

**The Endangered Enclave: Systematic Ethnic  
Cleansing of Wollo Oromo in Amhara Regional State  
of Ethiopia**

**Oromo Legacy, Leadership and Advocacy Association  
(OLLAA)**

**June, 22 2023**



## **Acronyms**

OLA	Oromo Liberation Army
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
PP	Prosperity Party
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
CAT	UN The Convention Against Torture
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
OLLAA	Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association
CEDAW Women	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women

## **1. Executive Summary**

The Oromo are Ethiopia's most populous ethnic group. Their homeland is the Oromia region of the country, but they also occupy the Wollo zone within the Amhara region and others. The Amhara are the second-largest ethnic group in the country, and certain extremist groups wish to drive Oromos from Wollo and resettle the area with Amharas. To this end, they have orchestrated a suspected ethnic cleansing campaign, sometimes with the assistance of the federal government.

Though the violence has persisted for years, this report focuses on the time period of 2021-2023. Within that short time period, Wollo Oromos have suffered immensely from repeated human rights violations. The extremist group known as Amhara Special Forces, along with leaders of the Fanno militia and some Amhara elites, has called for the removal of Oromos from Wollo zone. They have executed a campaign of violent attacks, disappearances, abductions, and extrajudicial killings in order to drive people from their homes and create a culture of fear.

Key informants have told OLLAA that Oromos are being specifically targeted. Particularly chilling examples have included abductions and public executions in the town of Shewa Robit, through which the main road to the capital passes. Armed guards have taken people from buses or even ambulances after their Oromo identity is confirmed via inspection of their identification documents. The federal government has also joined the attacks on Wollo zone, including a brutal airstrike that killed 37 civilians and injured 42. The government claims that its attacks are targeting Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) fighters, and that victims of the attacks are OLA supporters. However, OLA has repeatedly denied having fighters in the region and the government has not furnished any evidence to bolster their accusation.

The widespread violence and destruction of homes and livelihoods have led to the displacement of over 100,000 people in Wollo zone. Victims of these atrocities have been left stranded, with no justice and no assistance for rebuilding their lives. OLLAA calls on the Ethiopian government to fulfill its obligations under international human rights law, and on the international community to pay attention to the atrocities being committed in Wollo. This must be accompanied by a pressure campaign on the government to stop the violence.

## **2. Background and Introduction**

The Wollo is the Oromo special zone located in Amhara region and governed under Amhara Regional State. The Amhara region uses the Amharic language as its official language, which is the federal government's official language too. What makes Wollo zone special is the fact that it has used Afaan Oromo as its official language since 1994. This is because the significant majority of its people are Oromos. The zone has about seven woredas called Artuma Fursi, Bati, Bati Town, Dewa Cheffa, Dewa Harewa, Jile Dhumuga, and Kemisie towns, all surrounded by Amhara region.

From the time of the Wollo zone's establishment, it has been the wish of Amhara extremists groups to dismantle the zone, denying the Wollo community their right to self-governance, which includes the right to teach their children in Afaan Oromo, their mother tongue. The last five years have become the most difficult time for the Oromo living in the entire zone. At least seven rounds of documented military attacks were conducted against the Wollo community by Amhara region special forces and Fanno militias in the past five years.

The federal government is either unable or unwilling to fulfill its obligation under international law to protect Wollo civilians against mass atrocities. On the other hand, the Amhara region administration either collaborates with or is in support of Fanno radical groups that are known to target civilians or are unwilling or unable to stop the perpetrators. The persistent attacks against civilians indicate a pattern of ethnic cleansing with an often publicly stated mission to wipe out Oromo from the Amhara region. In other words, Wollo Oromos are collateral damage in the ongoing conflict between the Oromo and Amhara Prosperity Party (PP) and beyond due to their ethnic identity.

This report aims to investigate the types and extent of human rights violations the Wollo people have experienced since 2021, specifically the suffering of the Wollo community as a result of attacks by the Amhara Special Forces and Fanno militias. Though there were multiple attacks before March 2021, this report is only limited to the situation after March 2021. This report is structured under six sections. The first section deals with the methodology the investigation employed. Under section two, the relevant international instruments to which Ethiopia is signatory are highlighted.

The killing of civilians, destruction of property and forced displacement, and finally the abduction and enforced disappearance that are underway in Wollo special zone are analyzed under sections three, four, and five. Lastly, section six puts forward recommendations for the key stakeholders.

