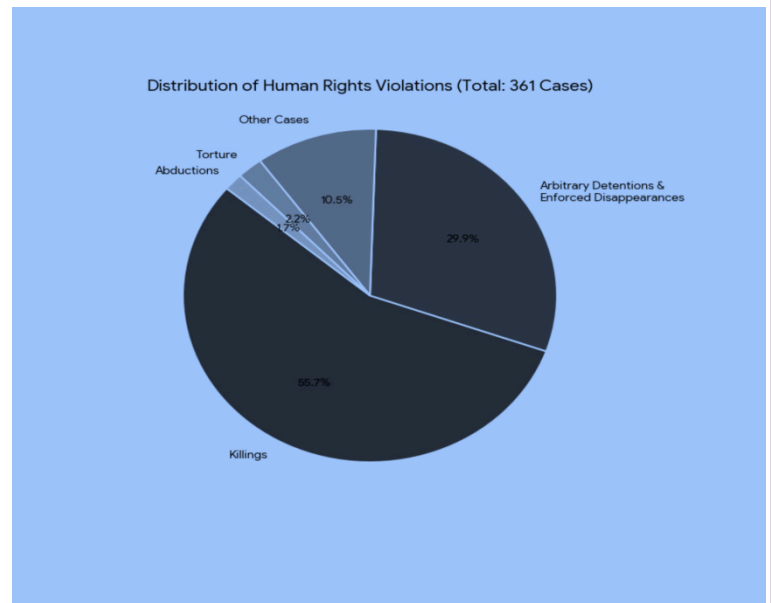




Violence and Impunity: Civilian Suffering in Oromia, Ethiopia (2025)



Sub-Regional distribution of human rights violation

in the Region

Region	Victims	Percentage (Approx.)
West Oromia	102	28.30%
South East Oromia	84	23.30%
Central Oromia	80	22.20%
South Oromia	61	16.90%
East Oromia	34	9.40%
Total	361	100%

Oromo Legacy, Leadership and Advocacy Association

Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association (OLLAA) is a nonprofit and nonpolitical organization that seeks to advocate for human rights, peace, and development by collaborating globally with like-minded entities. As an umbrella organization, we collaborate with dozens of Oromo communities worldwide and other advocacy organizations representing various ethnic groups across Ethiopia. In the past, OLLAA has worked with members of the U.S. Congress to support the adoption of resolutions related to the human rights situation in Ethiopia, offering expert analysis to numerous international media outlets and key decision-makers. We have also filed cases and provided reports to the U.N. International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues.

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ACRONYMS

CAT – Convention Against Torture

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

ENDF – Ethiopian National Defense Force

FDRE – Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IHL – International Humanitarian Law

IHRL – International Human Rights Laws

Kampala Convention – African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa

OCHA – UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OLF-OLA – Oromo Liberation Front - Oromo Liberation Army

OSINT – Open-Source Intelligence

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Executive Summary

Since 2018, the Oromia region of Ethiopia has been affected by open warfare and protracted armed conflict involving Ethiopian federal and regional government security forces, the Oromo Liberation Army–Oromo Liberation Front (OLA-OLF) and other armed actors, including Fanno militias and Somali Regional State security forces seeking to expand territories and targeting civilians for their ethnicity. In 2025, this conflict continued to be marked by targeted, widespread and systematic human rights violations, with civilians bearing the primary burden of violence amid a deteriorating rule-of-law environment.

Considering the severity of civilian killings, arbitrary detentions, displacement, torture, and enforced disappearances—along with the premeditated and deliberate actions taken by actors in the region to achieve their political objectives—the Oromo Legacy, Leadership and Advocacy Association (OLLAA) believes that the human rights violations in Oromia constitute a crime against humanity.

This report documents human rights violations committed against civilians across Oromia between January and December 2025. Drawing on interviews with victims and their families, field-based documentation, and corroborated open-source information, OLLAA documented 361 human rights violations, of which 322 incidents (approximately 90%) were verified using OLLAA’s documentation methodology. Due to access restrictions, insecurity, and fear of retaliation, these figures likely underrepresent the true scale of violations.

