



OLLAA's TAKE ON 2ND ICHREE REPORT

Falls Church, Virginia (9/19/2023) -- On September 18, 2023, the U.N. International Commission of Human Rights Experts in Ethiopia (ICHREE) released its [second report](#) outlining its investigations and findings into “the grave and systemic violations of international law and crimes committed in Tigray, Afar, Amhara, and Oromia regions”. As previously [reported](#) by OLLAA, the first ICHREE report from September 2021 highlighted mainly the human rights violations in Northern Ethiopia without much focus on the larger south or Oromia in particular. The ICHREE report stated the need for further resources and time to investigate human rights violations in other regions, including Oromia.

OLLAA is pleased to find that ICHREE was able to conduct investigations into the Oromia region during this report. In constant with OLLAA findings and report, the Commission's investigation revealed several significant incidents of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention and, torture and mistreatment and drone attacks against civilians in the Oromia region.

One such incident involved the killings and detention of Karrayyu community leaders by government security forces in Fentalle District, East Shewa Zone, on [December 1, 2021](#). According to the report, “security forces detained 39 men, including the senior leadership of the Karrayyu community, who were participating in a Waaq Kadhaa prayer ceremony, summarily executing 14 and holding 23 others in a military detention camp for over one month.”

Another incident involved the public execution of a 17-year-old boy by government forces in Dembi Dollo, Kellem Wollega Zone, [on May 11, 2021](#), based on allegations of being a member of an armed group. They noted that despite public outrage, no one has been held accountable for these incidents. They also found that Oromos in Kellem Wollega and West Wollega also reported killings of family members accused of affiliation with armed groups without consequences.

The Commission also uncovered a pattern of arrests and detentions of Oromo civilians, especially men, accused of OLA links. They found that family members of suspected OLA fighters, including women who experienced sexual violence, were also targeted. According to the report, “detentions documented between November 2020 and February 2023 were perpetrated primarily by the federal or regional police, Oromia Special Forces and at times the ENDF and were accompanied by torture and ill-treatment.”

The report also highlighted drone strikes by the Ethiopian Air Force in Western Oromia in October and November of 2022 resulting in civilian casualties. The Commission noted that access to information remains exceedingly restricted in Western Oromia and was “able to verify



three separate incidents during which civilians were killed or injured and recommended further investigation.”

Furthermore, in terms of the command posts set up in Western and Southern Oromia since 2019 composed of local militia, Oromia Special Forces, ENDF, Federal police and Oromia regional police, the Commission found the continued use of command posts even after it was said to be officially lifted. The report notes, “witnesses from Western Oromia described ongoing arbitrary restrictions on freedom of movement, including curfews, denial of access to healthcare, shootings of unarmed residents and arbitrary arrest and detention. Other violations under command post authority include extrajudicial killings, rape and the destruction of civilian property.”

OLLAA is also pleased that the Commission stated that violations of international human rights law were committed in the Oromia region. The report states, “there are reasonable grounds to believe that the ENDF and Oromia regional authorities committed serious violations of human rights, in particular of the right to life; prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, including rape and other forms of sexual violence; and arbitrary arrest and detention.”

The report also highlighted the lack of transparency and flawed transitional justice measures put in place by the Ethiopian government. The report found that the draft “Ethiopia Policy Options for Transitional Justice” released in January 2023 remains inadequate and non-reflective of regional and international standards.

OLLAA, therefore, calls for the renewal of the Commission’s mandate to further investigate human rights violations in the whole country, especially in the Oromia region where little data are available, and victims are extremely fearful to come forward to share their experiences. OLLAA believes special accommodations should be made for restricted areas where small data exist and to ensure accountability and transitional justice for victims. We also urge the international community to pressure the Ethiopian government to negotiate a settlement with all warring parties.

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