### **3. Methodology**

The report used a qualitative investigative approach with data obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Interviews were conducted with three residents of Wollo zone who were getting medical treatment for their wounds in a hospital in Adama city. Another four residents whose families were victims and who were believed to understand the situation in the area were also interviewed. All seven of them were purposely selected. The first three informants were chosen since they are survivors of the attack. The other four were selected due to their closeness to the incidents in the area. Compilations of victim lists from residents and from local level government officials were also utilized. Further, secondary sources including reports of international organizations, media, and other sources were consulted. While the nature of human rights violations in the zone is very complex and multidimensional, only extrajudicial killings, property destruction, abduction, and displacement are included in this report. Mass detention and significant rape cases were also reported but not included in this report. We could not independently verify these cases at the time this report was compiled. Due to the security concerns and difficulty of the situation in terms of accessibility, OLLAA was not able to interview more informants. The view of both the regional and federal government is also not included because of the risks such interviews would pose to data collectors. In terms of temporal coverage, although Wollo has been under attack for over five years, the scope of this report is limited to the period between March 2021 and May 2023. Moreover, OLLAA believes there are far greater atrocities committed by state and nonstate actors in the Oromia special zone of Wollo but due to security risk and the location of the region, we found it difficult to find more survivors to share stories and to visit some of the locations documented in the report physically.

### **4. Related International Legal Frameworks**

Ethiopia is party to many international instruments that guarantee the protection of human rights. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)<sup>1</sup> obliges state parties to ensure the protection of the right to life, liberty, the freedom of movement, and the right to property regardless of a person's background. This Covenant imposes the duty to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights. The Convention Against Torture (CAT),<sup>2</sup> to which Ethiopia is also party, guarantees the protection of persons from torture and inhumane and degrading treatment. Ethiopia is also party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)<sup>3</sup> that guarantees, among other things, the right to practice and develop one's own language and culture, health rights, the right to education, and an adequate standard of living. Additionally, Ethiopia is party to the Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)<sup>4</sup> and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>5</sup> that recognize the rights of women and children respectively. At the regional level, Ethiopia has ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. This charter recognizes all the three generations of human rights. Furthermore, Ethiopia ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, usually known as the Kampala Convention, in 2009.<sup>6</sup> State parties to international human rights conventions can only be excused from their obligations during a lawfully declared state of emergency, and even then only within the legally provided limitations. Other relevant international laws to which Ethiopia is party are the four Geneva Conventions that are applicable during armed conflict. In the Wollo case, Ethiopia has clearly violated numerous tenets of

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<sup>1</sup>UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 16 December 1966, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 999, p. 171, available

at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

<sup>2</sup>UN General Assembly, *Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, 10 December 1984, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1465, p. 85, available at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-against-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading>

<sup>3</sup>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>

<sup>4</sup>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>

<sup>5</sup> 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>

<sup>6</sup>African Union, *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa ("Kampala Convention")*, 23 October 2009, available at:

<https://au.int/en/treaties/african-union-convention-protection-and-assistance-internally-displaced-persons-africa>

these international instruments. The situation in Wollo shows not only the failure of the Ethiopian government to fulfill its international duties but also its violation of its own national laws, including the constitution. The following section details the nature and extent of human rights violations that took place in Wollo as a result of multiple attacks against the Wollo community by Amhara regional special forces, Fanno militias, and federal government security forces.

### **1. Killings with an Intention of Ethnic Cleansing**

The members of the Amhara extremist armed group, Amhara Special Forces, and Amhara elites have been publicly stridently advocating for the cleansing of Wollo Oromos from the zone in order to resettle Amhara on the land.<sup>7</sup> To that effect, they have launched multiple military attacks against farmers residing there. This call for cleaning out of the Wollo community has been made repeatedly by the Fanno leaders and other Amhara elites. In response to a question about the targeting of Wollo residents by Amhara extremist forces, one informant answered that it is “due to our ethnicity, because we are Oromos.”<sup>8</sup> Another informant described the situation as an attempted ethnic cleansing.<sup>9</sup> The Amhara Special Forces have tried to dismantle the zone and clear out its Oromo residents in order to resettle Amharas in the area.<sup>10</sup>

Wollo communities were also attacked by federal government forces during the war in Northern Ethiopia. Since the war in Northern Ethiopia broke out in 2020, Wollo residents were characterized by both the federal government and Amhara forces as supporters and sympathizers of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). It is worth noting that during the war in Northern Ethiopia, OLA and TPLF created a military and intelligence alliance<sup>11</sup> against the government. As part of the war campaign against the TPLF, a large number of federal troops and Amhara Special Forces were deployed to Wollo zone, where they committed atrocious crimes.

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<sup>7</sup> Oromia Media Network report, April 12, 2023 available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1Q4CJbV\\_aU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1Q4CJbV_aU)

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Wondimu T, key informant, resident of Wollo, interviewed on 25 May 2023 Wollo, Ethiopia

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Ahmed A, Key informant, victim of the attack, interviewed on 07 May 2023, Adama, Ethiopia

<sup>10</sup> <https://t.me/etanahabte/2871>

<sup>11</sup> Aljazeera news 11 August 2021 available at:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/11/ethiopia-armed-group-says-it-has-alliance-with-tigray-forces>



Communities in Jiille Dhummuugaa Woreda, July 2022 (author unknown)

In 2021, according to some who spoke to different Oromo media, these forces went house to house, hunting for people they saw on video.<sup>12</sup> They killed many people, arrested hundreds, and destroyed the properties of those they could not find. During this time, two members of parliament offered a rare rebuke of the ruling party's and Amahara forces' treatment of Wollo, publicly pleading with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for federal government intervention. Ethiopian Members of Parliament Aminaat Indris and Mohammed Hassen said, "Wollo people are targeted because of their ethnicity and religion."<sup>13</sup> Such a rebuke was unheard of, especially publicly accusing members of the Amhara regional government.

