
REPORT 68

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Human Rights Abuses in Ethiopia

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Abbreviations

ACSO	(Ethiopian) Civil Society Organisations Authority
ATMIS	African Union Transition Mission in Somalia
AUSSOM	African Union Stabilisation Mission in Somalia
EEPA	Europe External Programme with Africa, Belgium
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Force
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
NDRA	National Displacement and Refugee Agency (Somaliland)
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFC	Oromo Federalist Congress
OLA	Oromo Liberation Army
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OSG	Oromia Support Group
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees

OSG total recorded killings

OSG has now documented the killing of 6,156 Oromo civilians by Ethiopian government and Fano forces. This represents a small fraction of the real total, almost certainly under 20% and probably much less.

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Killings and ethnic cleansing in Showa

Among the thousands of killings in Showa, the brutal beheading of Dereje Amare (right, see p.16) – or rather the widely circulated video of it – has attracted media attention and the condemnation of Fano and government atrocities.

But the killing of the 15 year-old boy, including the barbaric method of his execution, is a commonplace event in North and West Showa zones of Oromia Region, and in other zones neighbouring Amhara Region, including Horo Guduru and East Wallega in Oromia Region and Metekel and Kamashi zones in Benishangul-Gumuz Region.

Another youngster, Tadese Neguse, was killed in the same village, Sararkullaa, around the same time as Dereje (p.16).



Humanitarian activist Daniel Gamada, who walked over 90 km to bring assistance to 13 villages in Darra district, North Showa, during an eleven-day visit in November, described conditions in the district to national and international media and in posts on social media. He reported that there has been violence in Darra for four years but it has been much more intense in the last 2-3 months.



Although only a small fraction of the killings and clearances in Showa ever reach public attention, clear patterns in the behaviour of government and Fano forces have now been discerned from previous OSG reports, OLA-OLF and OSG informants and from the posted eye-witness accounts of Daniel Gamada.

However, these events and behaviour patterns have been subject to disinformation and whitewashing. The narrative is being controlled and distorted by those carrying out the abuses. Evil is being disguised or disregarded.

Because of his bringing the humanitarian disaster in North Showa to public attention, Daniel Gamada has been sought by security forces. His house has been surrounded; his younger sister, two brothers and a friend have been detained. His life is at risk (see p.22).

ENDF and Fano atrocities in the zones of Showa began later than elsewhere in Oromia, as described briefly below.

ENDF

Federal Government forces – the ENDF – have continued since late 2018 to execute members of the Qeerroo generation and other civilians in order to deny support to the two legal Oromo parties (OLF and OFC) and to the OLA insurgency.

Collective punishment is being meted out to whole districts and zones where OLA is active. Heavy artillery and drone attacks are ‘drying out the ocean to kill the fish’ and driving Oromo civilians out of areas they have occupied for many centuries.



The mountainous terrain and one of 13 villages visited by Daniel Gamada (Kara Deema) November 2024.



Destitution in Darra district

Martial law and military command posts were established in Guji and western zones of Wallega in early 2019. Most of the killings and summary executions of Oromo in 2019 and 2020 (at least before the assassination of Harchalu Hundessa on 29 June) were in West Wallega and Qellem Wallega zones.

Targeted killings were first recorded in North Showa in early 2020 and in West Showa, with the summary execution of a prisoner, in June 2020. But the main onslaught of killings and burning began in January 2022. Six months later, military convoys of ENDF and Amhara Region Militia poured from Amhara Region into western zones of Oromia after a pact was signed between the Presidents of Amhara and Oromia regions, to ‘wipe out’ OLA in Oromia.¹

Attacks in Showa intensified in January and again in September 2023, with artillery barrages and drone attacks, which have continued through 2024 (see pp.16-22).

The majority of killings in Showa have been at the hands of government forces rather than Fano. Several hundred civilians have also been imprisoned but this arbitrary detention has been barely acknowledged amidst the killings and destruction.

Hundreds have been killed by ENDF; thousands of cattle and other animals have been killed; and scores of thousands of people are displaced after their homes have been burnt down and destroyed, as chronicled in OSG reports 52-67.

Fano

Fano and other Amhara militia began killing, burning and displacing Oromo villagers and townspeople in East Wallega in February 2021, in Wollo (Oromia Special Zone, Amhara Region) in March 2021, and in Horo Guduru zone, Oromia, in October 2021.

Fano committed ethnic cleansing in Western Tigray during and after the 2020-2022 Tigray war, according to Human Rights Watch.² Fano have also killed and cleared Oromo and Gumuz people from Benishangul-Gumuz Region since 2021.



Property is destroyed by Fano and by ENDF

Fano’s killings and destruction in all these areas increased in 2022, especially in East Wallega and Horo Guduru. Whereas the majority of landowners in Horo Guduru used to be Oromo before four years ago, this is no longer the case.

In Wollo, killings and burning have been particularly severe since 2021.

Fano activities in North and West Showa were largely unreported before 2023, although one attack in Nono district, North Showa, by ‘Amhara Region Militia’ on 19 November 2021, bore their hallmarks, with 23 killed, crops and property burnt, and livestock stolen or killed

¹ <https://oromoliberationfront.org/english/olf-statement-on-the-deepening-violence-in-omoria/>

² <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/06/01/ethiopia-ethnic-cleansing-persists-under-tigray-truce>

(OSG Report 58), and in February 2022, Jiru Dade village in Darra district was attacked by Fano, killing the husband of a survivor of gang-rape, interviewed by *Addis Standard*.³

Fano conducted cattle raids in North Showa during 2023, stealing 100 and killing 200 in June (Report 63), and stealing hundreds of cattle, burning 32 homes and gang-raping a 10 year-old girl in October (Report 64).

Although Fano groups have killed fewer civilians than ENDF, Fano has been responsible for significant numbers of deaths in North Showa since entering Darra district again in November 2023 and establishing a base in Ilu Goda Chafe. They were present in 10 of the 41 kebeles in Darra district before the end of 2023.

Fano: anatomy and taxonomy

Fano developed from within Amhara students who joined in with the Qeerroo Oromo student movement, to topple the EPRDF government, allowing Abiy Ahmed to take power in 2018.

Armed, supplied and supported by Amhara Region and Federal Governments, especially during the Tigray war, from November 2020 to November 2022, Fano groups are well-equipped and well-armed, including with heavy artillery. They draw substantial financial and media support from the Amhara diaspora.

Fano groups refused to be organised and trained by Amhara Region Militia in November 2022. They disagreed with terms of the peace agreement with Tigray and, after again refusing to be disbanded and amalgamated into government forces in August 2023, began an armed insurgency in Amhara Region.

There are three groups who self-identify as Fano.

1. Government Fano
2. Local Militia Fano
3. Real Fano

The other armed groups in Showa are OLA, ENDF and civilian groups established to defend their villages. Amhara civilian groups sometimes join in attacks on Oromo villages by Government Fano and Local Militia Fano.



Displaced people
in Darra district,
November 2024

1. ‘Government’ Fano

The term ‘Government’ Fano is used because the body is in some ways comparable to ‘Government Shane’, the group which masquerades as OLA. Both groups operate without official and overt backing by the Prosperity Party government. Unlike ‘Government Shane’ however, which behaves entirely differently to genuine OLA, the Government Fano shares objectives with the other Fano groups.

Sponsored and organised by central government, Government Fano is non-uniformed and acts independently of the other Fano groups and of ENDF. It is ‘established only for killing and terrorising Oromo civilians.’

The entity is known and supported by Amhara Region but, although supported, is not overtly recognised by the Federal Government, giving it *carte blanche* to commit the worst atrocities. It has its own budget and its troops live in the forest, not in military camps. Its members are

³ <https://addisstandard.com/escalating-conflict-in-oromias-darra-district-exposes-women-children-to-gender-based-violence-displaced-households-left-without-livelihoods/>

mostly taken from the ‘neftenya’ class, descendants of Amhara landlords from the days of empire, and recruited by zonal and district administrations in Amhara and other regions.

Zonal and district administrators interact with this group and with Local Militia Fano.

Government Fano especially targets for killing young Oromo men, capable individuals with leadership skills, successful and wealthy farmers, merchants and businessmen, and those who are respected or educated. Their intention is to ‘remove anybody who claims to be Oromo.’

Members of this group carried out the beheading of Dereje Amare and his young neighbour Tadese Neguse, in Sararkullaa village, Darra district, in September 2024.⁴

Government (Darra) Fano in North Showa is very similar to ‘Wallega Fano’ which is described by OLF-OLA to be active in the zones of Wallega. This is another Government Fano, with clandestine government support, led by former low-level officers in ENDF or government militia, which targets Oromo civilians (see p.15).⁵

2. Local Militia Fano

These uniformed regional, mostly Amhara, militia live alongside ENDF troops in military camps, with whom they work ‘hand in hand’. Local Militia Fano are formally armed and sponsored by Federal Government. They are ostensibly tasked with maintaining law and order. Some who have been present in Showa for many years use their local knowledge and gather local information. Others are settlers from Gojjam and Gonder. Their ‘main function’ is to direct Government Fano and national ENDF forces; ‘to show them the way.’

