by Fano Forces in the Amhara region (August 10, 2023)
- Extrajudicial Killing of Mr. Alaakaa Gammadaa (August 16, 2023)
- Abdeta Ahmed: Mercilessly Killed by Ethiopian Security Forces (August 22, 2023)
- Two Brothers Killed by Local Militia (August 24, 2023)
- Ziyad Haji: Murdered by the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (August 28, 2023)
- Ahmed Muhammed Usman: Killed by Local Militia (August 30, 2023)
- Habtu Joote: AAU Law School Student Killed by Government Security Forces (September 5, 2023)
- The Extrajudicial Killing of Fiqaaduu Guyyee (September 6, 2023)
- Extra-judicial Killings of Gammadee Kateeloo (September 19, 2023)
- Mr. Gelgelu Abishu. Killed by Government Forces in Broad Daylight (September 25, 2023)
- Gemechu Emiru: Killed by Members of ENDF (October 4, 2023)
- Sayido Abdulahi: Killed in a Fight Between the ENDF and OLA (October 11, 2023)
- Utte Kedir: Mercilessly Killed by ENDF Forces (October 16, 2023)
- Dasi Abraham Yuya: Killed by Somali Liyu Police Forces (October 18, 2023)
- Mahammad Aliyyii: Killed by Fano Forces in Walloo (October 27, 2023)
- Yohannes Amante: Killed by Benishangul Gumuz Region Special Force (November 17, 2023)





2. ARBITRARY ARREST AND DETENTION



Arbitrary arrest and detention are condemned under international law, as outlined in various human rights treaties and conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). These legal instruments affirm that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention, emphasizing the right to liberty and security of person. According to international law, arrests must be based on clear legal grounds, conducted with proper adherence to due process, and subject to review by an independent judiciary. Detainees have the right to be informed promptly of the reasons for their arrest, access legal assistance, and be brought before a court without undue delay. The prohibition of arbitrary arrest and detention underscores the fundamental principle that individuals should not be deprived of their freedom arbitrarily, aiming to protect individuals' rights and prevent abuse of power by state authorities.



CASE STUDIES

SHUKURI UMER: UNLAWFULLY DETAINED WITH TWO-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER

Shukuri Umer Furo, is a 50-year-old woman from Sirka District in the Arsi Zone of Oromia. As a wife and mother of three, she relies on farming for her livelihood in her current residence. Unfortunately, since 2016, Shukuri and her family have been repeatedly targeted for arrest and detention by government security forces.

OLLAA staff spoke to Shukuri's family regarding her unlawful detention and the suffering borne by her family. Following the assassination of renowned artist Hachalu Hundessa in June 2020, Shukuri faced intimidation and harassment from the security forces, who believed her son, Abdurahim, was associated with the OLA. Abdurahim was subjected to detainment and abuse in Sarka, prompting him to flee to another part of Oromia after witnessing the death of a good friend at the hands of government forces.

Shukuri's husband, Nura Hamda, also faced mistreatment and detention after their son fled. Despite having no criminal charges against him, Nura was held in prison for six months, with the authorities demanding his son's return in exchange for his release. After his eventual release on bail, Nura was rearrested by over 40 members of the OSF, leading him ultimately, like his son, to abandon his home.

Left behind with their two daughters, Shukuri shouldered the responsibility of caring for them and managing the household. However, the situation worsened when the OSF, unaware of Nura's departure, arrested Shukuri instead, along with her two-year-old daughter, subjecting them to imprisonment for over seven months before being released.

KALID DEREJE: VICTIM OF PROLONGED DETENTION

Kalid Dereje was born in Begi, West Wollega Zone of Oromia and moved with his family to Horro Guduru Wollega in 2012. Due to the September 2022 attack in this area by Fanno militia, the displaced family moved again, this time to Finfinnee. This move ended Kalid's dream of an education, and soon he was to become a victim of arbitrary detention.

A member of Kalid's family, who was able to visit the 18-year-old detainee after seven months in prison, relayed his story to OLLAA staff. Internally displaced, Kalid struggled with life in the capital, finding only occasional work as a day laborer. Despondent, he decided to return to his family in Jardega Jarte despite the difficult security and safety issues in the area. His journey back to his family ended in January 2023 in the town of Harato. There, Kalid was arrested by government security forces for not having his national ID, which was lost during his 2022 displacement to Finfinnee. He was subsequently accused of being a member of OLA.

Two weeks after his disappearance, Kalid's family finally learned that he was being held in a military camp and later a prison facility without court order or formal charges being brought. In April 2023, he was taken to Sanaqalle military training camp for two months, completing what the government called "reformation training" before being returned to the prison in Harato. While many are said to have been released, Kalid continues to languish in prison, having neither family in proximity to the prison nor a lawyer who can visit and bring him food.