In conjunction with the campaign against the TPLF, a significant massacre occurred in the Oromia Special Zone (Wollo) in the fall of 2021. For example, one video shows the execution of over 30 civilians after they were removed from a pickup truck.<sup>14</sup> This video, which was later verified by BBC Reality Check, reported the deaths of 38 men, all of whom were Oromos and appeared to be civilians.<sup>15</sup> They were forcefully taken from their homes, and mercilessly executed one by one after being taken from a truck by Amhara and federal government forces. Even though the federal and Amhara

<sup>12</sup> BBC Reality check Report 7 November 2022 available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/63515162>

<sup>13</sup> [Hussen Sayyid Walloo Dawwe | Facebook](#)

<sup>14</sup> Oromia Media network news report June 20 2022, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.facebook.com/OromiaMedia/videos/omn-ajjeechaa-walloo-fi-gaambeellaa-june-20-2022/965385104156484/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1686709809206384&usg=AOvVaw0Til9OzKkMDatjXm8uehq4>

<sup>15</sup> BBC Reality check Report 7 November 2022 available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/63515162>



regional governments tried to claim that the victims were members of what they call Ogeg-Shane (OLA)<sup>16</sup>, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) later confirmed the victims were civilians. According to one of the survivors, the massacre took place in December 2021 when the TPLF was pushed back after coming within 150 kilometers of the capital. The federal forces and regional security forces targeted civilians for what they called their support for Junta (when referring to TPLF) and Shane (when referring to OLA). Both OLA<sup>17</sup> and residents from the area have repeatedly denied any presence of armed OLA groups in the region. Two knowledgeable informants confirmed that no OLA forces have ever operated in the zone.<sup>18</sup>

Government claims of OLA activity in the area have gone unsubstantiated, and reports indicate that OLA operates largely in western Ethiopia. However, as part of their culture and due to constant attack from the Amhara and sometimes from Afar regions, farmers and most residents own armaments with which they protect themselves and their belongings from attack, one of the informants said.<sup>19</sup> Government statements appear to blame the arming of farmers on OLA, despite the fact that gun ownership is customary in the region for protection purposes.<sup>20</sup>

In the same year, in another attack, federal government air forces conducted indiscriminate strikes that killed over 37 and wounded over 42 civilians.<sup>21</sup> The federal government admitted the fact that it had conducted air strikes but denied the civilian casualties, claiming the government only targets armed groups, not civilians.<sup>22</sup> One of the informants said a survivor told him that 11 people were taken from prison and executed during the same operation.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, an informant who is among the families of the victims reported that over 700 civilians, including the well known

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<sup>16</sup> Addis standard analysis February 15 2022 available at: <https://addisstandard.com/analysis-massacre-in-plain-sight-behind-silent-killings-in-oromo-special-zone-amhara-region/>

<sup>17</sup> OLF-OLA press release January 27 2023 available at: <https://www.olf-olahq.org/post/ethnic-cleansing-underway-in-wollo-against-oromo-civilians>

<sup>18</sup> Wondwosen T, Key informant interview conducted on May 25 2023 and Ahimed A, key informant interview on conducted on May 07 2023 ( see 8 and 9 mentioned above)

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Ahmed A ( see 9 mentioned above)

<sup>20</sup> Reuters news report April 19 2021 available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/eighteen-killed-clashes-between-ethiopias-oromo-amhara-groups-2021-04-19/>

<sup>21</sup> Addis standard Analysis November 24 2021 available at: <https://addisstandard.com/analysis-civilians-in-oromo-special-zone-of-amhara-region-caught-in-crossfires-face-loom-ing-humanitarian-crisis/>

<sup>22</sup> (19) FDRE Government Communication Service-በኢ.ፌ.ዴ.ሪ የመንግስት ኮሙኒኬሽን አገልግሎት - Posts | Facebook

<sup>23</sup> Wondwosen T, key informant interview (see 8 mentioned above)

Oromo singer Sa'ad Awel, have been languishing in a prison center located in Kamise since 2021.<sup>24</sup> According to the source these civilians are still in prison as of the preparation of this report. Women, children, and men of older age are among the inmates. Conditions in prison are below the accepted standard, with over 90 people detained together in a very small room.