3. Real Fano

Real Fano consists of Amhara nationalist fighters opposed to the Federal Government and ENDF, based only in Amhara Region. Former members have leadership roles in Government Fano and Local Militia Fano and help to support them.

Interaction between Fano groups and collusion with ENDF

Fano groups are united in their hatred of Oromo and their desire to rid Showa and Wallega of Oromo, to ‘terrorise and uproot’ them from areas which are adjacent to Amhara Region.



Living in North Showa is hard even in peaceful times

When ENDF forces attack Oromo villages, killing civilians and destroying property, Local Militia Fano work with Government Fano to loot and remove resources, sharing the spoils of the destruction which is perpetrated by ENDF.

Using their local knowledge, Local Militia Fano identify targets for attacks by ENDF and for kidnapping by Government Fano. They communicate with Government Fano and direct them to prominent Oromo individuals whom they target for killing.

They direct ENDF to conduct drone strikes on churches and other places of refuge used by civilians.

⁴ OLF-OLA Press Release, 22 November 2024, <https://qbo-abo-wbo.org/2024/11/22/interim-findings-of-olas-investigation-into-the-north-shewa-displacement-and-harrowing-video-of-beheading-olf-ola-press-release/>

⁵ https://x.com/OLF_OLA/status/1871243177610404189

The situation in Wollo (Oromia Special Zone, Amhara Region), is different to that in North Showa. ENDF rounded up and killed hundreds of Wollo Oromo after the government repelled advancing OLA and TPLF troops in December 2021 (OSG Report 59). But since Real Fano began fighting ENDF in Amhara Region in August 2023, the Oromo in Wollo have looked to ENDF to protect them from Fano.

This protection is not reliable. In March 2024, the ENDF turned their guns on Oromo villagers, killing 25, after coming to the area to fight Fano troops who were attacking their village (see OSG Report 66).

Outside of Amhara Region, in Oromia and Benishangul-Gumuz regions, there is overt collusion and cooperation between ENDF and Fano groups. Outside of Amhara Region, Fano has not been opposed by government forces at all.



Remains of drone ordnance in Darra district, 20 November 2024

In North Showa, it has been observed that trucks which are laden with goods for Government Fano are not prevented by ENDF check points from taking supplies, including weapons and ammunition, to them.

When residents have complained about the lack of protection by ENDF against Fano attacks in Showa, they have been told by senior officers that they were powerless to intervene.⁶

Evidence of collusion between ‘Wallega Fano’ and ENDF in Wallega zones is given on p.15.

OLF-OLA accused Lt. General Tesfaye Ayalew, ENDF commander in Salale district, and a former inhabitant of Darra district, of supplying ammunition to Government Fano in Darra (‘Darra Fano’) via an intermediary, his brother, Alemayehu Ayalew.⁷



Livestock are killed by drones and heavy artillery

In its Press Release, dated 22 November, OLA reported that attacks in Darra had intensified for two months, since Lt. General Tesfaye Ayalew called a meeting with the government administrator of North Showa, Kefyalew Adere, and residents from seven kebeles in Darra district. Some Oromo refused to attend, fearing they would be ordered, as before, to hand in their weapons or join government forces in fighting OLA. The same conditions were laid down at the September meeting but Oromo residents refused to comply, citing Fano as the main perpetrators of abuse.

The Lt. General then accused them of harbouring OLA and succeeded in inciting Amhara residents to target their Oromo neighbours, sealing their pact with a symbolic feast. Thus, Local Militia Fano and Government Fano were joined by armed Amhara civilians in the attacks on Darra district and Marabite town from September to November, when aerial bombardment and heavy shelling of Oromo villages by ENDF intensified.

‘Even after residents fled, shelling continued in the bushes where they sought refuge.’⁸

⁶ <https://addisstandard.com/conflict-claims-lives-of-three-civilians-in-darra-district-oromia-region-another-three-reportedly-killed-by-govt-forces-in-west-wollega/>

⁷ OLF-OLA Press Release, 22 November 2024, <https://qbo-abo-wbo.org/2024/11/22/interim-findings-of-olas-investigation-into-the-north-shewa-displacement-and-harrowing-video-of-beheading-olf-ola-press-release/>

⁸ *Ibid.*

Fano atrocities

Each of the Fano groups and ENDF are responsible for frequent and egregious human rights abuses and atrocious cruelty. Government Fano, acting secretly and without official government control, have committed most of the worst abuses, but all Fano groups are complicit.

Government and Local Militia Fano have carried out beheadings, cutting throats of women and children, burning Oromo villagers alive in their huts and raping girls and women of all ages.

Children and husbands have been forced to witness gang-rape of their mothers and wives. Women have been forced to watch their husbands being beheaded and dismembered.

In a single attack on Qondala village in Nono district, West Showa, on 14 June, at least 20 wedding guests were locked in a building and burned to death and at least four more were shot dead as they tried to flee (Report 66). At least 21 were killed by Fano in a single attack in Darra district on 21 November 2024 (p.18).

Recently in Darra district, Fano members raped many girls and women, including a mother of six, who last gave birth only a few months previously.

Burning of whole villages, homes and crops, and killing and looting of livestock are Fano trademarks.

Precursors of genocide

As noted by *Genocide Watch*, reporting on the genocide of over 424 Anuak by EPRDF soldiers and Amhara militia in December 2003, the mutilation and dismemberment of the bodies of victims is part of a dehumanising process and an early warning of genocide.⁹

Genocide Watch reported that the perpetrators in 2003 chanted slogans which celebrated their killing, such as: 'Today is the day we kill Anuak.' 'From today forward there will be no Anuak.' 'Let's kill them all!'



Villagers from Sararkullaa, where two young men were beheaded by Fano in September 2024

Fano members terrorised villagers in Chawa Murassa, Warra Jarso district, North Showa, on 16 October 2023, razing 32 properties to the ground and rendering 150-200 men, women and children homeless and destitute. While roaming through the village, they chanted in Amharic that they were 'getting rid' of 'Galla', a derogatory name for Oromo, and 'Oneg-shane,' a derogatory term for OLF or OLA (Report 64).

On the video of the beheading of Dereje Aware, the Government Fano member mutters a prayer-like incantation in Amharic and the word 'Galla' as he begins.

The International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia concluded in October 2023 that all of the general risk factors and several of the specific risk factors for genocide were present in Ethiopia.¹⁰

⁹ http://www.genocide-watch.com/images/CampaignDoc_Today_is_the_Day_of_Killing_Anauks.pdf

¹⁰ The acute risk of further atrocity crimes in Ethiopia: an analysis. A/HRC/54/CRP.2, 3 October 2023 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/chreethiopia/A-HRC-54-CRP-2.pdf>

UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, stated that she was ‘alarmed at the heightened risk of genocide and related atrocity crimes in Ethiopia.’¹¹

Fetish for violence

The sharing of videos and still images of violence and of victims is dehumanising. It is commonly practised among members of Fano groups and ENDF. Beating to death, torture, executions by shooting and the burning alive of victims have been viewed and shared on social media in the last three years.

Perpetrators are depicted smiling and preening themselves as the atrocities take place.

These images reflect worryingly on the state of mind of the, mostly Amhara, perpetrators. The implications of this recorded cruelty will last for generations.

Effective ethnic cleansing

In North Showa, there is no functioning government outside of towns. Rural areas are controlled by Fano groups or OLA. ‘The government only comes to collect taxes.’ Banks and shops are not working, except in large towns, where only the elderly and truly desperate dare to go.

There are no functioning health facilities outside large towns. Economy and commerce are absent. There are no schools open in Darra district, except in the Darra administrative centre, Gundo Meskel.

Unlike in East Wallega and Horo Guduru, few families in Showa have sent youngsters to the Middle East or have fled to Finfinnee or Adama. Some, especially women and elderly, seek refuge in churches or mosques, where they remain at risk from drone attacks. Many in Darra district have been living off wild foods in the forest for up to three years.

Land cleared of Oromo more than two years ago, as in Horo Guduru and East Wallega, is now home to Amhara settlers. Farms in Showa, deserted within the last two years, lie neglected and dormant. No food is being produced. Thousands of cattle have been taken.

Although displaced people have been encouraged or forced to return to face persecution and destitution in Wallega zones, there have been no returns of displaced people to North or West Showa.

Fano has succeeded in the ethnic cleansing of East Wallega and Horo Guduru, to the west, and ENDF cleared Karrayyu Oromo from East Showa, before recently forcing them back. The process of ethnic cleansing in North and West Showa by ENDF and Fano continues.

Controlling the narrative

Despite the attacks on Oromo civilians by Fano and ENDF and the deliberate instigation of Amhara hostility against Oromo by all levels of government, the prevailing narrative of Ethiopian media is that OLA is responsible for killings and kidnapping of civilians. This is often regurgitated, without independent investigation, by international media, including *BBC*, *VoA* and *The Guardian* newspaper.

OLA-OLF reported that the video of the beheading of Dereje Amare was being kept to be used as propaganda to suggest that OLA and Fano were working together to attack the local community in North Showa. But after it was leaked early, unedited, on social media the

¹¹ https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/UN_Special_Adviser_statement_Ethiopia_101023.pdf

government changed course and has been using the recording to increase hostility and hatred between Oromo and Amhara.