CASE STUDIES

DAWIT ABDETA & LAMMI BENYA : OLF LEADERS LANGUISHING BEHIND BARS DESPITE COURT ORDERED RELEASE

Dawit Abdeta was born in 1983 in the Meki Town, East Shewa Zone of Oromia. He graduated with a BSc. in chemistry in 2005 from Debu University, a MSc. in chemical engineering in 2012 from Addis Ababa University and a BA in business administration and information science in 2017 from Addis Ababa School of Commerce. Dawit has been a member of OLF since 2007.

Lammi Benya was born in 1983, in Guto Wayu District, East Wollega Zone of Oromia. He graduated with a BSc. from Bahir Dar University in 2006 and joined the OLF in 2002. Since then, he has been subjected to multiple detentions and has languished in various Ethiopian prison centers both during the EPRDF regime and the current Ethiopian government.

On July 12, 2020, without benefit of a court order, federal police arbitrarily arrested both Lammi Benya and Dawit Abdeta at their home. They were both charged with instigating chaos and disturbance and released on bail of 20,000 Ethiopian birr each. The police subsequently changed the charge to that of terrorism. On December 24, 2020, the same Oromia Supreme Court acquitted him of that charge. The police, however, refused to release them, keeping them confined. On January 26, the Oromia Attorney General appealed to the Federal High Court. On July 2, 2021, the Federal High court once again acquitted Lammi and Dawit by affirming the Oromia Supreme Court's decision. Despite this acquittal, Lammi Benya and Dawit Abdeta remain imprisoned three years later and have been transferred to various military camps and police stations since the day of his arrest.

According to Lammii Gammachuu, Head of Public Relations for OLF, Lammi Benya and Dawit Abdeta have been detained in the following official and unofficial detention centers:

- 12/07/2020 – 16/08/2020 at 6 Kilo prison (unofficial)
- 16/08/2020-15/09/2020 at Sansusi prison facility
- 15/09/2020- 23/11/2020 at Dality detention center
- 23/11/2020 – 21/12/2020 returned to hidden detention center at 6 Kilo
- 21/12/2020 -04/02/2021 at Sebeta Hawas police office
- 04/02/2021 – 13/07/2021 at Modjo police office
- 13/07/2021- 27/07/2021 at Awash Melka Arm center
- 27/07/2021 – 30/07/2021 at Gelen City police department
- 30/07/2021 – police took them back to Dire Sololiya army camp to hide them from EHRC
- 21/09/2021 – 08/02/2022 subjected to harassment/ torture by police at Dire Sololiya arm camp
- 08/02/2022 – 18/04/2023 at Burayu City Police Department
- 18/04/2023 – 22/05/2023 at Dukem Town police department
- On 22/05/2023, once again they were taken back to Burayu City Police Department





CONT'D

Despite repeated acquittals by the Ethiopian courts of law, Lammi Benya and Dawit Abdeta remain illegally detained by the Oromia Police Commission. Conditions within the prison are horrific, and the men have been held incommunicado for most of the time. They are confined in difficult, unsanitary, and cramped conditions that expose them and other prisoners to both emotional trauma and various incurable diseases. Sources also report that Lammi and Dawit have been subjected to torture and other inhumane treatment. Their family and friends are gravely concerned about their deteriorating health.

CASE STUDIES

GAMACHIS IMIRU: VICTIM OF MULTIPLE ARBITRARY DETENTIONS

Gamachis Imiru Kalbessa was born in Nekemte, East Wollega Zone of Oromia and currently lives in Mattu Town, Illubabor Zone. Gamachis is a husband and father of one daughter.

OLLAA staff recently spoke with Gamachis directly about the unlawful and unwarranted arrests he was subjected to between 2018 and 2022. He has been arrested five times since the 2018 reforms. In 2018, governmental security forces arrested Gamachis for the first time and held him in Mattu Town prison facilities, where he remained for four months. In 2019, Gamachis was again arrested and held in prison for three months without any criminal charges being brought against him. In April 2020, government security forces detained Gamachis for a third time, holding him in Mattu police custody for five months. In 2021, they arrested him for a fourth time at the same place.

After two months of detention in Mattu police custody, Gamachis was transferred to a federal military training camp called Awash Melkassa. He stayed there, along with 1,080 other detainees, for six weeks. The conditions in the camp were difficult. Water was scarce—so much so that detainees were denied showers for the duration of their detainment. Gamachis had been suffering from Hepatitis B, which he reportedly contracted while in prison. Gamachis did not receive medication for his condition while at the camp. It was not until his release that he was able to seek treatment. In 2022, Gammachis was arrested for a fifth time in Mattu Town. This time, security forces came to his home without any court warrant, arrested him, tied his hands behind his back, and searched his home. He was detained for five months in a containment cell located in Mattu Town.