News

## Amid violence, Ethiopia declares state of emergency in Amhara

*The defence ministry says deadly armed violence witnessed in parts of the Oromia special zones.*



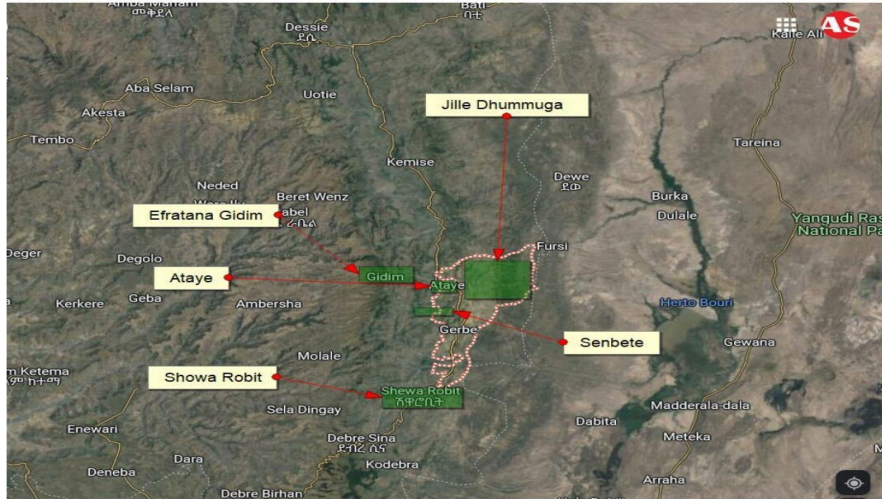
The declaration of emergency came a day after Ethiopia's military deployed troops to the North Shoa zone and Oromo special zone [File: Tiksa Negeri/Reuters]

19 Apr 2021

Some attacks have not involved federal security forces directly. For example, in March 2021, conflict erupted due to the killing of an Oromo individual in Ataye town North Shewa Zone of Amhara Region by members of Amhara Special Forces. This unprovoked ethnicity-based killing prompted some Ataye residents to take measures against the perpetrators. In retaliation, Amhara forces went on killing rampage, broadening the conflict to Kamise (Zonal town) and attacked any Oromos residing there. The Oromia branch of the Prosperity Party (PP, the ruling party) admitted that civilians, community leaders, and wounded people who had been on their way to get

<sup>24</sup> Halima M, Key informant interview conducted on May 20 2023, Wollo Ethiopia.

medical treatment were killed by Amhara regional forces.<sup>25</sup> In addition to the killings, the Oromia branch of the Prosperity Party confirmed significant destruction of property in the zone due to fires set by the assailants. The Amhara branch of the ruling party, however, denied these killings and blamed OLA.



*Map showing part of the locations where the latest violence is ongoing*

2023 violence outbreak in Special Oromia Zone (Wollo). Photo from Addis Standard

Further, in July 2022 over 14 civilians were killed and 27 wounded by the Amhara special forces and Fanno militias in an incident started on July 10th. Residents of the North Shewa zone crossed over to Jile Dhumuga district of Wollo zone and attempted to steal herds of cattle from local farmers.<sup>26</sup> According to one of the informants, the Amhara forces are always in search of reason and provocations to start an attack against the Wollo community. In this particular incident, houses were destroyed and many of the wounded died due to lack of medical care, which in turn is due to the fact that the Amhara forces deliberately closed roads to the capital. Moreover, January 2023 was one of the most tragic times for Wollo community as the Amhara special forces and Fanno jointly attacked the zone. OLLAA staff met the family of victims and survivors of this incident in Adama town while they were receiving medical treatment.

<sup>25</sup> BBC Amharic News report May 23 2021 available at: <https://www.bbc.com/amharic/news-56495523>

<sup>26</sup> OLLAA Press statement July 12 2022 available at: <https://ollaa.org/attack-against-civilians-reported-in-jile-dhumuga-district-wollo-oromia-special-zone/>

An informant (Ahimed T) who lost seven family members, including three of his children and his wife, during the January 2023 killing in Kara Lenca Kebele Jile Dhumaga district said the following:

“They took away everything I have, my family and my property. I had four children. Three of them, including the four-month-old son, were killed by Fanno and Amhara Special Forces. They wanted us to leave our home, they said we are Shane (OLA) but neither my wife nor my children were Shane/OLA.”<sup>27</sup>

The following is a list of family members of the informant who were killed or wounded during the attack. Among the victims were women and children.

- Alima Daga (woman of 65 years of age) Kara Lenca, Jile Dhumuga, 28 January 2023
- Amina Abdale (Ahimed’s wife), Kara Lenca, Jile Dhumuga, 28 January 2023
- Fatima Ahimed (12), Kara Lenca, Jile Dhumuga, 28 January 2023
- Halima Ahimed (5), Kara Lenca, Jile Dhumuga, 28 January 2023
- Hasan Ahimed (4 four months), Kara Lenca, Jile Dhumuga, 28 January 2023
- Aliyi Ahimed Hasan, Kara Lenca, Jile Dhumuga, 28 January 2023
- Mohamad Ahimed, Kara Lenca, Jile Dhumuga, 28 January 2023
- Kubuli Daga (a survivor), Kara Lenca, Jile Dhumuga, 28 January 2023

The last victim survived after being shot twice. Kubuli was the mother-in-law of the informant. She went to her daughter’s home to visit a day before the attack started. On January 28, 2023, when Amhara Special Forces along with Fanno attacked their home, Kubuli survived as a matter of chance and received medical treatments in Adama.<sup>28</sup> OLLAA staff saw her in Adama during the visit for interviews. However, at the time she was not willing to talk. This is often the case for many Oromo survivors. The government often targets family members or survivors who speak to the media or any human rights organization.