Local sources report that when Local Militia Fano direct ENDF drone strikes against civilians sheltering in churches and other places of refuge, they are then claimed to be OLA fighters. ENDF sometimes dress civilian corpses in OLA military fatigues so they can claim to have targeted OLA fighters, rather than civilians (see p.24).

The government and Amhara disinformation machines continue to blame killings and other atrocities on OLA. As described in detail by OSG in 2022,¹² anti-Oromo propaganda began as soon as Abiy Ahmed came to power, when his government orchestrated lethal violence in Burayu in September 2018 and blamed it on members of the Qeerroo peaceful youth movement.



About half of the displaced are children

Instigated violence in Shashemane and Dera, Arsi, after the assassination of Harchalu Hundessa in mid-2020, was also wrongly blamed on Qeerroo. Although the killings of Amhara residents in Guliso in November 2020 were committed by government forces masquerading as OLA, national and international media, including a report by *Amnesty International* stated that OLA itself was responsible.

Even the massacre of revered Karrayyu Gadaa leaders in December 2021 was initially attributed to OLA.¹³ After ‘government Shane’ killed 12 in Agamsa, Horo Guduru, on 29 August 2022, and 105 Oromo were killed by Fano forces next day as they attacked and looted the town, displacing thousands, the Amhara Association of America claimed that OLA had massacred innocent Amhara civilians.¹⁴

One of the most egregious distortions was the reporting of the Tole massacre in Southwest Showa on 18 June 2022. Within days, Amhara and international media claimed that more than a thousand Amhara had been killed by OLA, whereas local sources stated that government forces were responsible for the deaths of 25-100 villagers.¹⁵

Reportage of the Tole killings in 2022 is in stark contrast to the absence of reports on the killing of at least 20 named Oromo civilians in Tole district by ENDF on 5 April 2024.¹⁶



A man sings a lament as farms are burnt (Report 67)

Selective and distorted reporting continues to reflect government and Amhara influence on national and international media and NGOs.

¹² See pp.14-17, OSG Report 60, <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Report-60-.pdf>

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/The-facts-behind-the-Agamsa-massacre-30-August-2022.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Press-Release-Slaughter-and-Slander-of-OLA-5-July-2022.pdf> and https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Tole-Massacre-Reporting-on-Ethiopia_6-July-2022.pdf

¹⁶ See p.22, OSG Report 66, <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/OSG-Report-66.pdf>

Aftermath: detention, displacement, demonstrations and violence

After the recording of Dereje's murder was circulated in November, Oromo university students demonstrated against the continuing violence in North Showa, with protests in Arsi, Jimma, Nekemte and Ambo reported by *Addis Standard*,¹⁷ and in universities in Fiche (North Showa), Robe (Bale), Metu



Kotobe students refuse to eat in protest at abuses in North Showa.



Metu, Illubabor



Fiche

(Illubabor), Haramaya (East Hararge), Bula Hora (West Guji), Asosa (Benishangul-Gumuz Region) and Addis Ababa and Kotobe Universities in Finfinnee, by OSG informant W1. A demonstration at Dembi Dollo University in Qellem Wallega was restricted to the campus by armed soldiers who beat students and fired on them (see p.31).

Witnesses of the September beheading, including the boy's father, have since been detained and forced to retract their statements.

OSG informant W1 wrote on 28 November that Daniel Gamada had been forced into hiding after receiving death threats from government sources, and later reported that his sister, two brothers and a friend had been taken from his home in the capital and imprisoned on 2 December, to be held until Daniel 'gives himself up' (see p.22).

As informant M reported in November 2023, Oromo and Amhara civilians had lived side by side in peace in Showa for over 120 years before the Prosperity Party government of Abiy Ahmed came to power.

At the end of 2023, OCHA reported that over 61,000 were displaced by ongoing violence in eight districts of North Showa. There were 4860 burnt out shelters, 53 damaged health posts, 12 disabled ambulances, 205 damaged schools, and 47000 children out of school.¹⁸

Since then, there have been twelve more months of killing, bombing, burning and looting; displacing scores of thousands. More than 8,600 were displaced in recent months from a single kebele, Karo Barbere, in Darra district.¹⁹



Displaced boy in Darra district, photographed by Daniel Gamada

¹⁷ <https://addisstandard.com/Afaanoromoo/aanaa-darraatti-ajjeechaan-suukanneessaa-dargaggeessa-tokko-dheekkamsa-kaase-jioota-afur-keessatti-namoonni-43-ol-ajjeefamaniiru/>

¹⁸ The 1 December 2023 Situation Report, which was quoted in OSG Report 64 (p.15), is no longer on the OCHA website.

¹⁹ <https://addisstandard.com/escalating-conflict-in-omias-darra-district-exposes-women-children-to-gender-based-violence-displaced-households-left-without-livelihoods/>

Forced conscription, extortion and child soldiers

Forced conscription into ENDF and regional militia is not new in Ethiopia. The quota for new recruits from each kebele was high during the Tigray war and has increased again in recent months, as reported by *Addis Standard* on 6 September,²⁰ and 20 November,²¹ and according to a wide-reaching investigation in Oromia Region by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), published in *The Reporter* on 7 December.²²

Conscription has been arbitrarily enforced and has involved corruption and extortion, whereby those without means are more likely to be unwilling conscripts, curtailing their education and leaving behind families which relied on their income.

Addis Standard reported farms being abandoned in Horo Guduru zone in September. Refusal by farmers to undertake militia training led to imprisonment, torture and denial of access to fertiliser, seeds and pesticides. Public meetings, ostensibly for consultation, were used for recruitment.



12 year-old from Ambo, captured on his way to school and forcibly conscripted

The online publication wrote in November of teenagers taken by police when working as street vendors in Adama, when going to or from markets, school or work in North Showa and Shaggar city, or when demonstrating against their land being taken by investors in Jimma.



Military training in Senkele Police College, Ambo, W. Showa

When interviewed after capture by OLA, a 12 year-old from Ambo (above right) said he was captured on his way to school and forcibly conscripted.²³

When meetings to encourage voluntary enlistment were unsuccessful, 'government forces, in collaboration with local administrators, began

rounding up individuals.' Conscripts have been taken from their homes, places of recreation such as pool halls, and from prisons. Even the mentally ill have been detained with a view to conscription.

Children as young as 11 have been detained and conscripted, according to the EHRC, which reported illegal recruitment and extortion in the cities of Adama, Bishoftu, Jimma and Shashemane.

Commonly, potential recruits are held in police stations for days or weeks before being transferred to military training camps. Payments of 20,000 to 100,000 birr were demanded by police for their release to avoid their being sent for training.



Forced conscripts, Burayu Keta, W1, 16 November

²⁰ <https://addisstandard.com/farm-or-fight-farmers-in-oromias-horro-guduru-wollega-zone-struggle-against-forced-conscription-under-gachana-sirna/>

²¹ <https://addisstandard.com/oromia-residents-report-widespread-forced-conscription-allege-detentions-extortion-by-govt-forces/>

²² <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/42872/>

²³ <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1575906886367167>

Forced training of civilians to become local militia in Sendafa, 38 km north of the capital, in the Oromia Special Zone, was described by *Addis Standard* on 31 December.²⁴ Significant social disruption was reported as bajaj and horse-drawn carriage drivers were forbidden to work between 6.30 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. and forced to attend training from 27 December to 9 January. Failure to attend would result in cancelled work permits, rendering households destitute, so compliance is necessary. The training is because of ‘security issues.’ The trainees will be required to ‘serve as security personnel during the nights and where necessary.’

Human rights NGOs banned

On 20 November, Ethiopia’s Civil Society Organisations Authority (ACSO) suspended the activities of three human rights organisations: and on 23 December notified two more that they were banned.

The Centre for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD), Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia (AHRE) and Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) were stopped from working in November.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) and the Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Centre (EHRDC) announced their closure on 26 December.

They were accused of ‘partiality, irresponsibility, working against national interests, and engaging in activities outside of the scope of their stated purpose.’

Human Rights Watch pointed out that the November bans were issued days after the organisations joined in public criticism of proposed amendments to media laws, bringing control of the country’s media authority under the control of the Prime Minister’s office.²⁵

HRW wrote of Ethiopia’s efforts in recent years to ‘silence independent civil society groups, the media, and other critical voices to evade scrutiny.’ Individuals working for the banned NGOs were followed, threatened and harassed earlier this year, resulting in self-censorship, suspending their work and leaving the country.

‘During unrest or conflict, government authorities have shut down the internet and access to telecommunications and carried out sweeping arrests against journalists and government critics, detaining people for prolonged periods without charge. In June, the Committee to Protect Journalists found that government harassment and persecution had forced at least 54 Ethiopian journalists and media workers into exile since 2020.’

‘Few avenues currently exist for international scrutiny of the government’s abusive actions, including serious conflict-related violations. In June 2023, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights quietly terminated the Commission of Inquiry on the human rights situation in Tigray, and in September 2023, Ethiopia’s international partners, including the European Union and its members on the United Nations Human Rights Council, failed to renew the UN expert inquiry on Ethiopia.’