Each time Gamachis was arrested, the government security forces accused him of supporting OLA. Gamichis claims he has no link or connection with OLA. At no point during any of Gamachis' arrests or detainments was he presented before a court of law. His family, in particular his wife, was threatened and intimidated by security forces. Due to pressure from the government security forces, the owner of the house Gamachis' family had been renting terminated their lease contract. Gamachis' wife gave birth during the time Gamachis was in prison, and he was prevented from being present to witness the birth of his child or from obtaining help for his wife and newborn.

CASE STUDIES

DR. GADA OIJIRA: OLF LEADER ARBITRARILY DETAINED AND DENIED ACCESS TO MEDICAL TREATMENT

Dr. Gada Oljira was born in Kiramu District, East Wollega Zone of Oromia. He is a veterinary doctor by training and also holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration. Throughout his career, Dr. Gada has taught at several colleges in Nekemte, East Wollega Zone, in Oromia, including at the prestigious Wollega University. Until the time of his arrest, Dr. Gada lived in Finfinnee.

Dr. Gada was first arrested by the Ethiopian government while teaching in Nekemte. OLLAA's source reports that during his detention, he was severely beaten. As a result of this mistreatment, Dr. Gada fled to the country of Eritrea, where he joined OLF in 2015.

Following the rise to power of Prime Minister Abiy in 2018 and based on the OLF and Ethiopian government's negotiated agreement, Dr. Gada was able to return to Ethiopia. Unfortunately, he reports that, almost immediately upon their return to Ethiopia in September 2018, the Ethiopian government began targeting OLF members and leaders, including by closing many of their offices. The government's action effectively excluded the party from participation in the 2021 national elections.

In December 2020, Dr. Gada and other OLF leaders were arrested near their homes in the Asko area of Ethiopia by members of the Ethiopian government. All those arrested were held incommunicado for days without a court warrant, unable to contact family members or legal representation.

Our source reports that Dr. Gada was first taken to Burayu First Prison, but was transferred to Burayu Third Prison after two days. He remained in Burayu Third Prison for an additional 23 days, after which, the Burayu district court ordered Dr. Gada's release on bail. However, instead of following the court order for his release, Ethiopian security forces transferred Dr. Gada to Awash Bishola prison, then to Galan prison facilities. Finally, he was returned to Burayu First Prison, where he remains detained to this day, despite his lawyers filing a habeas corpus petition and the court having ordered his release and closing the file on his case.

Our source further reports that Dr. Gada is suffering in prison. Since being detained, he has developed epilepsy due to the physical and mental traumas related to his detention. Dr. Gada is also suffering from permanent injuries to his leg. Unfortunately, despite continued ill health, he has been consistently denied medical attention.





OTHER HUMANS OF OROMIA REPORTS

- Fikiru Bayana: Judge on the Run (January 3, 2023)
- Aman Qaallu: Arbitrarily Detained (January 10, 2023)
- Waktola D: Living on the Run (January 24, 2023)
- Nannessa B: Survivor (January 31, 2023)
- Ibsa G: Journalist, Politician, and Survivor (February 7, 2023)
- Gesisa Kusa: Victim of Tyranny (February 21, 2023)
- Gutu Mul'isa: Former MP (March 28, 2023)
- Akililu Hordofa: Imprisoned Teacher (April 4, 2023)
- Milki Abdisa: Imprisoned (April 11, 2023)
- Tafara Nagasa: The Whole Family Scattered (May 9, 2023)
- Gamachis Imiru: Victim of Multiple Arbitrary Detentions (May 16, 202)
- Sa'ad Awel: The Singer Languishing in Prison (June 20, 2023)
- Mame G: Subjected to Several Detentions (July 25, 2023)
- Obsa Ahmed: Subjected to Arbitrary Detentions and Property Looting (August 11, 2023)
- Abdulawab Hasan: Moving From Prison to Prison without Justice (August 29, 2023)
- Muhe Abdu: Subjected to Arbitrary Detentions and Torture (September 27, 2023)
- Roba A: Jailed for more than a Year (October 25, 2023)
- Mome F: Imprisoned without an Arrest Warrant (October 31, 2023)
- Tekiya: Jailed for More Than a Year Due to Her Husband (December 4, 2023)

3. TORTURE & INHUMAN TREATMENT



International human rights law contains a prohibition on torture, and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Torture has been defined under the Convention Against Torture as “any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.”