OLA released a 76-name list of the civilian victims who were killed in that same attack.<sup>29</sup> Reuters reported the killing of 18 members of Oromo ethnic groups at one

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<sup>27</sup> Ahimed T, Key informant interview conducted on May 07 2023, Adama Ethiopia

<sup>28</sup> Mohamed U, Key informant interview conducted on May 07 2023, Adama Ethiopia

<sup>29</sup> OLF- OLA report see ( 18 mentioned above)

<https://www.olf-olahq.org/post/ethnic-cleansing-underway-in-wollo-against-oromo-civilians>

location.<sup>30</sup> A document informally obtained from government officials confirms the deaths of 189 due to several attacks launched since 2022. According to the document, 29 people were from Artuma Fursi, 16 from Chafa Robit, 125 from Jile Dhumuga, and 19 from Sanbate town. The Amharic version of the document is annexed to this report. Another incident took place in April 2023, when Amhara special forces and Fanno militias attacked the Wollo community in protest of the federal government's plan to dismantle regional special forces and to include them in the National Defense Forces (ENDF). It was during this time that Fanno publicly mutilated a farmer by the name of Amme Aliyi. His mutilated body was taken by Fanno members to Shewa Robit to be displayed as a trophy.<sup>31</sup> As seen in a video from Oromia Media Network, several members of Fanno were chanting about how Fanno killed what they call Oneg-Shane (an offensive name given by the Ethiopian government to OLA).<sup>32</sup>

In general, the degree of violence in Wollo zone is highly concerning, and could lead to the extremist forces' ultimate goal of clearing the community from their land unless measures are taken. The current situation bears hallmarks of ethnic cleansing, including the use of violence to remove people of a certain ethnicity from an area. Specific actions by state and nonstate actors described in this report, including arbitrary arrest and detention, extrajudicial executions, and destruction of property, are among the practices recognized as components of ethnic cleansing.<sup>33</sup> While ethnic cleansing itself is not considered a crime under international law and lacks a single official definition, it is strongly associated with genocide and may include individual crimes against humanity.<sup>34</sup>

The severity of such acts can easily lead to serious conflict, even war. Indeed, if these atrocities were committed elsewhere in Oromia, they may well incite full-scale ethnic conflict or even civil war. However, Wollo zone occupies a unique position in Ethiopia. Because it is embedded within the Amhara region, perpetrators of human rights violations in Wollo zone are more often shielded from consequences, and these

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<sup>30</sup> Reuters news report( see 21 mentioned above)

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/eighteen-killed-clashes-between-ethiopias-oromo-amhara-groups-2021-04-19>.

<sup>31</sup>OLLAA Humans of Oromia report April 25 2023, available at: <https://ollaa.org/amme-aliyi-killed-in-wollo/>

<sup>32</sup> OMN news report available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1Q4CJbV\\_aU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1Q4CJbV_aU).

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/ethnic-cleansing.shtml>

<sup>34</sup><https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/whats-the-difference-between-genocide-and-ethnic-cleansing>;

<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/ethnic-cleansing.shtml>;

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/06/crimes-against-humanity-and-ethnic-cleansing-ethiopias-wester-n-tigray-zone>

violations are generally less visible to other Oromos and the international community. The Oromia region administration has failed to stop the atrocities or expressed interest in protecting the people of Wollo, which has left the zone's residents feeling neglected or forgotten and left without proper governance.

## **5. Displacement and Property Destruction**

As discussed elsewhere in this report, multiple attacks have been conducted against the Wollo community in an attempt to uproot them from their land or cleanse Oromos from Amhara region and replace them with Amhara people. It seems that forced displacement and property destruction are being used as the strategies for the same purpose.

According to the document OLLAA obtained from government officials, over 63,782 people were displaced from their homes in Jile Dhumuga district during the 21-26 January 2023 coordinated attack by Amahara Special Forces and Fanno militias. Among these, 7,652 were children under five years of age. The document listed 27,368 people from Chefa Robit district, 48,086 people from Artuma Fursi, and 30,450 from Sanbate town. In total, from these districts over 169,686 were displaced from their homes. Only a few of them have returned. Many houses were burned to the ground, and therefore, these internally displaced persons (IDPs) were left with nothing to return to. In addition, between April and May 2021 over 300 were killed and over 358,000 were displaced.<sup>3536</sup>

The informant from Jile Dhumuga confirmed the destruction of over 1,000 homes, as the whole Kebele (lowest administrative structure in Ethiopia) was destroyed. He said, "they burned down everything we have. I lost over 36 quantal of crops in my house. No aid is reaching, the whole Kebele is destroyed and those who survived are displaced, living some under trees, others under temporary shelters of their own."<sup>37</sup> Another informant said his house was burned down with all the crops and other properties.<sup>38</sup> He was wounded during the attack and getting medical treatment at