The Reporter noted that 1,504 organisations were shut down by ACSO in July, citing failures to renew licences and submit annual reports, and creating a ‘climate of fear’ for civil society.²⁶

²⁴ <https://addisstandard.com/mandatory-militia-training-disrupts-transportation-livelihoods-in-sendafa-town-oromia-region/>

²⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/02/ethiopia-authorities-suspend-three-rights-groups>

²⁶ <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/43148/>

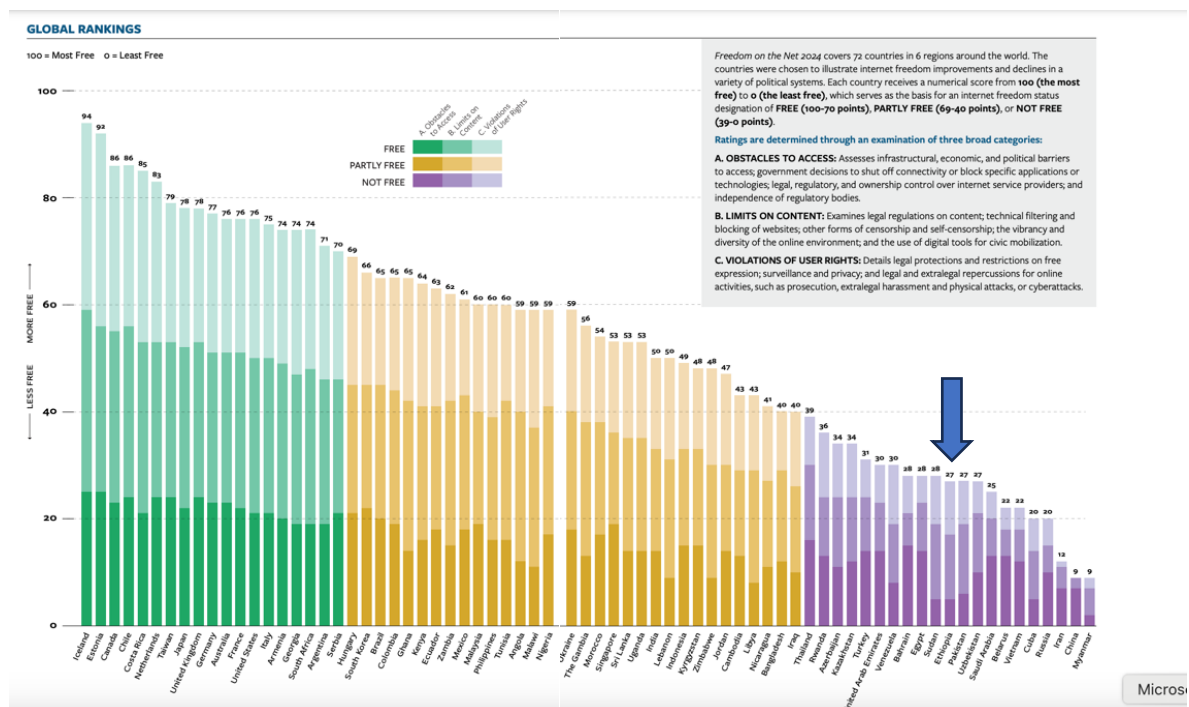
In December, *Civics Monitor* downgraded Ethiopia to ‘Closed,’ the worst of its five grades for civic freedoms and protection, shared by 29 other countries from the 198 which were assessed.²⁷

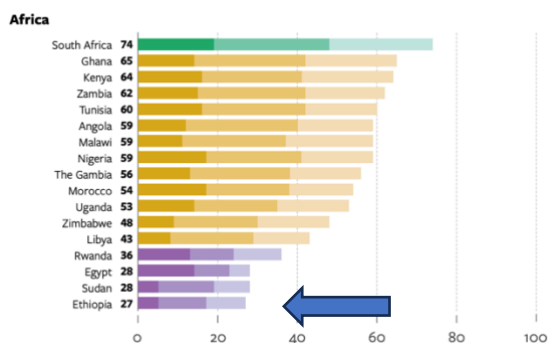
The organisation’s researcher for Ethiopia said the ‘Ethiopian government views critical voices as the ultimate threat to their power. They use every tactic to ensure civil society and media can barely operate and sustain itself . . . ‘The result is a situation where activists feel constantly under threat.’

‘Human rights activists, journalists and opposition members face serious challenges in their work, including physical and online surveillance, verbal harassment, intimidation and threats to try to make them stop their activities.’

The ‘cold blooded murder of Bate Urgessa, a vocal government critic and senior official of the Oromo Liberation Front’ was specifically referred to.

Freedom on the Net: Ethiopia scores lowest in Africa





Lower or equal scores were given to Belarus, China, Cuba, Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan (equal), Russia, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and Vietnam (equal) – 10 countries. Only 8 countries were lower.

Internet and mobile phone services across Oromia Region have been interrupted for months at a time due to conflict, affecting districts of Guji, North Showa, Qellem Wallega and other zones, according to VoA.²⁹

Eritrean refugees attacked, detained, fined and deported

The 25 November EEPA Situation Report included news of thousands of Eritreans being held with Sudanese refugees in unsafe camps in Amhara Region, where they were faced with daily attacks and lack of services. It also wrote of Eritreans in Finfinnee being subject to detention, fines and deportation.³⁰ (Attacks on refugees are also covered in Amhara Region, p.34.)

Eritreans are being detained in centres across the capital because they have overstayed their visas and are unable to pay fines, recently increased from \$3 to \$10 per day. This amounts to as much as \$12,000 for some who have overstayed more than three years. A minimum of \$2,000 is being charged for release but they are told they cannot leave Ethiopia without paying the remainder of their fines.

They applied for asylum three years ago but were told Ethiopia no longer accepted Eritrean refugees because of the peace agreement between the two countries.

There were unconfirmed reports by EEPA on 5 December that about 350 were deported to Eritrea that week.

Fano in Wallega

OLF-OLA wrote on 23 December about the activities of ‘Wallega Fano.’³¹ The group is very similar to ‘Darra Fano’, the Government Fano in North Showa. With little military training and discipline, Wallega Fano, is another Government Fano group which operates secretly, although supported and funded by central government. Their function is to kill and terrorise Oromo civilians, as in North Showa.

Wallega Fano ‘attack and loot’ Oromo villages in 11 kebeles, named by OLF-OLA as Wofcoo Bangen, Haroo, Caffee Guddinaa, Margaa Jireenyaa, Siree Doorroo, Nacinoo, Ashuu Kusaayee, Qixuu Aabboo, Lalistuu Somboo, Baddeessaa and Guddinaa Jiireenyaa.

Their leaders were trained by the regime and held ‘lower-level leadership positions within its militia forces until mid-September 2024’ when a violent dispute arose between them and local kebele officials. Although two kebele officials were killed, the dispute settled and the group continued to receive direct support from ENDF.

‘They maintain connections with specific intelligence operatives within the regime, although their exact purpose may not be fully understood by intelligence officers outside the operations in Horro-Guduru Wollega.’

²⁹ <https://www.voanews.com/amp/residents-in-ethiopia-s-romia-region-report-network-disruptions-as-government-forces-fight-rebels/7846799.html>

³⁰ European External Program with Africa, https://www.eepa.be/?page_id=4237

³¹ https://x.com/OLF_OLA/status/1871243177610404189

OLF-OLA listed publicly available evidence that the Government Fano in Wallega works closely with the Prosperity Party government, viz:

A recent Fano press conference was held in a school within an ENDF-controlled area.

Fano bases and training grounds are within 5-10 km of ENDF bases.

Fano members move freely between ENDF-controlled towns and sometimes ‘are openly escorted by the regime’s military to sell their looted goods in markets such as Gutin and Nekemte.’

The ENDF ‘actively disarms and intimidates local communities to prevent resistance against them.’

Officers threaten local communities to send their youth for conscription into the ENDF, otherwise ‘we’ll unleash this Fano group on you.’

The objectives of this Government Fano in Wallega are similar to the earlier Fano groups which committed ethnic cleansing and other atrocities in Western Tigray. The difference is that in the case of Government Fano (operating in Showa as well as in Wallega) ‘their links to the regime are carefully concealed to create an illusion of independence.’

The use of clandestine forces masquerading as Fano or OLA is to denigrate both forces and drive an even deeper wedge between Amhara and Oromo people.

Abuses in Finfinnee and Showa

Killings

ENDF ground forces and drone strikes, and Fano militia continue to kill innocent Oromo villagers and other civilians in central Oromia, especially in North Showa. There was a major offensive in November by ENDF and a government-backed ‘Fano’ group (‘Darra Fano’) agitating Amhara villagers to join them in killing Oromo and driving them from their villages in Darra district.



The video recording of the beheading of 15 year-old **Dereje Amare** (left) was widely circulated on social media after it was obtained by humanitarian activist Daniel Gamada, when visiting Darra district, North Showa, in November.³²

OLF-OLA investigated the incident and wrote that Dereje Amare and his neighbour, **Tadese Neguse**, also a young teenager in Sararkullaa village, Darra district, were both **beheaded** in September.³³ (*Addis Standard* wrote on 21 November that Dereje was 17 and from Warreen Gabroo village.³⁴)

The disturbing video shows a Darra (Government) Fano member (see p.3) muttering incantations in Amharic, using the word ‘Galla’ – a derogatory and insulting term for Oromo – as he begins the seemingly ritual beheading of Dereje.