Key Findings

The 361 documented violations reflect widespread and systematic harm to civilians across all zones:

- 201 extrajudicial killings
- 108 cases of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance
- 8 cases of torture
- 6 cases of abduction
- 38 other violations, including physical injury and property destruction

Regional Breakdown of the Cases

- **Central Oromia** (four zones of Shewa, including Shaggar City): OLLAA documented 80 human rights violations in this area, involving 73 male and 7 female victims, of which 63 cases were fully verified.
- **West Oromia** (four Wallagga zones, Jimma, and Ilu Abba Bora): A total of 102 violations were recorded, affecting 86 males and 16 females; 81 cases were verified, while 21 could not be independently verified.
- **East Oromia** (two zones of Hararghe, Dire Dawa City, and Harari Regional State): OLLAA documented 34 verified victims of human rights violations, including 30 males and 4 females.
- **South-East Oromia** (Arsi East, Arsi West, and Bale): These areas accounted for 84 documented violations, all involving male victims.
- **South Oromia** (two zones of Borana and Guji): OLLAA recorded 61 victims (56 males and 5 females) were verified.

Patterns of Responsibility

Analysis of documented killings indicates that responsibility is disproportionately concentrated among specific actors:

- Government security forces were responsible for 70% documented civilian killings, 100% cases of arbitrary detention, and over 100% cases of torture.
- The Fano group accounted for 15% of civilian killings, carried out on ethnic grounds and involving property destruction and forced displacement.
- Somali Regional State security forces and allied militias were implicated in 8% civilian killings and were responsible for 2% cases of physical injury.
- The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) was responsible for 9% killings and abductions for ransom.

Regional Impact

Violations were recorded across all parts of Oromia, with particularly high concentrations in Central, West, and South-East Oromia, where killings and arbitrary detention were most prevalent. In South Oromia, 61 human rights violations of different kinds were recorded indicating persistent patterns of abuse, particularly mass arbitrary detention.

Key Takeaway

The 2025 findings point to a severe and ongoing civilian protection crisis in Oromia, characterized by widespread killings, arbitrary detention, and entrenched impunity. Without independent monitoring, credible accountability mechanisms, and sustained national and international attention, civilians will continue to face grave human rights violations without protection or justice.

Background

The Oromia regional state of Ethiopia has been facing a prolonged armed conflict that is costing many lives, property, and freedoms. The region has been at the center of instability for decades, especially since 2015, when the Oromo protest that resulted in government reform in 2018 officially started¹. However, shortly after the new prime minister came to power and the opposition group, Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), returned from Asmara, both sides accused each other of failing to keep the agreed agreement. While OLF remained in discussion with the government, a splinter group that called itself Oromo Liberation Front/Oromo Liberation Army (OLF-OLA) began an armed struggle. By late 2019 and 2020, the government was targeting individuals for supporting what it later designated as a terrorist group, and parts of Oromia were placed under an unofficial state of emergency.

In May 2021, the Ethiopian Parliament officially designated OLA as a terrorist organization

¹Amnesty International, 'Ethiopia: After a year of protests, time to address grave human rights concerns', Press Release, 6 Nov 2016. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2016/11/ethiopia-after-a-year-of-protests-time-to-address-grave-human-rights-concerns/>

along with the Tigray Liberation Front (TPLF)². Since then, the human rights situation in Oromia has only worsened, especially following the killing of prominent singer Hachalu Hundessa³ and the arrest of prominent opposition party leaders. In the aftermath of Hachalu's killing, protests erupted across Oromia, and an official state of emergency⁴ was declared that led to the closure of political space. This further led to more people joining the armed struggle against the government, and the government further targeted anyone who appeared sympathetic to or in support of the armed struggle group. In the initial days after Hachalu was killed, hundreds were killed, thousands were arrested, and many protests were dispersed.

Other armed non-government militias, called Fanno, which mainly operate in the Amhara regional state and were supported by regional and federal government authorities, also began to enter Oromia region. They attacked civilians and looted property in the Horro Guduru, East Wallaga, and North Shewa zones of Oromia, which share borders with the neighboring Amhara regional state. They also targeted ethnic Oromo, especially in the Oromia Zone of Wollo. The group targets civilians and local government officials due to their ethnicity and has ambitions for territorial expansion.

Similarly, Somali Special Forces and local militias linked to the Somali regional government are responsible for killings, displacement of people, and looting or destruction of property. In 2018, the border conflict instigated by these forces displaced over a million people and killed thousands in the adjacent Hararge and Borena zones of Oromia and the Somali region⁵. While the situation was temporarily eased after the detention of the then Somali Regional President, whose charges were dropped by the government, the attacks resumed in 2025 and resulted in displacement and killings⁶.