CASE STUDIES

SEMAN SHERIF: TORTURED AND KILLED BY GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES

Seman, 38, was born in Dodota Mojo, Bedeno District, East Hararghe Zone. A distinguished scholar and father of six, he has worked as a civil servant for over a decade in the Bedeno District Office of Agriculture, serving his community at various levels from expert to leadership roles. He was well known for putting the needs of the community above his own.

According to our informant, the ruling party of the Bedeno District had been interrogating Seman since 2020 after he voiced his disagreement with government policies. In 2021, Seman was arrested and sent to Bedeno District prison twice for a total of three months; there he was severely beaten by government security forces. Though they released him on bail, they suspended his three-months' salary without offering any reason, causing his family to starve.

In the detention that ultimately resulted in his death, three Oromia police officers took Seman from the woreda administration office while he was at work and brought him to the Bedeno District police station, beating him on the way. After his imprisonment, they transferred him to a solitary house where they subjected Seman to further assault and torture. Seman became severely ill as a result. Three days later, his wife, Manzaraa Mahammad, paid 3,000 birr to secure Seman's release. His family immediately brought him to the hospital in Bedeno, but he passed away before receiving medical care.

Subsequently, his relatives moved Seman's remains to Dire Dawa Dilchora Hospital so that a post-mortem examination could be performed. The autopsy revealed that water had built up in Seman's lungs as a result of the beatings, causing his death.



CASE STUDIES

WARIYO DIDA: TORTURED BY GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES



Wariyo Dida was born in Shawabaret Moyale, Borena Zone of Oromia. He was an economics student at Borena University and owns an electronics shop in the market town of Moyale.

In May 2022, while Wariyo was studying for a final exam, he received a call from an unnamed man known to Wariyo who told him he wanted to meet with him. After Wariyo finished his exam, he went to meet with the man. However, when Wariyo arrived, he found the man waiting for him with members of the police. The police arrested Wariyo without a court warrant. According to our source, while they were placing him under arrest, the police told Wariyo, “You are hindering the movement and the operation of the ENDF. We know that you are a member of OLA.”

The police took Wariyo to Abba Gada Hall, a government office in the town of Adama, where Wariyo was detained for a day without access to his lawyer or family. Wariyo was then transferred to a federal police training camp in Hurso, a town near Dire Dawa City.

At the Hurso camp, Wariyo was detained with more than 800 inmates, all of whom were Oromo. According to our source, Wariyo experienced torture and inhuman treatment in the camp, including beatings, whippings by dry stick, forced physical exercises while barefoot, and food deprivation, which OLLAA’s staff have been told are typical forms of torture at military training camps like these. Wariyo was detained in Hurso camp for approximately 104 days.

After more than three months of imprisonment and without ever being brought before a court of law, Wariyo was finally released on September 25, 2022. Due to his detention, Wariyo was forced to drop out of school and returned home to find all 20 of his cattle dead due to drought and neglect. According to our source, Wariyo continues to face intimidation and harassment from the district and kebele security forces.

CASE STUDIES

MUHE ABDU: SUBJECTED TO ARBITRARY DETENTION AND TORTURE

Muhe Abdu, 25, was born in Sole Village, Adaba District, West Arsi Zone of Oromia. He attended school until the tenth grade. Between 2016 and 2023, this ambitious young entrepreneur was imprisoned four times without charge and trial.

He describes his experience being detained on October 20, 2022 as follows (edited for clarity):

“At first, I didn’t even recognize where they kept me because they tortured me so badly. I noticed I was detained in the nearby military camp in Adaba when I regained my consciousness. They handcuffed and jailed me alone in a single dark room for three months. The guards subjected me to one torture after another until I fainted. They didn’t allow anyone from my family to communicate with me. They used to drop me the meal and water brought by my family, but I barely ate the meat for fear of being poisoned. After three months, they moved me to the Adaba District prison center. On the way, they stopped and showed me what they did to my small business office and my home. They had taken everything I owned: I had laptops, phones, and different electronics. It was all worth more than 100,000 birr. They destroyed the rest with a bulldozer.

“Day to day, I found it quite difficult to get dressed, eat properly, use the restroom, and perform other activities because I was forced to wear handcuffs. One day, a public prosecutor visited the prisoners and I appealed to him to remove them. He responded, ‘it could be a lot worse, and it’s better for you to remain silent.’ They finally removed the handcuffs after eight months. After a lot of arguing among themselves, they released me with a strong warning on 27 August 2023. According to the security forces, the reason for my detention was my active engagement on social media. They claim that I was the person who provided information to Oromo Media Network (OMN) and Kello Media.”