³² <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/3SxRkD4CgkLcExZF/>

³³ <https://qbo-abo-wbo.org/2024/11/22/interim-findings-of-olas-investigation-into-the-north-shewa-displacement-and-harrowing-video-of-beheading-olf-ola-press-release/>

³⁴ <https://addisstandard.com/Afaanoromoo/aanaa-darraatti-ajjeechaan-suukanneessaa-dargaggeessa-tokko-dheekkamsa-kaase-jioota-afur-keessatti-namoonni-43-ol-ajjeefamaniiru/>

Dereje's father (right) spoke of the killing but was later imprisoned with other local informants and, like the others, was forced to retract his testimony and not identify his son's killers.

Daniel Gamada, who had obtained the video and publicised the atrocities in Darra district, has been forced into hiding (see p.22). He reported that beheadings by Fano were commonplace.



The following previously unreported killings are listed in chronological order.

Government Fano and Government OLA were blamed for **17 killings** in 5-6 incidents in Darra district in September.³⁵

On 18 October, W1 reported the **killing of seven civilians** in Jeldu district of West Showa during fighting between ENDF and OLA, but was unable to provide names.

W1 reported on 23 October the killing of a teacher, **Ayana Amanu** (right), in Darra district, North Showa, by Fano militants. Ayana, from Lalo Asabi district, West Wallega, walked several hours each day to and from the school where he taught. He was captured, bound and executed before his body was discarded as shown. One of W1's sources claimed Ayana was killed by Fano but another source blamed ENDF for the killing.



ENDF were responsible for the **killing** and burning of **Teshale Negasa**, in Darra district, on 24 October (W1). All that remained of Teshale was his left foot (see left). He was accused of supporting OLA.

Shortly afterwards, on 28 October, three were killed in their homes during a drone strike on Babu Dire village, Darra district:

Girma Abebe
Ale Girma
Damtew Amare

Six cows were killed in the same strike. The helicopter (right) was photographed from nearby.



On 1 November, 'armed assailants' **killed 45-48**, including the newly-appointed Wacale administrator, **Nigussie Koru**, along with 'several government security personnel,' when they were traveling to Kara district, North Showa to 'monitor the security situation.' The government and Ethiopian Human Rights Commission attributed the ambush to OLA but this was not confirmed.^{36,37}

Addis Standard reported that **Sheikh Mohammed Makin Haj**, the Imam of Arabian village mosque, Darra district, was **killed** on 2 November after being kidnapped by militants (Government Fano or Government OLA) for ransom on 18 October. His mother, wife and

³⁵ <https://addisstandard.com/Afaanoromoo/aanaa-darraatti-ajjeechaan-suukanneessaa-dargaggeessa-tokko-dheekkamsa-kaase-jjoota-afur-keessatti-namoonni-43-ol-ajjeefamaniiru/>

³⁶ <https://addisstandard.com/over-45-killed-in-oromias-north-shewa-zone-including-wacale-district-administrator/>

³⁷ <https://www.firstpost.com/world/bloodbath-in-ethiopia-48-killed-in-restive-oromia-region-whats-the-conflict-all-about-13833165.html>

children had been released after 1.4 million birr was paid but Sheikh Mohammed (right) was killed before more money could be raised by his family.³⁸



The bodies shown below are of at least 21 killed by Government Fano in Darra district on 21 November (W1). The photograph, copied below right, of a young woman who was reported on 22 November to have been killed by Fano, may have been in the same attack. The unnamed woman was a resident of Darra district.



The Union of Oromo Communities in Canada issued a call to action on 27 November,³⁹ listing further atrocities, writing that ‘a heavily armed group calling itself the Dera Fano came in broad daylight, blowing their horns and started the carnage.’

Both ENDF and Fano continued attacking villagers with heavy artillery after they had fled into the bush.

ISS reported on 28 November from Cairo that he had received information that the following five civilians were **killed in a drone attack** on Salale, Darra, a few hours previously:

Tiringo Abu
Gazze Sanbato
Firee Warquu
Lama Abuye
Tamima Juwar



Killed by Fano, in Darra district, probably 21 November (see above)

Two more killings in North Showa by ENDF were reported by W1 on 30 November: **Birane Asefa**, in Kuyu district, and **Matiwos Jiru** in Darra district.



On 1 December, two farmers, **Dereje Aba-Galan** and **Ababe Dereje**, were killed and six were wounded in an ENDF drone strike in Yaya Haro village, Dagem district, North Showa (W1).

Negash Garoma was killed in Meta Wolkite, West Showa, on 5 December (W1).

Of three people reportedly mistreated in detention in Ambo prison (West Showa), **Elias Lema** was killed on 9 December (W1).

Ismael Tibesso (left), a university graduate in Adama, East Showa, was killed by ENDF during the night of 17 December.

Among civilians **killed** by ENDF in Adaha Berga, West Showa, on or shortly before 29 December, three were named by W1:

³⁸ <https://addisstandard.com/Afaanoromoo/aanaa-darraatti-ajjeechaan-suukanneessaa-dargaggeessa-tokko-dheekkamsa-kaase-jioota-afur-keessatti-namoonni-43-ol-ajjeefamaniiru/>

³⁹ <https://uoccanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Stop-the-barbaric-violence-against-Salaalee-Oromos.pdf>

Aselefech Nigatu
Tesfaye Lema
Midegsa Olkeba

Injuries

Misgana Alemu (near right) was admitted to hospital in Fiche, Salale, after being wounded in a drone strike in Darra district on 2 November (W1).

More than nine schoolchildren were wounded in a drone strike on Dhahe Wilinco Bifti school, Gabra Guracha district, North Showa, on 7 November (W1).

Lalisa Habtamu (far right), a young boy in Darra district, was shot and wounded on the back of his head by Fano on 27 November (W1).



Burning

Among the thousands of homes burned by ENDF, four heads of households whose homes were burnt down on 13 December in Meta Walkite district, West Showa, were (W1):

Gedefa Fikiru

Fikadh Damto

Lenjiso Bote

Ashetu Adugna

‘All their maize’ and properties were destroyed.

Drone attacks

Photographs of the remains of ordnance used in drone attacks was sent by W1 on several occasions in November.



Remains of ordnance from drone strike, Darra district, 1 November.



‘Dropped from drone and helicopter, on Oromo farmers only, in Hidhabu Abote and Gabra Guracha districts’ North Showa, 7 November.





20 November 'In Selale Darra, this regime and Fano fighters are killing side by side; the regime by drone and Fano by attacks on civilians, including our cows.'

Displacement

Villagers from Darra district, gathered on or shortly before 20 November.



Disappearances

The man shown far right was taken from Burayu Kata, west of Fnfinee, (in the Oromia Special Zone around the capital) on 10 October. He was taken to an unknown destination. He was not named but is known to have come from Limu district, East Wallega (W1).

Artist Kerenso Diriba (near right) was taken to an unknown place by police in Wanchi district, Southwest Showa, on 24 December (W1).



Detention



The two young men shown left were reported on 13 October to have been taken from Irreecha celebrations at Melka Itete, Burayu, to be detained and mistreated in Burayu prison. Their names were not given (W1).

On 26 October, OSG was informed of the continued detention in Burayu and Ambo prisons of Qeerroo and Qarre activists.

In Burayu prison:
Michu Shurshura



Megersa Sirna



Wakjira Getachew



In Ambo prison (West Showa):

Bikila Guta



Geleta Bekele



Bontu Hayile



Tesfaye Gemechu (right) was reported on 10 November to have been detained in Bishoftu 2nd Police Station, East Showa. He was offered release on payment of 200,000 birr but was unable to pay. His family, including three children, were evicted and forced to live on the street (W1).

On 14 November, W1 sent the picture shown below of detained young men, yoked together in a degrading manner, taken from Bosat, East Showa.



Addis Standard reported that 16 residents who had given media interviews about the killing of Dereje Amare in Darra district in September were detained on 22 November, after the video of his beheading had been widely circulated.⁴⁰ They included Mezgebu Teshome, Tamene Garado, Abaye Aminu, Asmara Temesgen, Reverend Abaye Belaw, Kasiye Habtamu, Emabet Temesgen, and Mulalem Werku.

The following were reported on 11 December to have been detained without trial or court appearance for one year in Kilinto prison (W1):

Wada Getacho

Wajirra Getacho

Geleta Bekele

Megersa Sima

Samuel Esrael

A wave of arrests in West Showa, in Bako, Ijaji and Ambo was reported on 13 December, including these three in Ijaji district (W1):

Garoma Tesfaye

Desta Dugesa

Sanyi Wakuma

⁴⁰ <https://addisstandard.com/sixteen-detained-in-oromias-darra-district-after-media-statements-on-violence-and-civilian-killings-as-teens-beheading-sparks-social-media-outrage/>

Long prison sentences were reported on 18 December to have been handed out by Lideta High Court to Queerloo activists (W1):

Getu Girma – 22 years

Tilehun Getacho – life sentence

Biranu Jifara – 18 years

Birhanu Tola – 16 years

On 31 December, the following were reported to have been detained in Ilu Galan police station, West Showa, for more than three months (W1):

Meraba Garomas

Ms Angatu Belisa

Megersa Kufeta

Asefa Ababe

Kara Deema forced into hiding: family detained and beaten

Daniel Gamada Oljira, 31, ‘Kara Deema,’ is from a family of humanitarian activists and began his own activities when a student in Bale, where he organised the provision of clothing and other basic needs for local unsupported women. He is an engineering graduate, musician and artist, but above all else is a humanitarian activist.