Furthermore, in addition to numerous actors perpetrating violence against civilians in Oromia, Oromia remained in the shadow of international attention. Even as the world was pressuring for conflict to cease in the northern part of the country, the conflict in Oromia remained unabated and invisible, with no international or locally based human rights organizations documenting the human rights abuses. Even though Oromia is home to half of Ethiopia's population, there are no human rights organizations that have fully reported on the magnitude of the situation facing Oromia. OLLAA⁷, a U.S.-based organization, has remained one of the few organizations covering the situation in Oromia. This report attempts to document the human rights situation in the conflict in the Oromia region during 2025. Accordingly, the report reveals the invisible plight of civilians in a rarely covered region, with particular focus on extrajudicial killings, arbitrary

² Bloomberg, Ethiopia Declares Tigray, Oromia Groups Terrorist Organizations Bloomberg News 6 May 2021, available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-06/ethiopia-declares-tigray-romia-groups-terrorist-organizations>

³ Human Rights Watch, 'Ethiopia Cracks Down Following Popular Singer's Killing', 1 July 2020 available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/01/ethiopia-cracks-down-following-popular-singers-killing>.

⁴ US State Department Country Reports on Terrorism 2021: Ethiopia (2021) <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2021/ethiopia/>

⁵ OCHA and National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) joint report, 'Ethiopia: Conflict Displacement Situation Report' (23 January 2018) available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-conflict-displacement-situation-report-23-january-2018>

⁶ Addis Standard, 'Over 288,000 people reportedly displaced following renewed conflict along the Oromia-Somali region border – UNOCHA', News Report, 10 October 2025 <https://addisstandard.com/over-288000-people-reportedly-displaced-following-renewed-conflict-along-the-romia-somali-region-border-unocha/>

⁷ Previous human rights works of OLLAA can be accessible here: <https://ollaa.org/humans-of-romia/>

detentions, and property destruction in a conflict setting.

1. Ethiopian Human Rights Legal Frameworks

Ethiopia has ratified seven of the nine core international human rights treaties and is bound by their provisions. Among others, Ethiopia is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)⁸, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)⁹, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)¹⁰, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).¹¹ Ethiopia is also a party to key regional human rights instruments, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights¹² and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention).¹³

Under Article 9(4) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's (FDRE) Constitution, all international agreements ratified by the Ethiopian parliament constitute an integral part of the law of the country.¹⁴ The Constitution further recognizes and guarantees both individual and collective rights, including the rights of Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples. A substantial portion of the Constitution is devoted to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms¹⁵, as set out under Articles 13 to 44. Notably, however, Ethiopia has not ratified the optional protocols that enable individual complaint mechanisms under several of the abovementioned core treaties, and successive governments have been criticized for failing to fully implement international human rights standards in domestic law and practice.

⁸ UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16 December 1966, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 999, p. 171

⁹ UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16 December 1966, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 993, p. 3, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>

¹⁰ UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 18 December 1979, A/RES/34/180, available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/12/cedaw-for-youth#:~:text=The%20Convention%20on%20the%20Elimination,women's%20and%20girls'%20equal%20rights>

¹¹ UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

¹² African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), entered into force Oct. 21, 1986, https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36390-treaty-0011_-_african_charter_on_human_and_peoples_rights_e.pdf

¹³ African Union, 'Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa', Adopted by the Special Summit of the Union, Kampala, 23 October 2009, 3014 U.N.T.S. Available at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36846-treaty-kampala_convention.pdf

¹⁴ Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Proclamation No. 1/1995, Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1st Year No. 1, Addis Ababa, 21 August 1995.

¹⁵ Id Article 13-44

Right to Life

The right to life is universally recognized as the foundation of all other human rights. It is protected under multiple international and regional human rights instruments. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) affirms that “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”¹⁶ Similarly, Article 6 of the ICCPR recognizes every human being’s inherent right to life and explicitly prohibits its arbitrary deprivation. State parties are obligated to respect, protect, and fulfill this right through legislative, administrative, and judicial measures.