”

Furthermore, the authorities accused Muhe of being responsible for the logistical support provided to the youths of the area to join the OLA forces. However, these authorities failed to corroborate their claims with evidence. Rather than following due process, the security forces sadistically tortured Muhe in order to extract the information they wanted. The reason that led to these repeated arrests was his active involvement on the social media and protests organized by the youths to call for freedom for the Oromo people against the injustices perpetrated by the ruling government. Muhe is not the only one who has suffered from these arrests and detentions; to this day, security forces threaten his family. Currently, Muhe has migrated to another location out of fear for his safety; he remains under threat.

4. SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE



Under international law, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is unequivocally condemned and considered a grave violation of human rights. Numerous international treaties and conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, explicitly prohibit SGBV in all its forms. These legal frameworks oblige states to prevent, investigate, and prosecute instances of SGBV, ensuring the protection of individuals from such heinous acts.

CASE STUDIES

FAYO AHIMED: RAPED BY TWO GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES

Fayo Ahimed (name changed) is a 14-year-old student in the fifth grade. Fayo was born in the rural area of Southeastern Oromia and spends much of her time assisting her elderly family members with their work in the rural area. Fayo is a bright and ambitious student, and her family has always had high hopes that she would bring them out of poverty. Fayo dreams of a better future for her family. Most of Fayo's family subsists on farming and livestock activities to make a living. Fayo has been a big help to her family, completing chores and looking after their cows. Simultaneously, she has proved herself to be a dedicated student, and her family is proud of her hard work and commitment. OLLAA staff recently spoke with Fayo's family and learned the devastating story of how two members of Ethiopian government security forces raped her in her own village.

Many people in the village had fled their homes due to clashes between the OLA and the Ethiopian government force. After hours of fighting, the government army took control of the village. Fayo's family was at home when two government soldiers barged into their home carrying knives and other weapons. The family was terrified and tried to hide. The soldiers took Fayo away to another house and proceeded to rape her in turn. In the immediate aftermath, Fayo's family pleaded with the local community for help, but no one responded. Instead, many people hid in fear while others fled.

Later that day, Fayo relayed to her family how she had been raped by two members of the ENDF. Fayo's family took her to a nearby hospital for treatment. (Family members told OLLAA staff they did not want the name of the hospital known for security reasons). After more than a week of treatment, Fayo recovered from her physical injuries. However, the attack that she endured at such an early age has had a devastating effect on her life. It has caused her to drop out of school, and she has been left struggling with serious mental trauma.

Fayo was the victim of a devastating rape, committed by the government army. This brutal attack was a traumatic experience that Fayo and her family will never be able to forget. OLLAA staff has also confirmed that another woman had also been raped in the same village, but was afraid to come forward. Fayo's family has expressed hope that justice will be served and that such an incident will never happen again.



CASE STUDIES

GALANE HUNDE: CHILD VICTIM OF RAPE

Galane Hundu (name changed for privacy reasons) is a 12-year-old girl born in Jarte District, Horro Guduru Wollega Zone of Oromia. Galane was forcibly displaced from her home due to the conflict in the area. She eventually managed to reach Shambu Town along with thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs), where she was raped. She has no family to support her.



OLLAA staff spoke to sources at a makeshift IDP camp in Shambu bus station regarding Galane's rape. The Oromo communities of Amuru, KIRAMU and Jarte Districts have been attacked multiple times since August 2022. Thousands who were lucky to survive the attack, including Galane, reached Shambu Town. One night, Galane was raped near the IDP camp by a bus assistant driver. She was in a comatose state for the whole night until people from the camp saw her. The community contributed money and took her to the hospital, where she was treated for her injuries. The incident was reported to the police office, but the suspect had not been brought to justice by the time of this report's publication. Fear of stigmatization drove Galane back to her hometown, despite the security concerns there. Galane suffers from a fistula that developed as a result of the attack and has no access to medical or psychological treatment. A similar rape case of a 14-year-old girl was reported in the camp, and the police likewise failed to investigate or bring the suspect to justice. Rape cases are common in the town but usually left unreported, the sources told OLLAA.

METI MENGISTU: OROMO GIRL RAPED BY FANNO MILITIA

Meti Mengistu (name altered for security reasons) is a 16-year-old girl born in one of the districts in the Wollega Zone of Oromia. She was a student in seventh grade as well as a source of income for her family when she was abducted by armed militiamen and subjected to brutal rape and terror. Meti was targeted due to her Oromo ethnicity. OLLAA staff spoke to sources close to Meti regarding her abduction and subsequent suffering at the hands of Fanno.

In addition to pursuing her education, Meti supported her family by trading maize. One day in October 2022, on her way home from buying maize in the small market in Botoro, Meti was abducted by members of Fanno and taken to an unknown location nearby. There, Meti was held for a month, repeatedly raped and terrorized by several armed groups who took turns on a daily basis. Upon her release, Meti, now pregnant as a result of these rapes, did not receive any kind of immediate medical treatment. Unfortunately, she is now awaiting the birth of a child by one of her rapists.