Because he was an active member of the peaceful Queerloo student protest movement, which led to the opening of democratic space in Ethiopia, Daniel was detained, beaten unconscious by government security forces and thrown on the street, before the EPRDF government collapsed in early 2018.

Since then, he has been detained twice by the current Prosperity Party government. He was detained for four days in Finfinnee in December 2020 (OSG Report 56) and was held *incommunicado* for an unknown period in the capital in September 2021 (Report 58) before being held for 11 months in Muger military camp, where he was severely mistreated.

The reason for his detention in 2021 was that he had made four visits to destitute and displaced Oromo in ‘Wollo,’ Oromia Special Zone, Amhara Region, and had broadcast his findings.

Daniel’s popular name, Kara Deema, is roughly translated as ‘Travelling Man.’ He is now a well-known national figure in Ethiopia because of his humanitarian activities and media appearances.

Daniel has organised trucks loaded with material for shelters, medical and food supplies, and has taken cash supplements to support IDPs and destitute communities in several zones in Oromia Region, including West Wallega, Horo Guduru, East Wallega, Borana and North Showa. In March 2024, he returned to Wollo, delivering assistance to IDPs. He also helped to provide assistance to IDPs in West Wallega during the devastating malaria epidemic in late 2023 and took material to build large shelters for IDPs in West Wallega in May 2024.

He has repeatedly drawn national and international attention to humanitarian crises in areas of Oromia Region, where killing of civilians, burning of homes and collapse of commerce and health and education infrastructure, have driven hundreds of thousands to become IDPs.

Daniel has given interviews on national and international radio and television media, including *Oromia Media Network (OMN)* and the *BBC Afaan Oromoo* radio and on-line news service. He is active on social media, including Facebook and TikTok. He has many media appearances posted on YouTube. In every appearance and broadcast, he has described adverse humanitarian conditions and human rights abuses in the places he has visited.

Because his published and broadcast accounts have reflected poorly on government accountability for the security and health of Ethiopia's citizens, he has become increasingly unpopular with federal and regional governments.



Daniel has been a wanted man after his latest revelations from an eleven-day visit, walking 90 km, to 13 villages in Darra district, North Showa, in November 2024. During this visit, he obtained a video clip of the beheading of 15 year-old Dereje Amare by Fano militants which was taken in September (see pp.3 and 16). Daniel instigated the widespread dissemination of this over national and international media.

Three days after he returned to his home in Finfinnee on 22 November he was subjected to increased surveillance by government security services. Masked and helmeted men watched his house for several days before it was raided by uniformed police and security officers in four vehicles at 11.00 pm on 2 December. Daniel, his wife and young daughter had already gone into hiding.

His two brothers, Rabira and Oda Gamada, his sister, Hana Gamada, and a friend, Debeli Bekama, (pictured below) were arrested from his property and detained as hostages for his return. The housemaid was beaten unconscious and left at the otherwise vacant house. His young sister, Hana, was taken to a separate place of detention, where she was badly beaten before being taken unconscious to hospital a few days later, according to local contacts on 18 December.

Daniel is now wanted, dead or alive. District officials have been told that there will be no legal consequences for his death.

In an appeal released on 3 December by *BBC Afaan Oromoo*,⁴¹ Daniel stated that he had acted in good faith, reporting only what he had seen and experienced in Darra district, pointing out atrocities committed by Fano militants on Oromo civilian villagers.

'I'm worried and hiding, they've arrested my family . . .' he told *BBC Afaan Oromoo*.



⁴¹ <https://www.bbc.com/afaanoromoo/articles/cx27ll14nx3o>

Abuses in Arsi and West Arsi

Killings

In the late evening of 10 October, ENDF soldiers rounded up students and farmers in house searches in Sadika Karsa kebele, Robe Didea district, Arsi, accusing them of links to OLA. Seven were shot dead at 2.00 am that night in the Amelama area of the kebele:

Abdulaziz Abduljalil (7th grade student) and three other students, named **Indato**, **Karso**, and **Sibe**, and farmers, **Husen Mama**, **Misaba Mahmud** and **Abdusalam Haji**.

Relatives were prohibited from retrieving their bodies. Another eight are missing, presumed dead: **Kemal Umar**, **Anas Umar**, **Basir Majid**, **Salam Majid**, **Kemal Kaso**, **Mohamed Umar**, **Tajudin Muktar**, and **Mahmud Ali**.

After the killings, ENDF dressed four of the victims in military uniforms and displayed them in the centre of Sadika Karsa village, ‘falsely claiming they had killed OLA.’

In rural Robe Didea district, there has been displacement, violence and mass detention. *Addis Standard* was told ‘The government forces beat anyone they saw on a motorbike, and they took any motorbike they found in the villages of the Robe district.’⁴²

Previous killings, unreported by OSG, include **36 Orthodox Christians**, among them children and elderly women, in Shirka district in November 2023, by ‘unidentified armed men.’ Local officials blamed OLA, which denied the accusation and pointed out widespread atrocities including burning of property and killing of civilians by government forces from 24-27 November in 2023.⁴³

On 13 August 2024, six civilians, including priest **Belayneh Mamo** of Telaltu St. Gabriel Orthodox Church, were **killed** and three others injured in Tijo village, Aseko district. Others killed were **Gezahegn Mengistu**, **Gebeyahu Tsegaye**, **Mebratu Fikire**, **Abebe Fikire**, and **Admasu Tadese**, according to *Addis Standard*.⁴⁴

Homes were destroyed and livestock looted. After the attack, many took refuge in St. Michael Church, where conditions were ‘dire’ and children and the elderly were short of food and medicine. A church member blamed OLA but the nature of the attack and associated looting bore hallmarks of government forces masquerading as OLA.

A video posted on social media around 19 October,⁴⁵ shows **two men** abducted by ENDF, seated in the back of a pickup truck, prior to being **executed**, in Munessa district, West Arsi (W1). Screenshots show an ENDF officer, a young man with his hands tied behind his back and an elderly man with his hands tied in front of him. Their names were not given.



⁴² <https://addisstandard.com/seven-dead-eight-missing-in-oromias-arsi-zone-as-govt-forces-accused-of-targeting-civilians/>

⁴³ <https://addisstandard.com/news-45-believers-killed-in-two-separate-attacks-in-arsi-and-kellem-wollega-zones-oromia-region/>

⁴⁴ <https://addisstandard.com/deadly-attack-in-arsi-zone-of-oromia-region-leaves-priest-and-five-others-dead/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/61561859818894/videos/573869221703762/?mibextid=4MzKDW5ooBP2efJs>

W1 reported that **eight civilians**, including **Mohammed Nur**, were killed by ENDF in Sirka district on or shortly before 30 November.

Detention

Many were taken from their homes in Chilalo district, Arsi, on 20 October and detained in Sibu Abadiri prison. Only four names were available to informant W1: Abishu Dilbato, Bayisa Tura, Usman Sheikh Usmoo and Abdela Gishu.

On 21 November, Basa Adilo, 9 months pregnant, from Heban village in Arsi, was imprisoned ‘because her child is in OLA.’

Abuses in East Oromia

Killings

On 12 October, seven young men and **one young woman** were **killed** by ENDF in southeast Oromia ‘Arsi Bale’ (W1). The informant was able to name:

Husen Mama

Abdulhamid Alduljelil

Abdusalam Jelil

Misbah Shek Mohammed

Kamal Umar

Abba-Basir Abbaa-Majid

Abba-Salaam Abbaa-Majid

The eight were accused of supporting OLA.

On 8 November, W1 reported the execution of **Fatima Yusuf** who lived in Kora city. She was from Gumbi Bordode district, West Hararge. Fatima (right) was captured the day before she was killed and her body ‘thrown’ on the ground. The militia member who allegedly shot her is also pictured right.



On 16 November, the **killing** of two young teenagers, **Abdulfetah Hasan** and **Nasir Mohammed**, was reported to OSG (W1). The boys (left), aged 14 and 12, were close relatives, living in Obi 17 kebele, Bultum district, West Hararge.

Ali Yasin, Gololcha district, West Hararge, was reported **killed** by ENDF on 30 November (W1).

On 2 January 2025, government forces killed **Murad Shamsadin** (right) in Dire Dawa city, East Hararge (W1).

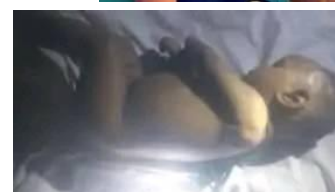
Also on 2 January, government security forces **killed five** in Carcar, West Hararge, including three members of one family (W1):

Idris Umar Gidi

Asha Bakar Musa

Adudin Mustefa, a five month-old infant (right)

Two others, Ms Iftu Sharif and Mohamed, were injured and admitted to Chiro hospital.