Security of Person

At the national level, Article 15 of the FDRE Constitution guarantees the right to life and protects individuals from deprivation of life except as prescribed by law. Subordinate legislation, including provisions of the Ethiopian Criminal Code, further criminalizes murder and homicide. Accordingly, extrajudicial killings constitute serious violations of both international human rights law and Ethiopian domestic law.

Protection against Arbitrary Detention

Arbitrary arrest and detention are also prohibited under international human rights law. Article 9 of the UDHR and Article 9 of the ICCPR affirm the right to liberty and security of person and prohibit arbitrary deprivation of liberty.¹⁷ These provisions require that arrests and detentions be conducted in accordance with law and subject to judicial oversight.

Domestically, Articles 20 and 21 of the FDRE Constitution, together with provisions of the Ethiopian Criminal Procedure Code, guarantee due process rights for arrested and accused persons¹⁸, including the right to be informed of charges, to be brought promptly before a court, and to challenge the legality of detention. Arbitrary detention therefore constitutes a violation of both international and national legal standards.

Prohibition of Torture and Enforced Disappearance

Torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, and enforced disappearance are among the gravest human rights violations, particularly in the context of detention. International law absolutely prohibits such practices. Article 4 of the ICCPR identifies the prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment as non-derogable, meaning it cannot be suspended even during a state of emergency.¹⁹

Similarly, Article 18 of the FDRE Constitution guarantees protection against torture and inhumane treatment, and Article 93 affirms that this protection is non-derogable under any circumstances.²⁰ Any acts of torture enforced disappearance, or inhumane treatment therefore constitute serious violations of Ethiopia’s international and constitutional obligations.

¹⁶United Nations General Assembly (1948) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Resolution A/RES/217(III)A, Article 3, Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

¹⁷ Ibid, see also supra note 9

¹⁸ *Supranote 14*

¹⁹ *Supranote 9*

²⁰ *Supranote 15*

Protection of Civilians and Property

Ethiopia is also a party to international humanitarian law instruments, including the four Geneva Conventions²¹, which establish protections for civilians during armed conflict. These conventions prohibit attacks against civilians and civilian objects and impose binding obligations on both state and non-state armed actors.

In addition, the Kampala Convention obliges state parties to prevent and criminalize arbitrary displacement and to protect the rights and property of internally displaced persons. Attacks targeting civilians, civilian objects, or resulting in arbitrary displacement therefore violate international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and regional legal commitments binding on Ethiopia.

2. Methodology

This report employed a qualitative human rights documentation methodology consistent with internationally recognized standards. Data were drawn from both primary and secondary sources to document abuses committed against civilians in the Oromia Region.

Data collection covered the period from January to December 2025 and focused on incidents occurring across multiple zones of Oromia. During this period, OLLAA documented more than 361 civilian victims of serious human rights violations. The documentation emphasizes extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention (including enforced disappearances), torture and other forms of inhumane treatment, as well as violations affecting civilian property, including destruction and looting.

Five trained human rights monitors were recruited for this investigation and received training in human rights monitoring and documentation, including ethical standards, informed consent, trauma-sensitive interviewing, confidentiality, and physical and digital security.

Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with victims, family members, and eyewitnesses. Interviews were conducted in Afaan Oromo, either in person at secure locations or remotely using encrypted communication tools, depending on security conditions and the safety of interviewees.

Open-source intelligence (OSINT) was also used to corroborate testimony. Researchers systematically reviewed social media content, local and international media reporting and publications by other human rights and humanitarian organizations. Information was cross-checked across multiple independent sources wherever possible. Where cross-checking was not possible, the data were excluded from this report but retained for future verification.

Scope

The report covers the Oromia and Harari Regions of Ethiopia and Dire Dawa city over the period from January 2025 to December 2025.

²¹ <https://www.loc.gov/item/2013437298/>

Limitations

Documentation efforts were significantly constrained by restricted access, ongoing insecurity, and the limited presence of independent human rights organizations in Oromia. Many victims and witnesses were reluctant to provide testimony due to fear of surveillance, arrest, lack of trust, or retaliation by parties to the conflict.

In some cases, identifying information or incident details could not be fully verified, and access to official records was extremely limited. As a result, the findings presented in this report likely represent a gross underestimation of the true scale and scope of violations committed against civilians in Oromia during the reporting period.

