



## ETHNIC-BASED DEADLY CLASHES BETWEEN ETHIOPIAN MIGRANTS IN YEMEN

*Falls Church, Virginia (9/14/2023)* – On [September 11, Sharq Al-Awsat published an article](#) citing Arafat Jibril, the Oromo Human Rights Organization president in Yemen. According to Arafat, who also spoke to OLLAA, the following report is missing important context regarding what unfolded last week that led to the deadly tragedy.

Arafat affirmed that on Thursday, September 7, 2023, hundreds of Ethiopian refugees and migrants gathered before the International Organization for Migration (IOM) office demanding to be returned to Ethiopia. IOM had recently restarted repatriating migrants after an extended period due to various reasons, including funding and security concerns. In the past, OLLAA had met numerous times with IOM Yemen staff on issues pertaining to Oromo migrants seeking to return to Ethiopia. OLLAA was aware that the Ethiopian government had in the past refused to return Oromo migrants, citing security concerns. This has been the case since 2020.

In 2021, [OLLAA](#) reported on what became known as the Yemen Massacre or [migrants bombing, in which over 500 migrants were killed](#). Among those denied return to Ethiopia included the survivors of this horrific bombing incident. OLLAA was also aware of many desperate migrants who made the journey on foot in order to return to Ethiopia.

In the latest tragedy that consumed innocent lives and saw unfolding violence between the most vulnerable groups (migrants and refugees in foreign lands), staffers from IOM handed tickets mainly to Oromo migrants, including those on the waiting list. While OLLAA has not yet verified the exact conversation between IOM and Ethiopian migrants, Arafat said migrants were told that due to conflict in the Amhara and instability in the Tigray region, the Ethiopian government had requested not to return migrants from the two regions, citing security concerns.

OLLAA believes proper context is important when discussing matters involving the Oromo community to prevent the targeting of Oromo individuals and to curb misinformation. OLLAA reminds the world that many Amhara activists worked with the current Ethiopian government to commit acts of [ethnic cleansing](#) in Tigray, Oromia, Gumuz, and other areas. In the diaspora, the Amhara protested against and [stabbed Oromo youth during the 2020 Oromo protests in Washington, DC](#). The hate speech and dehumanizing of Oromo by certain Amhara groups has been unrelenting since the current prime minister came to power. For over five years, certain Amhara elites who worked in tandem with the current regime sought to spread hate against the Oromo, including by using religion as a shield.

For years, Amhara individuals within the Oromia region have used the [Orthodox churches as a haven to attack Oromo civilians and to](#) stockpile weapons. Earlier this year, when [26 bishops started to form the Nation and Nationality Synod](#), the Ethiopian Orthodox leaders and Amhara elites accused Oromo Orthodox leaders and the Oromo people at [large of waging a religious war](#).

[In Ethiopia](#), hundreds of Oromo civilians have been killed [since 2019](#) by Amhara Fano. [Amhara Fano](#) has been observed committing heinous crimes, including burning [Oromo alive](#) whom they accuse of

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supporting the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). Sadly, the world has failed to condemn or even acknowledge Fano's brutality and the Ethiopian government has failed to label Fano accordingly. More disappointing is that Amhara Fano, who stood shoulder to shoulder with the current government, is now trying to blame Oromo victims and label this the government they enabled as an Oromo government.

In this incident, according to Arafat, many of the Amharas who joined the protests in front of IOM on September 7 came armed with knives. The deadly incident started when an Amhara individual tore the return tickets handed to Oromo migrants. A security guard tried to step in, but Amhara individuals attacked him. The security agent fired two shots, killing one Amhara who attempted to stab him.

OLLAA condemns all violence against civilians and urges the Yemeni government and security forces to be vigilant by differentiating between those inciting violence and their victims. Yemen's government must protect all migrants and refugees on its soil and should follow international humanitarian law when handling migrants. The international community should be mindful of the well-organized, anti-Oromo, and hateful activists and groups using this incident to instigate further hatred against the Oromo people in different parts of the world.

OLLAA calls on Ethiopian migrants and refugees to refrain from violent attacks against one another. It is important to remember that everyone is in a foreign land searching for safety or betterment. We also urge the Ethiopian government to fulfill its international duties to allow and facilitate the return of migrants.

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