Detention



The detention by police of two young men, Kichu Saba and Fromsa Abdurashid (left) was reported on 6 November (W1). They were taken from Sawena village, near Micha city, East Bale.

On 1 January 2025, two young men were detained for ransom by Fano (presumably Government Fano) in East Bale. They demanded 500,000 birr each for their release. W1 was informed next day that their families were unable to pay and that

they would be executed on 2 January.

Safi Hasan was born in Mokona Farajo village, Agarfa district, and Ali Abdurazak was from Gindhir district. They are both shown right.



Abuses in Horo Guduru and East Wallega

Killings

Kena Tola was among 130 detainees who were mistreated in Oboro Police Station, Amuru district, Horo Guduru, because alleged links between family members and OLA. *Addis Standard* reported that he died of untreated injuries from being beaten, in August (see p.28, below).

A video taken mid-2022 in Agamsa town, Amuru district, Horo Guduru, was sent by a local informant to OSG on 9 December.

It shows several youths whooping with delight as they drag the **corpse of a young Oromo** who has been beaten to death. After running with him for 50-100 metres, the youths throw him down next to the body of **another young man** in a field. About 20-30 teenagers and young adults shout and whoop with delight throughout the 27 second clip.



It was reported on 10 October that **Dinku Tolera** (left), a teacher at Bilo Boshe High School, Bilo district, East Wallega, was killed the previous day near the Mekane Yesus, 'Church of Anne', because he was suspected of involvement with OLA (W1).

On 28 October, at **five** members of one family were **killed** by Fano forces in Lali Gudina village, Hangar Gute district, East Wallega (W1 – a second report on 18 November named the district as Limu Galila).

Three brothers named **Jireenya Mosisa** (pictured far left on the top of facing page), **Jirata Mosisa** (near left) and **Xuru Mosisa** (centre), their mother, **Shitaye Fayisa** (right) and their father **Mosisa Gammada** (not pictured) were all killed.



In Done village, Bilo Boshe district, East Wallega, on 17 November, two young men, **Lalisa Bacha** and **Imiru Keba**, were killed by government forces and their family were detained in Bilo Boshe district prison (W1).

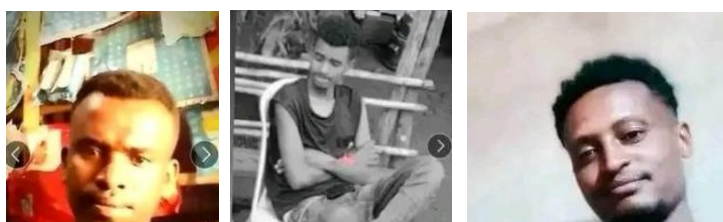
Four civilians were kidnaped by Fano from Limu Galila, East Wallega on 17 November. One, Tolesa Garado, escaped. The other three, including Tolesa's brother, **Eyuel Garado**, and two others, **Elias Daba** and **Soruma Regassa**, were **killed** next day, despite 1 million birr being paid by their family for their release.

On 18 November, three were named as being injured by Fano members in Lali Gudina village (Ayala Duressa, Kababu Dhufeera and Qana'I Dugassa) and the village was reported deserted by its occupants (W1).

Four more civilian **killings** were committed by Fano in Migir village, Amuru district, East Wallega, on 3 December (W1):

Dosho Gudeta
Ararso Merga
Fekeda Teshale
Babu Getachew

Three of the victims are pictured right.



Robbery

W1 reported on 13 October that robbery by 'the regime' in Horo Guduru had affected many families. Up to 100-200,000 birr and cattle were taken. Those without livestock or money were taken to prisons in Jima Rare and Limu Genet districts and beaten. 200,000 birr was stolen from Tariku Dheressa. 100,000 birr and a cow were taken from Chemedda Gerenfes. Mesfin Soressa lost 200,000 birr and three siblings, Chaltu, Lata and Hachalu Dhaba, had respectively 50,000, 50,000 and 30,000 birr taken.

Detention

Seven farmers in Horo Guduru, including two women, were reportedly detained in Jima Rare prison on 13 October because they had no money to pay for their release. They were moved from Jima Rare by 15 October (W1). They were named:

Kaleessa Umata
 Adisu Wayu
 Geleta Barihun
 Lamechu Sefu
 Alamayo Simanyo
 Wanimne Wasihun
 Jiraatu

Three youngsters were reported detained in Nekemte, East Wallega, on 26 October (W1):

Wada Getachew



Samuel Esrael



Keeyeroon



Addis Standard reported on 15 November that more than 130 civilians in Amuru district, Horo Guduru, had been detained at Obora Police Station for over seven months without trial, subjected to mistreatment and denied medical care.⁴⁶ They were accused of having links to OLA and included husband and wife, Tesfaye Beyana and Dosa Tolera.

Tesfaye was detained on 20 April, because of his son's alleged links to OLA. Dosa was detained on 8 November because she was unable to provide more food when ordered to feed local militia members. She was beaten and 'given offensive insults' in front of her other children. Although they had lost contact with their son and did not even have his phone number since he joined OLA, they remain in detention. They are farmers, 'with no political involvement.'

67 year-old Tolosa Sori was detained on 16 April, due to his son's alleged ties to OLA. He is another 'peaceful resident with no political connections.'

One detainee, Kena Tola, died in custody in August, from untreated severe injuries sustained during beating (see Killings, above).

Four civilians were reportedly arrested and imprisoned in Bako, East Wallega, on 25 November, following the death of an ENDF commander (W1):

Alemu Lemu

Dachasa Getaneh

Chaltu Guluma

Miratu Shanko

On 17 December, six were named among those detained that day in 07 kebele prison, Nekemte, East Wallega (W1):

Daba Dheressa

Bedassa

Yoosef Megersa

Chalchisa

Haile

Muse

Three more were detained from Garjo Marami village, Diga district, East Wallega, including Taresa Teso and Zekarias Banti (W1).

Brothers Mulatu and Mesgabu Wakgari were reported detained in Sibu Sire district prison, East Wallega, on 21 December. They were both detained because their children had joined OLA (W1).

Returnees

Over 1000 IDPs from East Wallega were returned from camps in Amhara region in the first few months of 2024. The majority returned to Amhara Region by March (see p.36).

⁴⁶ <https://addisstandard.com/dozens-detained-for-months-without-court-appearances-in-oromias-horo-guduru-wallega-over-alleged-ties-to-ola-families-report-abuse/>

Abuses in Qellem and West Wallega

Killings

It was reported on 8 October that **Jibril Balacho**, of Abshaala village, Begi district, West Wallega, was killed by government forces ‘because he wanted no involvement with the Prosperity Party’ (W1).

On about 10 October, **Dirbaba Horro**, from Lata, in Sibu district, West Wallega, was killed by government forces. Next day, his home (right) was destroyed by fire (W1).

On 20 October, a young man named **Debela** was killed by ENDF in Kiltu Kara district, West Wallega (W1).



W1 reported that **Ebisa Game** (left), a teacher in Babo Gambel district, West Wallega, was abducted by government forces on 21 October while on his way to school. Next day he was killed and his body was thrown ‘in a rural place.’

Bontu (right – father’s name not reported), a 14 year-old girl from Babo Gambel town, West Wallega, was raped by three ENDF soldiers and then killed on 25 October (W1).



Adamu Bento Yadeta, from Boji Chokorsa district, West Wallega, was abducted and killed by government forces in Kaji during the night of 8 November (W1).

Biraatu Tesso Jigi, from Saci village, Mana Sibu district, West Wallega, was ‘killed on the road’ on 8 November (W1).

A third killing by ENDF in West Wallega during the night of 8 November was that of **Matiwos Erana**, from Baro Badessa village, Mana Sibu district (W1).

Following fighting between ENDF and OLA, two civilians, **Beshatu Kena** and **Baca Yadeta**, in Geba Arbi district, Qellem Wallega, were killed by ENDF on or shortly before 18 November (W1).

Firomsa Jirata, his wife, **Alemnesh Sanyii**, and another person, **Geneti Tilahun**, from Dangi village, Qiltu Kara district, West Wallega, were reported on 27 November to have been killed by government forces (W1).

Three friends and neighbours were taken from home where they were drinking coffee together in Yubdu district, West Wallega, on 28 November, and shot dead by government forces, ‘without any reason.’ They were named **Elias Dereje Kitessa**, **Daniel Balcha Diriba** and **Daniel Negasa**. Two are shown below and right (ISS).

On 28 November, OSG received from local informant W2 two videos taken in the Gimbii area, West Wallega, ‘near the road called Maqa Najjo.’ The recordings were made on the same day but not dated. The video clips, lasting





22 seconds and 67 seconds had been posted on TikTok. They show six young men, five of them bound with their elbows tied tightly behind them, in a forested area by a road, surrounded by a dozen or more uniformed ENDF soldiers and a few men in civilian clothes.

One sits apart from the others, next to a standing soldier who carries an automatic rifle (above left). There are more soldiers in the vicinity, including a truck packed with troops, parked on the road. Two large, full, passenger buses pass along the road while the videos were made.

During the longer clip, a sixth young Oromo arrives, unbound, and joins the group of four sitting on the ground. He is shown right, wearing torn white trousers.