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<sup>35</sup> Addis Standard analysis April 19 2021, available at: [Analysis: Amid renewed violence and conflicting accounts army places Oromo Special. South Wollo & North Shewa zones of Amhara region under command post - Addis Standard](#)

<sup>36</sup> Addis Standard news available at: [News: At least 358,000 IDPs in North Shewa & Oromo Special Zones need urgent assistance: UN - Addis Standard](#)

<sup>37</sup> Ahimed T( see 27 mentioned above)

<sup>38</sup> Mohamed U ( See 28 mentioned above)

Adama when OLLAA staff interviewed him. Corroborating this claim, the document mentioned above identified the destruction of 2,254 houses and 7 mosques across the zone. Because the Ethiopian government is a party to the Kampala Convention, it bears special responsibilities toward IDPs. The Convention imposes three major duties on state parties, including the duty to prevent displacement of any kind, the provision of protection and assistance during displacement, and finally the obligation to seek durable solutions for internally displaced persons. However, according to our informants and other data sources, the Ethiopian government has failed to fulfill these duties it pledged to uphold.

### **6. Abduction and Killing; Shewa Robit or Bermuda Triangle?**

Shewa Robit is located between Kamise and Addis Ababa (the capital), and one must cross through it to reach the capital from Kamise. Recently, it has become the place where travelers with the Oromo name on their ID card are either abducted or publicly executed. One of the informants described the town as the Bermuda triangle, associating the town with the mysterious region of the Atlantic Ocean where many planes and ships are said to have gone missing.<sup>39</sup> On 23 January 2023, over 40 people, including teachers, civil servants, and pastors were abducted in Shewa Robit while on their way from Kamise/Wollo to Addis Ababa.<sup>40</sup> According to one of the informants and later confirmed by a document he sent to OLLAA staff, these victims started their journey by a TATA bus (underside number 8123).<sup>41</sup> An informant confirmed to OLLAA that teachers and civil servants were abducted.<sup>42</sup> They were traveling during the semester break to visit their families in Oromia. These teachers and civil servants were originally from different parts of Oromia and worked and lived in Wollo zone. According to one of the informants, the families of the victims went to Wollo and asked the relevant government body about the whereabouts of the victims. The matter was also reported to the Oromia Regional State Peace and Security Office. However, according to the informants, the office is doing nothing that the families of the victims are aware of. Some claim all of them were executed, while others claim they were not. As of the time of writing, no one knows their whereabouts. The families are

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<sup>39</sup> Wondsowen T (See 8 mentioned above)

<sup>40</sup> See the documented attached in annex 1

<sup>41</sup> Wondwosen T (See 8 mentioned above)

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

concerned about them. OMN reported on these victims on 13 April 2023.<sup>43</sup> Though the list reported by OMN totals 30 victims, one of the informants said there are over 40 and mentioned that one of them was his friend.<sup>44</sup> A list of the names of these victims, which was compiled by an informant, is attached as an annex to this report. Another 17 people were abducted from a bus and killed in April 2023. Out of the 17 abducted in Debra Sina from the bus while traveling to the capital, only one, who is aged 16, managed to escape and reach his family.<sup>45</sup> The other 16 are missing and their families do not know their whereabouts.

Another gruesome incident occurred in March 2021 during which at least eight people were killed. This violence took place following the invasion of Amhara Special forces, where soldiers unlawfully campaigned inside the special zone of Wollo. An angry mob of radical Amhara (Fanno) surrounded an ambulance, dragged its injured patients into the street and murdered them while they were en route to Addis Ababa for treatment simply because of their Oromo ethnicity. The mob also murdered the medical staff and ambulance driver assisting the victims. This incident is known as the Shewa Robit massacre<sup>46</sup>. As mentioned above, this incident was confirmed by the Oromia branch of the ruling party. Attacks on ambulances are particularly concerning in light of the fact that Wollo zone has no specialized hospitals. In most cases, its residents must travel through the Amhara territory to receive needed medical care in the Oromia region. Additionally, there have been troubling reports of Oromo Wollo patients who do arrive at the hospital being denied access to care by Fanno militia members in Amhara region.<sup>47</sup> On December 6, 2021, at least 11 travelers were killed by Amahara special forces, among whom were two teachers whose names were confirmed by the informant in Shewa Robit.

Over the years, the road from Kamise to Addis Ababa has become extremely dangerous for anyone who is listed as Oromo on their identification documents. In most cases, Oromo who live in Wollo zone are the only ones who travel this road. In recent times, they are obliged to use a different and longer route to Adama (along this

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<sup>43</sup> Oromia Media Networks, April 12 2023 available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwSrOhVgEJU>

<sup>44</sup> Wondwosen (See 8 mentioned above)

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Reuters news report (see 21 mentioned above) OLLAA  
<https://ollaa.org/ollaa-demands-investigation-into-shawa-robit-massacre-and-justice-for-victims-families/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://twitter.com/RArarssa/status/1374027615779004419?s=20>



same route) to get medical treatments. The informants said the closure of the road to the capital is costing lives and economically affecting the community. The victims of the 28 January 2023 attack, interviewed in Adama while being treated for their wounds, said transportation alone from Sambate town to Adama costs them over 30,000 Ethiopian birr. Some of the victims said their properties and houses were burned. Often, it is a diaspora group that helps to pay the cost of their medications in Adama. They told OLLAA many died because of lack of medical treatments, and some died because they could not afford the costs of medications and transportation to Adama. They also said many pregnant women are suffering from lack of proper medical treatments and have been forced to deliver babies alone without any care.