3. Findings

3.1. Extrajudicial Killings

Based on data collected across Oromia in 2025, OLLAA documented widespread and deliberate killings of civilians by all parties involved in the conflict. These killings were not incidental consequences of hostilities, but formed part of recurring patterns of abuse linked to counter-insurgency operations, territorial control, forced compliance, and retaliation against perceived political, social, or ethnic affiliation.

3.1.1. Killings by Government Security Forces

Government security forces were responsible for the largest number of civilian killings documented during the reporting period. In 2025 alone, OLLAA documented at least 201 civilian killings out of which up to 140 attributed to Ethiopian federal and regional government forces, including the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), federal and regional police, and allied militias. In the majority of cases, killings were justified by allegations that victims supported or sympathized with the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), often without evidence, arrest warrants, or any form of judicial process.

These killings followed consistent operational patterns. Many occurred during security operations such as nighttime home raids, village sweeps, and targeted arrests, while others took place in public spaces or agricultural fields. Civilians were frequently attacked while carrying out daily livelihood activities, indicating that victims posed no immediate security threat at the time they were killed.

On 8 August 2025, Suye Qaxala, a 37-year-old woman who was nine months pregnant, was shot and killed by regional security forces while working on her farmland in Tarcaa, Sabbaa Boruu Woreda, Guji Zone. Authorities, firstly, were accusing her of having a link with OLA, later after her death, they alleged that she was killed in crossfire during fighting. These are common justification the government security forces use to kill civilians. No arrest warrant, investigation outcome, or disciplinary action was made public. Instead, Addis Standard reported that the victim's house was burned to ash after her killing in September 2025 and members of her family were detained and killed.²²

²² <https://addisstandard.com/news-relative-of-nine-month-pregnant-woman-killed-in-guji-zone-reportedly-detained/>

Similarly, on 22 July 2025, security forces raided a residence in Waltaha Gaba Kebele, Deder Woreda, East Hararghe Zone, killing Seeyfuddiin Shamshaddiin. During the same operation, his wife, Sa'ada, was severely beaten. OLLAA found no evidence that judicial proceedings were initiated in connection with this killing.

OLLAA also documented killings linked to religious identity and social non-compliance. On 8 October 2025, government security forces summarily executed six civilians in Dachi Kebele, Sadan Sodo Woreda, Southwest Shewa Zone, while they were practicing Waaqeffannaa, an indigenous Oromo religion. Witness accounts indicate that the victims were unarmed and engaged in religious observance at the time of their deaths. Members of this religious community have been repeatedly targeted, suggesting a broader pattern of repression under successive Ethiopian regimes.

In addition, OLLAA and other media documented cases in which civilians were killed for refusing forced recruitment into government-affiliated local militias, indicating the growing normalization of coercive conscription practices in rural Oromia²³.

Documented killings in 2025 align with patterns reported in previous years. OLLAA and other human rights organizations have documented cases such as the execution of Karrayyu Abba Gadas (community leaders),²⁴ the public execution of 17-year-old Amanuel Wondemu,²⁵ and the assassination of opposition political leader Battee Urgessa.²⁶ Indiscriminate airstrikes, including drone attacks conducted in civilian areas, have also resulted in civilian deaths.²⁷

Multiple media outlets and human rights investigations have reported on the existence of a secretive security structure known as Koree Nagenya, allegedly involved in extrajudicial killings, kidnappings, and unlawful detention in Oromia. While OLLAA has not been able to access official documentation or interview individuals associated with this structure, OLLAA documented numerous incidents linked to Koree Nagenya well before the publication of a Reuters investigative report following three years of investigation.²⁸ When considered alongside recurring killing patterns, these reports raise serious concerns that some violations may be coordinated and systematic, rather than isolated acts by individual perpetrators.