5. SERIOUS INJURY



Under international law, the protection of individuals from serious injury is fundamental and integral to human rights principles. International humanitarian law and human rights treaties, such as the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, prohibit actions that cause serious physical harm to civilians during armed conflict. These legal frameworks also extend protections to non-combatants during times of peace. States are obligated to take measures to prevent and mitigate serious injuries inflicted on individuals within their jurisdiction. Additionally, international law emphasizes the importance of providing medical care and assistance to those affected by serious injuries, ensuring access to adequate healthcare and rehabilitation services. Upholding these protections under international law underscores the commitment to safeguarding human life, dignity, and well-being, especially in situations of conflict or violence.



CASE STUDIES

WOUNDED IN A PUBLIC VEHICLE: THE STORY OF MS. SHUKE WARIO

Ms. Shuke was born and raised in Tulluu Fardaa District of Borana Zone. As an employee of the Oromia Agricultural Ministry, she currently serves as an extension officer based in the remote area of Dhas. On June 13, 2023, she was heading to Yaballo after attending a one-week training in Adama on agro-pastoralist livelihoods. The following account was provided by an anonymous eyewitness who was traveling in the same vehicle as Ms. Shuke when it was attacked by unknown gunmen.

The public service vehicle she was traveling in was ambushed at a place called Magaadaa Forest between Bule Horaa and Yaballo. Armed men made an attempt to stop the vehicle, but the driver refused to slow down and kept driving. The gunmen then fired on them indiscriminately. As the driver tried to escape, the bus slid off the road. The gunmen then forced their way onto the bus and robbed the passengers. One witness claimed to have lost 5,000 birr during the attack, and stated:

“After the criminals left, we started checking on each other. We saw two individuals were already dead, while six others were seriously wounded.”

One of the bullets had hit Ms. Shuke’s left thigh, causing severe injury, according to the witness. The police arrived at the scene an hour after the incident. Ms. Shuke was sent to the emergency room at Yaballo Level 4 Hospital where her wounds were dressed. Later that evening, she received a referral to the Wolaita Sodo Bones and Lips Hospital for further treatment. Ms. Shuke is currently recovering from this vicious attack in a hospital bed in Wolaita Soddo.

WARGICHA BUCHUKA MOKKONA: BADLY INJURED BY ETHIOPIAN SECURITY FORCES

Wargicha Buchuka Mekkona, 12, has a promising future, but is unable to attend school currently because he is recovering from a gunshot wound inflicted by Ethiopian security forces. Wargicha’s family is having financial difficulty paying for his medical care.

Wargicha was born and raised in Guji Zone, Wadera Woreda, at a place called Hanchoka Boko. He helps his family while attending second grade.

The nearest relative of Wargicha claims that the boy was severely injured by a heavy weapon shot by Ethiopian security personnel from three kilometers away. Three days prior, the government security forces and the OLA engaged in a fierce skirmish that ended in a draw. On the second day, the government security personnel searched the area but discovered no sign of the OLA militants. On the third day, the security forces opened fire in various directions, including toward Borena, Handoya Hanchoka, and Hando Haro, despite the fact that there were still no signs of OLA militants.

When Wargicha was returning home after tending to his family’s cattle, he heard the gunfire from the direction of Hanchoka Boko. He tried to hide beneath the edge of his house, but was hit before he could reach safety. At that very moment inside the house, eight members of his family were hiding from the same attack.

CONT'D

Wargicha was shot in the knee, the burn from the bullet searing off his flesh. Because no transfusion to match his blood type was available, he struggled to get treatment in his district. Even though his family moved him to government medical facilities in Adola and Kuyera to get better medical care, none was found. Finally, Wargicha's relatives were forced to take him to a private medical clinic in Shashemene where they had to pay a higher fee. His injury was quite deep, necessitating an extended hospital stay.

According to Wargicha's relatives, the family already has paid approximately one-half million Ethiopian birr. Had Wargicha received treatment from the public medical facilities, the medical costs would have been less by at least half.

After receiving medical treatment in Shashemene, his wound required regular cleanings at a local clinic. Since the medical facility is a distance from their residence, his family members were forced to rent a house nearby. The victim's family is already in a precarious position because of a drought in the area, and now they have to sell their property in order to pay for Wargicha's medical care. Meanwhile, they are pleading with the community for assistance. However, due to what the community is experiencing more broadly, the locals are no longer assisting Wargicha's family.