## **7. The Findings and Recommendations of the Investigation**

As illustrated above, OLLAA has reason to believe that severe human rights violations have taken place in Wollo zone amounting to ethnic cleansing. Wollo communities are subjected to arbitrary killings by Federal government security forces, Amhara regional government forces and Fanno extremist groups. Thousands are displaced, thousands of houses have been burned to ash along with their properties, hundreds or even thousands are in prison, and many abducted remain missing, including teachers. Based on these findings, OLLAA puts forward the following recommendations:

- The Ethiopian government should fulfill its international obligations by immediately providing protection to the people of Wollo zone.
- The international community should conduct independent investigations into human rights violations, especially where perpetrators were security forces.
- The federal government and Amhara region government should take measures to ensure accountability of abuse perpetrators and provide remedies for the victims. To that effect, the government, in particular Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, should undertake a serious investigation of the credible reports of human rights abuses in Wollo zone.
- The government should provide assistance and protection to those who are displaced from their homes and those who lost all of their property due to the attacks.

- The general public, civil society organizations, and media should support the Wollo community and be a voice for them.
- The international community must pay attention to the unique situation Wollo faces and put pressure on the Ethiopian government to prevent future abuses.
- To solve the crisis of violence in Wollo zone, the zone should be governed under Oromia administration or else, the zone should be upgraded to regional state by itself as per the article 47 of the FDRE constitution.
- The ongoing transitional justice effort must give special attention to the situation in Oromia Special Zone/Wollo.

## 8. Annex

8.1. Annex: Lists of the names of victims abducted and possibly killed in Shewa Robit.

Gaafa guyyaa **15/5/2015** konkolaataa kamisee irraa gara Finfinnee kan deemu **TATA** lakk. Gabatee isaa **8123** ta'e irraa **magaalaa shawaarobititti** kan ajjeefaman:

1. Lammeessaa Taaddasaa Hordofaa- Barsiisaa (Aanaa Arxummaa Fursiitti )
2. Lammeessaa Taaddasaa Qaajii- Barsiisaa (Aanaa Arxummaa Fursiitti )
3. Tasfaayee Haayilee Birruu- Barsiisaa (Aanaa Arxummaa Fursiitti )
4. Dassaaleny- Barsiisaa (Aanaa Arxummaa Fursiitti )
5. Dassaaloo- Barsiisaa (Aanaa Arxummaa Fursiitti )
6. Jamaal Tunaa- Barsiisaa(Bulchiinsa Magaalaa Kamisee mana barumsaa Kamisee lakk.02)
7. Biraanuu Nagaash- Barsiisaa(Bulchiinsa Magaalaa Kamisee mana barumsaa Kamisee lakk.02)
8. Sirraaj Imaamuu Hasan-Barsiisaa(Aanaa Dawaa caffaa mana barumsaa Garbii)
9. Hasan Mahaammad-Barsiisaa(Aanaa Dawaa caffaa)
10. Kaffaaloo Jambaree Wadaajoo- Barsiisaa( Aanaa Dawwee Harawaa)
11. Bojaa Taaddalee- Barsiisaa( Aanaa Dawwee Harawaa)
12. Yaadasaa Kaadiree Tarfaa- Qabduu maallaqaa buufata fayyaa ( Aanaa Dawwee Harawaa)
13. Garrumoo- Aanaa Dawwee Harawaa
14. Misgaanaa Fiqaaduu Lammeessaa- Barsiisaa( Aanaa Baatee)

15. Cimdeessaa Alamuu Tottoobaa- Barsiisaa( Aanaa Baatee)
16. Daani'eel Lachiisaa Magarsaa- Wangeelaawwii( Waldaa Obbolootaa Magaalaa Kamisee)
17. Koorsaa Dhangiyaa- Wangeelaawwii(Waldaa Masarata Kiristoos Caffaa Roobit)  
KANNEEN KONKOLAATAA KAN BIRAA IRRAA BUUFAMUUN BAKKA  
BUUTEEN ISAANII DHABAME IMMOO
18. Tashoomee Damoozee- Barsiisaa
19. Dajance Abarraa- Barsiisaa
20. Adam Hirphoo- Barsiisaa
21. Ayyaantuu Tulluu- Barsiistuu
22. Gannat Habtaamuu- Ogeettii Fayyaa
23. Huseen Adam – Barsiisaa
24. Eebbisee Mootii- Barsiistuu
25. Gammachiis Tolaa- Barsiisaa
26. Lalistuu Bantii- Barsiistuu
27. Ayyaanaa Lataa- Barsiisaa
28. Waaqgaarii Ofkalaa- Barsiisaa
29. Haayiluu Daggafaa- Barsiisaa
30. Geetaachoo Gurmuu- Barsiisaa
31. Dabalii Waakkennaa- Barsiisoota
32. Bushuraa Abdallaa- Barsiisaa
33. Naasir Gammadoo- Barsiisaa
34. Abdulkarim Mohaammed- Barsiisaa
35. Geetuu Girmoosaa- Barsiisaa
36. Lammii Immiruu- Barsiisaa
37. Jamaal Qaabatoo- Barsiisaa
38. Ifinash Qaabataa- Barsiistuu