²³Oromia residents report widespread forced conscription, allege detentions, 'extortion' by gov't forces Nov 2024 <https://addisstandard.com/oromia-residents-report-widespread-forced-conscription-allege-detentions-extortion-by-govt-forces/>

²⁴OLLAA, 'Karayu Massacre' OLLAA Press Release 17 May 2023 available at: <https://ollaa.org/wp-content/uploads/04-17-23-Press-Release-UN-Experts-Write-to-Ethiopia-on-Karayu-Massacre.docx-1.pdf>

²⁵ https://ollaa.org/wp-content/uploads/OLLAA_press-release_5_19_2021.pdf

²⁶ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/06/ethiopia-free-brother-slain-opposition-politician>

²⁷<https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/least-20-civilians-killed-and-dozens-injured-air-strike-oromia-09-nov>

²⁸ Giulia Paravicini, 'In Ethiopia a secret Committee orders killings to crush rebels' Reuters' Investigation Report Feb 23, 2024 <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/ethiopia-violence-committee/>

3.1.2. Killings by Fanno Militias

In 2025, OLLAA documented the killing of at least 29 civilians by Fanno militias, primarily in western and central Oromia. These attacks frequently targeted civilians based on ethnicity and were accompanied by widespread destruction of civilian property.

In Horro Guduru Wallaga and East Wallaga Zones, Fanno militias killed more than 21 civilians, burned homes, and looted livestock, triggering large-scale displacement. In Southwest Shewa Zone, on 19 October 2025, Fanno militias executed eight residents in Hallo Dikii Kebele, Nonno Woreda.

3.1.3. Killings by Somali Regional State Forces

OLLAA also documented repeated attacks by Somali Regional State Special Forces and affiliated militias in eastern Oromia. These attacks resulted in civilian deaths, mass displacement, and the destruction of homes and livelihoods.

Between August and September 2025, OLLAA recorded at least 15 civilian deaths during attacks in Cinaksan, Goro Gutu, Bordode, and Sayyo Woredas. Other eight civilians were wounded by these forces. Independent reporting by the Oromo Support Group documented 238 civilian deaths in attacks involving Somali Regional State forces and federal security actors.²⁹ OCHA has also reported the displacement of approximately 288,000 people due to renewed conflict along the Oromia–Somali border in 2025.³⁰

3.1.4. Killings by the Oromo Liberation Army

OLLAA's findings also indicate that the OLA committed deliberate killings of civilians, primarily targeting individuals accused of cooperating with government security forces or providing information to authorities. OLLAA documents killings of over 17 individuals. These killings frequently followed abductions and were carried out without any form of due process.

In December 2025, OLA members executed a 23 years old Dofte Dalu in Badi Qallu Kebele, Lemu Bilbilo Woreda, Arsi Zone, after accusing him of spying. On 27 November 2025, Babo Dadhi 40 years old, and Sisay Habatamu 33 years old, were killed by OLA fighters in Mallima Bari Kebele, Boora Woreda, East Shewa Zone under similar accusations.

OLLAA also documented cases of abduction for ransom. In Bekele GIRRISA Kebele, Dugda Woreda, OLA members abducted Nega Haile and later killed him on 14 December 2025 after his family was unable to pay the demanded ransom.

²⁹Oromo Support Group(OSG) report March 3 2026, page 29-32 retrieved from <https://advocacy4oromia.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/osg-report-72-3-march-2026.pdf>

³⁰ Addis Standard, 'Over 288,000 people reportedly displaced following renewed conflict along the Oromia–Somali region border – UNOCHA', News Report, 10 October 2025 available at <https://addisstandard.com/over-288000-people-reportedly-displaced-following-renewed-conflict-along-the-oromia-somali-region-border-unocha/>

3.2. Other Documented Violations

3.2.1. Arbitrary Detention, Torture, and Enforced Disappearance

OLLAA documented widespread use of arbitrary detention in Oromia during 2025, with 116 recorded cases. Government security forces routinely detained individuals based on alleged links to the OLA, including accusations of providing food, logistical support, or having family members associated with the group. Affiliation with opposition political parties was also a recurring basis for detention.

Detainees were held in both officially recognized facilities and unofficial detention sites, including military bases and temporary camps. Victims reported torture, inhumane treatment, prolonged detention without charge, denial of legal counsel, and restricted contact with family members. In several cases, detainees or their families reported being asked to pay money in exchange for release. In two cases, security force members detained individuals and demanded one hundred thousand birr for their release in Shambu town of Horro Guduru Wallaga Zone.

OLLAA documented eight cases involving torture or inhumane treatment and three cases of enforced disappearance in which families were unable to determine the whereabouts of detained relatives for extended periods. Furthermore, seven cases of abduction are recorded; four by members of OLA and three others by unknown.