OLLAA's source claims that despite the fact that local authorities are aware of the occurrence, none of them is providing assistance. Local authorities even claim that some members of the community are backing the OLA combatants, and therefore, they are delighted that Wargicha is suffering from an injury inflicted upon him by the government security forces. The informant further stated:

"We are suffering from a fight between the two forces and couldn't get peace for the past three years. The community in the area is hungry for peace more than anything. Therefore, we want both the international community and stakeholders who could put pressure including the community to stop the fight between the OLA and government forces and return peace to the community."



CASE STUDIES

YESTERDAY'S WOUNDS HAVE YET TO HEAL

Yerosan Lami, a 19-year-old boy, was born and raised in Hora Ayetuu, a small village in the Ambo District in the West Shewa Zone of Oromia. He attended school in Ambo until the seventh grade. Yerosan's life took an unexpected turn, however, when Oromo artist Hachalu Hundessa was tragically killed three years ago.

With profound reverence and admiration for Hachalu's contributions to Oromo art and struggle, Yerosan attended his funeral that morning. Hachalu was not just a respected figure to Yerosan but someone he deeply admired and loved. Unfortunately, Yerosan was unable to bid farewell and pay his respects as he had anticipated.

Yerosan vividly remembers the tragic incident that unfolded when he arrived at Hachalu's family's house. Without any prior warning, the OSF opened fire, causing a devastating loss of lives, numerous injuries, and lasting trauma. Yerosan himself was shot in the leg and received medical treatment at Ambo Referral Hospital. However, despite being grateful for his survival, he has been unable to recover fully and continues to suffer from his injuries.

The abrupt end of Yerosan's academic journey occurred when he fell behind in his studies. While his friends advanced to tenth grade, he had no choice but to drop out of school. It was a difficult decision, forcing him to confront the harsh realities of life as a struggling individual.

Yerosan shared his deep feelings with the staff members of OLLAA:

"I feel so helpless and desperate. My health is declining rapidly and I'm terrified that I won't be able to get the assistance I need. Everyday life is becoming increasingly difficult to me, and I'm not sure what to do next."



Yerosan's family faces significant financial hardship. They are considered poor and have expended their resources on Yerosan's treatment. Unable to work and earn a living, Yerosan relies on help from others, which is both challenging and humbling for him. Presently, he finds himself in an incredibly difficult situation – homeless and unable to secure a place to stay due to his financial circumstances.



OTHER HUMANS OF OROMIA REPORTS

Torture and Inhumane Treatment

- Gabrole Waqo and Jarro Dhale: Stories of Mistreated Youth (May 30, 2023)
- Kemal K: Government Security Forces Killed a Young Man and Displayed His Body on the Street (August 3, 2023)
- Rameto Gobena: Under Arbitrary Arrest and Being Tortured in Prison
- Reshid Subi: A Student Subjected to Arbitrary Arrest and Torture in Prison (December 18, 2023)
- Mushamami Mamo: Under Arbitrary Arrest and Being Tortured in Prison (January 2, 2024)

Sexual and Gender Based Violence

- Meselu Abdena: Killed by Unidentified Gunmen after Attempted Rape (November 24, 2023)

Serious Injury

- Two Brothers Fatally Attacked by Ethiopian Security Forces; One Killed, the other Injured (October 13, 2023)

IN MEMORIAM

Furthermore, aside from documenting the human rights abuses experienced by the Oromo people, we have also documented stories paying tribute and remembering the Oromo activists who passed away in the previous year. During 2023, we honored the memory of the following two individuals through dedicated memorial reports:

ZERIHUN WADAJO



Zerihun Wadajo, a beloved father and emblematic figure in the early Oromo art scene, was born in 1957 in Nekemte city, East Welega zone, Oromia. His lifelong commitment to advocating for the rights of the Oromo people began in his youth, driving him to use music as a platform for freedom and equality.

His music, encompassing over 95 songs primarily focusing on Oromian struggles, made him a legend within the community. Despite authorities' attempts to dissuade him, Zerihun remained steadfast, stating, "I fight for truth and my people, not personal gain."

Imprisoned and tortured under different regimes, he persisted in his dedication. Zerihun's passing on April 22, 2023, in India, following a prolonged illness, marked the loss of a cultural icon. His funeral on April 26, 2023, in Finfine, was a poignant moment for those inspired by his art and resilience.

OLLAA extends deepest sympathies to Zerihun Wadajo's family, admirers, and the wider Oromo and Ethiopian communities. His unwavering commitment to Oromo unity and cultural pride will endure as an everlasting legacy. May his soul rest in eternal peace.



IN MEMORIAM

HALO DAWE

Halo Dawe, a revered Oromo artist, dedicated her life to advocating for art and the liberation of the Oromo people. Born around 1960 in Dire Dawa, Eastern Oromia, she embraced values of heroism and nationalism from a young age.