KANNEEN REEBICHA CIMAATII REEBAMUUN LUBBUUN ISAANII HAFE

1. Barsiisaa Nagaash Gazzaanyii Aanaa Jiillee Dhummuugaa fi
2. Barsiistuu Tolashii- Aanaa Baatee

1. Sadaasa 27/2014 A/L/I tti barsiisonni dhalootaan naannoo Oromiyaa ta'an hojiidhaan immoo godina saba Oromoo kamisee kan ta'an namni kudha tokko (11) kamisee irraa gara Finfinnee osoo konkolaataan deemanii waraqaan eenyummaa isaanii ilaaluun waraqaan eenyummaa isaanii godinaalee Oromiyaa waan ibsuuf konkoolaataa irraa buusuun humni addaa naannoo Amaaraa magaalaa Shawaa Roobiititti "genocide" irratti gaggeessuun isaanii beekamaadha. Isaan keessaa maqaan isaanii kan adda bahe muraasni kanneen armaan gadiiti:

1. Barsiisaa Darajjee Iddoosaa- dura taa'aa mana barumsaa kan ta'e aanaa Arxummaa Fursii irraa kan ajjeefame
2. Abbabaa namarraa- waajjira human namaa aanaa arxummaa fursiirraa irraa kan ajjeefaman yoo ta'an bulchiinsa saba oromoo kamisees ta'e eenyu iyyuu hanga har'aatti iyyannaa kan hin goone ta'uu

2. Gaafa amajji 15/2015 A/L/I tti barsiisonni dhalootaan naannoo oromiyaa namoonni naannoo 70 ol ta'an boqonnaa seemisteeraantiif maatii dubbisuuf osoo konkolaataa

## 8.2. Annex 2 Document informally obtained from government officials

በጦርነቱ ምክንያት የሞቱ እና የቆሰሉ ሰዎች መረጃ			
ወረዳ	በጦርነቱ የሞቱ	በጦርነቱ የቆሰሉ	ምርመራ
እርጡማ ፋርሲ	29	34	የሚችሉ እና የቆሰለኛ ቁጥር ለጨምሮ ይችላል። ምክንያት በጣም የቆሰሉት ለየሞቱ እና ያልተገኙ ለስክራን ሊኖር ይችላል።
ጨፋሮቢት ከተማ አስ/ር	16	11	
ጅሌ ጥሙጋ	125	147	
ሰንበቱ ከተማ አስ/ር	19	25	
<b>ድምር</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>217</b>	

በጦርነቱ ምክንያት ከአካባቢያቸው የተፈናቀሉ ማህበረሰብ መረጃ					
ወረዳ	በጦርነቱ ወቅት የተፈናቀሉ ብዛት	ወደ ቀያ ቸው የተመለሱ	አሁን ላይ መጠለያ (ት/ቤት) ፣ እና ከቤት ውጭ የሚሰቃዩ	የተፈናቀሉ ቀበሌ	
				በ	በከፊል
እርጡማ ፋርሲ	48086	461 81	1905	3	7
ጨፋሮቢት ከተማ አስ/ር	27368	246 72	2696	1	0

ጅሌ ጥመጋ	63782	174 05	46377	4	6
ሰንበቴ ከተማ አስ/ር	30450	223 10	8140	1	2
ድምር	<b>16968 6</b>	<b>110 568</b>	<b>59118</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>

በጦርነቱ ምክንያት የወደሙ የግል መኖሪያ ፣ የመንግስት እና የእምነት ተቋም መረጃ					
ወረዳ	ሙሉ ለሙሉ ተቃጠለ የግል መኖሪያ ቤት	ሙሉ ለሙሉ ተቃጠለ የመንግስት ተቋም	ሙሉ ለሙሉ የተቃጠለ የዕምነት ተቋም	የተቃጠሉ መንደሮች	
				በሙሉ	በከፊል
አርጡማ ፋርሲ	4	1 ትራንፎርመር	የለም	0	1
ጩቆቢት ከተማ አስ/ር	300	1 የቀበሌ ግብርና ቢሮ	የለም	2	0
ጅሌ ጥመጋ	1630	3 ት/ቤት	6 መስጊድ	3	3
ሰንበቴ ከተማ አስ/ር	320	መረጃ አልተላከም	1 መስጊድ	1	1
ድምር	<b>2254</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7 መስጊድ</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>