3.2.2. Destruction of Property and Forced Displacement

OLLAA found that the destruction of civilian property was systematically used as a method of punishment and intimidation by all parties to the conflict. Government security forces, OLA fighters, Fanno militias, and Somali Regional State forces were all implicated in burning homes, destroying crops, and looting livestock and displacing people from their homes.

In 2025, widespread property destruction was documented across multiple zones, particularly in areas bordering the Somali Region. These findings were corroborated by UN reporting, which confirmed the looting of more than 5,700 livestock and other civilian property.

As a result of these practices, thousands of civilians were forcibly displaced, many repeatedly. Displaced families often fled to urban areas without access to shelter, livelihoods, or durable solutions, underscoring the protracted and unresolved nature of displacement in Oromia.

4. Conclusion

The findings documented in this report demonstrate a serious and ongoing human rights crisis in Oromia, marked by widespread violations against civilians and a near-total absence of accountability. The cases presented represent only a partial account of abuses, as the conditions under which documentation occurs severely limit the ability to capture the full scale and impact of violations across the region.

Human rights documentation in Oromia takes place in an environment of zero tolerance for independent monitoring and reporting. State authorities have consistently treated documentation efforts as a security threat rather than as legitimate human rights work. As a result, OLLAA's monitors have been forced to operate under constant risk of surveillance, arrest, or retaliation,

significantly constraining access to victims, restricting the flow of information, and limiting the verification of incidents.

This hostile environment is reinforced by systematic restrictions on access to the region for journalists, international organizations, and human rights institutions, including long-standing barriers that predate recent policy changes that further restricted access. By isolating Oromia from sustained external scrutiny, government security forces have committed and/or enabled serious abuses to continue largely out of public view while advancing narratives that minimize or deny violations. The absence of oversight has allowed state actors to operate with functional impunity, framing violence as isolated or externally driven rather than as part of broader patterns, while at the same time conveying to the Oromo population that no one cares about their suffering.

This report seeks to document a small fraction of the reality faced by Oromos under the current Ethiopian government and to counter enforced silence by presenting credible, corroborated evidence of abuse and amplifying the voices of affected civilians. In the absence of independent human rights organizations operating in Oromia, meaningful protection for documentation, unrestricted access for monitors, and sustained national and international attention, the conditions that allow violations to persist will remain unchanged. Civilians will continue to face harm without access to justice, accountability, or protection under the law—or worse, without even documentation that their suffering has occurred.

5. Recommendations

To the Government of Ethiopia

1. Immediately uphold international humanitarian law and international human rights law by ending all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and ensuring that all federal and regional security forces, as well as affiliated militias, fully comply with these obligations.
2. Conduct prompt, independent, impartial, and transparent investigations into all alleged violations committed in Oromia; preserve evidence; and hold perpetrators accountable regardless of rank, position, or affiliation.
3. Establish an inclusive and credible accountability framework, including comprehensive security-sector reform and vetting mechanisms, to suspend or remove individuals credibly implicated in serious human rights violations or atrocity crimes from public office and security positions.
4. Establish independent, community-led regional Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, free from state influence, that provide safe spaces for victims and survivors and ensure meaningful representation of historically marginalized communities.
5. Enable and protect independent human rights monitoring and documentation, particularly in Oromia, by granting unhindered access to domestic and international human rights

organizations, journalists, and investigators, and by ending harassment, intimidation, or retaliation against monitors, victims, and witnesses.

To Regional and Non-State Armed Actors

1. Call on Fanno militias to immediately halt all attacks against civilians in Oromia, including ethnically targeted violence, killings, forced displacement, and the destruction or looting of civilian property.
2. Call on the Somali Regional Government and its security forces to end cross-border attacks into Oromia, prevent violations by affiliated militias, investigate alleged abuses, and ensure accountability for killings, displacement, and property destruction.
3. Call on the Oromo Liberation Army to immediately cease all attacks against civilians, including executions, abductions, and ransom-related killings, and to comply fully with applicable obligations under international humanitarian law.

To All Parties and the International Community

1. Urge all parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire, engage in good-faith, inclusive political dialogue, respect IHL and IHRL during hostilities, release unlawfully detained civilians, and support safe and durable solutions for internally displaced persons.
2. Call on the international community to exert sustained diplomatic pressure, support independent investigations and accountability efforts – including via the UN Human Rights Council, – and ensure continued international attention to Oromia, particularly given the absence of independent human rights organizations operating freely in the region.

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