Despite severe government restrictions on Afaan Oromo music, Halo fearlessly joined the Oromo art movement, fiercely defending her community's identity and rights. Even after the disbandment of Afran Qallo, she co-founded "Biftu Bari," ensuring the preservation of Oromo art and the struggle for rights.

Her unwavering commitment led to imprisonment, followed by years of seeking refuge abroad and eventually joining armed resistance. Over four decades, she produced numerous music cassettes, showcasing her enduring dedication. After battling severe health issues, Halo Dawe passed away on October 14, 2023. Her funeral in Adama town on October 16, 2023, became a gathering of family, friends, and admirers paying their respects.

Though physically departed, Halo Dawe's legacy lives on. Her impactful contributions to Oromo culture and the fight for freedom will continue to inspire generations, leaving an enduring mark on the collective memory of her people. May her legacy forever serve as a beacon of courage and resilience.





SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

When considered collectively, these reports underscore the pervasive pattern of human rights violations against Oromo civilians across Ethiopia. From extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detentions, torture and inhumane treatment, sexual and gender based violence and serious injury cases, it is evident that Oromos faced a range of human rights abuses throughout the year. Perpetrators of these violations included state actors like the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), Amhara regional forces, Oromia regional security forces, and non-state actors like the Fanno Amhara militia group.

As mentioned above, extrajudicial killings targeted innocent civilians based on their Oromo identity or alleged ties to the Oromo Liberation Army, resulting in tragic deaths and displacement. The region witnessed indiscriminate airstrikes and drone attacks causing significant civilian casualties.

Furthermore, arbitrary arrests and detentions affected thousands of Oromo individuals, subjecting them to inhumane conditions, lack of medical access, and prolonged incarceration without legal recourse and in violation of their due process rights.

The reports also highlighted sexual violence against Oromo women, often tied to perceived affiliations with the Oromo Liberation Army or their families, albeit underreported. Lastly, torture, ill-treatment, and serious injuries inflicted on detainees or during conflict further emphasized the grave human rights violations ongoing in Oromia.

In light of these circumstances, it is evident that decisive action is imperative from all involved parties, including the Ethiopian government and the global community, to safeguard the rights of Oromo civilians throughout Ethiopia. Specifically, OLLAA recommends the implementation of the following measures:



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT:

- Call for an immediate cessation of hostilities between the Ethiopian government forces, Fanno militia group and OLA.
- Re-enter into peace negotiations with OLA and prioritize the end of violence in the region and participation in a comprehensive political dialogue.
- Promptly and impartially investigate allegations of human rights abuses committed by all parties and prosecute those individuals found responsible for human rights violations.
- Release all Oromo political prisoners and any other person arbitrarily arrested and detained without due process; call for an end to torture and the ill treatment of detainees.
- Address sexual and gender-based violence in Oromia by establishing a safe mechanism for survivors to report abuse and ensuring perpetrators are held responsible for crimes.
- Allow for the establishment of an independent, transitional justice mechanism that is victim-centered, transparent and credible.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:

- Publicly condemn these and other violations of human rights perpetrated against the Oromo people and call for an immediate cessation of hostilities.
- Encourage the Ethiopian government to re-enter into negotiations for a ceasefire agreement with the OLA and to prioritize an end to violence in the region.
- Pressure the Ethiopian government to fulfill its duty to protect and promote the human rights of the Oromo people and to launch further independent investigations into allegations of human rights abuses.
- Call for the establishment of an independent, transitional justice mechanism that develops an inclusive dialogue process that is victim-centered, transparent and credible.

CONCLUSION

The persistent and egregious human rights violations against the Oromo people in Oromia throughout 2023 underscore an urgent need for decisive action and global attention. The documented reports by the Oromo Legacy Leadership & Advocacy Association (OLLAA) paint a grim picture of widespread atrocities, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual violence, and denial of basic rights to the Oromo civilians.

The gravity and scale of these violations, perpetrated by both state and non-state actors, demonstrate a systemic failure to protect and uphold the fundamental rights and dignity of the Oromo community. Despite international obligations and legal frameworks mandating the safeguarding of human rights, the situation in Oromia continues to deteriorate, with impunity exacerbating the suffering of innocent civilians.

It is imperative that the Ethiopian government takes immediate and meaningful steps to investigate these reported abuses, holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring justice for the victims. Moreover, the international community must exert significant pressure on Ethiopia to fulfill its obligations under international human rights laws and undertake independent investigations into these documented violations.

The findings outlined in OLLAA's reports serve as a distressing reminder of the ongoing plight faced by the Oromo people. Addressing these grave human rights concerns demands not only swift action but also sustained engagement from global entities to bring an end to the cycle of violence, promote accountability, and restore dignity and justice for the Oromo community in Oromia.