A female soldier takes his mobile phone from him and transfers it to her right hand. He stands to empty his trouser pockets and hands a small bundle or object to her. When re-seated, he is ordered by the young woman to remove his shoes and toss them away, helped by her kicking them (below right).

At least two of the four seated at the beginning of both videos have blood on their faces, presumably from beatings. Several of the uniformed soldiers are shown taking videos of the captives. Two of the



four sitting together initially appear to be wearing camouflaged military t-shirts and trousers.

One of these, (left) with blood on his forehead, is ordered to stand, to be filmed more closely. The soldiers smile as they film.

All six were executed after the videos were taken, according to the informant, W2.



On 30 November, **Merertu Daba**, was reported killed by government forces in Boji Chokorsa district, West Wallega (W1).

Mustefa Simesso, Ambalo Dilla village, Babo Gambel district, West Wallega, was reported killed by ENDF on 10 December (W1).

Three other killings by government forces in West Wallega were reported by W1 on 10 December. In each case their bodies were 'thrown on the road.'

Merga Indalu, Inemai Boli village, Boji Dirmaji district

Lemi Indalu Gameda and **Dawit Bari Nado**, Gida Buruso village, Nejo district.

On 13 December, W1 reported the killing by government forces of **Samuel Kitila** in Geco village, Sayo Nole district, West Wallega.

Government forces killed five civilians at a wedding ceremony in Dale village, Mendi district, West Wallega, on 21 December (W1):

Deale Indalu

Wako (father's name not known)

Dino Kebede

Abire Abraham

Gemeda Melkamu

Detention

W1 reported on 18 November the detention of Adugna Kabeta (54), his wife Alganesh Sukessa (47) and two others, Jaleta Lamu (38) and Ms Chaltu Wandimu (27), from Dale Wabera village, Qellem Wallega. They were taken to Dembi Dollo 04 police station where they were reportedly mistreated. They were detained because other members of their families had joined OLA.

Five young men were arrested and taken to Gimbi town police station on 19 November. The names of three were obtained by W1: Merga Akawak, Sanyi Rebu and Tamane Hundesa.

On 4 December, police detained Wande Etana in Guliso, West Wallega, after taking 440,000 birr from his home (W1).

Demonstration in Dembi Dollo

A short video of government forces dispelling a crowd of demonstrating students in the campus of Dembi Dollo University on 22 November was sent to OSG. It shows several hundred students running and shouting, while gunfire and screaming is heard.

Demonstrations such as this occurred throughout Oromia following the circulation in November of the video of the beheading of Dereje Amare.



Abuses in Jimma

Killing and beating

Fu'ad (father's name unknown – pictured right), a motorcycle rickshaw (bajaji) driver in Jimma city, was killed by government forces 'in his bajaji' in the evening of 15 December (W1).



A short video of ENDF soldiers and security officers manhandling, beating and kicking a young Oromo in public, was sent to OSG on 26 December (W1).



It was filmed in Manna district, Jimma zone, and shows the youth being dragged by his hair and carried for a few metres before being thrown on the ground and repeatedly kicked (two screenshots are shown left).⁴⁷



⁴⁷<https://www.facebook.com/61563382264982/videos/1125032822487151/?mibextid=rS40aB7S9Ucbxw6v>

Abuses in Guji and West Guji

Killings

Only a very small fraction of abuses, including killings by ENDF, are reported from the Guji zones because of limited access and communications network. The number of reported killings does not reflect the ongoing persecution there.

Three members of one family were **killed** by ENDF during the night of 8 November in Hafa Loggaa village, Bule Hora district, West Guji, and their bodies left ‘on the road’ (W1):

Shoto Elema Hanku

Elema Ganale Hanku

Ganale Hanku Jilo

Two civilians from Booree village, Galana district, West Guji, were taken from prison on or just before 2 January and executed (W1):

Tise Jilo Carbu

Alga Warku Kesena

Burning, robbery and looting

Homes belonging to the following heads of households in Surro Bargudda, Guji, were burned by ENDF soldiers on 13 October:

Sida Dube – 200 kg maize and 40 goats stolen

Nuguse Dayaso – two homes burnt, 300 kg maize taken

Gololcha Sida – 80 kg maize taken

Dido Bule

Jara Bedasso

Homes belonging to 16 heads of households in Sapalisa village, Bule Hora district, West Guji, were burnt down, and cattle and maize stolen on 14 October:

Dugo Safayi

Jaarsi Adola

Ture Robe

Gobana Alamo

Adola Bokko

Bokko Jilo

Ture Tuka

Samaro Noko

Dasta Duka

Cacu Jaldo

Ware Ture

Dambi Aba-Refa

Elema Daro

Amare Robe

Balela Adola

Gamada Robe

On 15 October, at least six homes were destroyed by fire in Cari Badessa village, Galana district, West Guji, by ENDF, who stole ‘cows, sheep, goats and maize’:

Utura Koncori Dido

Ararso Roba Nore

Roba Joga Halake

Damte Andule Nu’e

Bones Utura

Abonsa Hexossa

Rape of child

Five year-old Raggasa Fiqadu Horo (right) was raped by ENDF soldiers ‘in front of his house’ in Wadera district, Guji, on 6 December (ISS).

Detention or execution



The photograph, left, of an unnamed young man, carrying his shoes and walking barefoot with his arms tied tightly behind him, was sent by W1 on 31 December. He is being marched to a place of detention or possibly execution in Guji zone. No further details of name or location were given.



Abuses in Borana zones, South Oromia

Killings



Debano Bonaya Wako (right) and her brother **Xune Bonaya Wako**, of Sabba village, Elwaye district, Borana zone, were reported killed by government forces on 13 December (W1).

In Molicha village, Liban district, East Borana, **Dadi Jibicho** (left) was killed by government forces on 25 December. He was falsely accused of having links to OLA.



Demonstration

Civilians in Elwaye district, Borana, took to the streets on 16 December (right) in protest against the killing of civilians by government forces.



Abuses in Amhara Region

Civilians killed in conflict

On 10 October, EEPA reported heavy fighting between Fano and ENDF in Gojjam and Gonder zones. At least four humanitarian workers were killed. Roads were closed by Fano across the region.⁴⁸ Millions of children were unable to attend school.⁴⁹

Civilians are being killed by Fano and by ENDF as control of areas changes hands in the fighting, which intensified from October onwards. Aerial attacks by helicopters and drones targeted schools and administrative buildings where Fano has sheltered before.

⁴⁸ <https://www.eepa.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Situation-Report-EEPA-Horn-No.-579-10-October-2024.pdf>

⁴⁹ <https://www.eepa.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Situation-Report-EEPA-Horn-No.-592-28-November-2024.pdf>

The Reporter wrote on 1 December,⁵⁰ after visiting parts of Gojjam, Gonder, Wollo and Showa, that Amhara Region was devastated.

Regional government officials control major cities and towns. ENDF had ‘significant influence’ in mid-sized towns and Fano controlled most smaller settlements and rural areas. Some places, such as around Debre Tabor, are controlled by bandits and thieves. Both Fano groups and ENDF staff numerous road checkpoints, sometimes within a kilometre of each other.

Towns controlled by ENDF suffer the violence and injustices which characterise the Command Post rule in Wallega and Guji in Oromia Region. ENDF soldiers commit gang-rape with impunity.

Youngsters are likely to be taken at checkpoints by ENDF and ‘established adults’ draw unwanted attention from Fano at other checkpoints. All are vulnerable to kidnapping and extortion. Government officials travel with their faces covered and accompanied by large numbers of soldiers. There is a 6.30 pm curfew on all roads. Commerce and education are at a standstill.

Bahir Dar, which like most cities is a relative haven for floods of people displaced from rural areas, is ‘almost unrecognisable.’ The displaced told of summary executions of civilians, including groups of teenagers and monks by ENDF; and of suspected government collaborators by Fano. Unable to go to Finfinnee, by road because of fighting and by air because of poverty, they are stuck; trying to eke out a living on city streets.

An elderly resident of Debre Birhan, North Showa, told *The Reporter* ‘After a clash, government soldiers go door-to-door, interrogating residents about the whereabouts of the Fano fighters. Innocent civilians always pay the price.’

Drone attacks were scaled up in Gonder during October. About 50 children were reportedly killed in drone strikes in Bahir Dar,⁵¹ and 23, including children, were killed in fighting between Fano and ENDF in Addis Kedam, Awi zone, on 27 October.⁵² Fano controlled Addis Kedam briefly before withdrawing that afternoon. When ENDF regained control, they searched houses and executed civilians on the street.⁵³

At least 50, including children and pregnant women were killed in drone strikes which hit a primary school, market and health centre in North Gojjam on 6 November.⁵⁴

A drone strike on a truck leaving a market in North Wollo killed about 50 market vendors, farmers and youngsters on 19 November, according to the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC).⁵⁵

Fano killed 37 government officials in Gojjam when they left the town of Dega Damot-Feresbet on 6 December. Since Fano took the town in September they had detained 97, including the 37 who were later executed.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ <https://thereportermagazines.com/3399/>

⁵¹ <https://www.eepa.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Situation-Report-EEPA-Horn-No.-580-17-October-2024.pdf>

⁵² <https://www.eepa.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Situation-Report-EEPA-Horn-No.-586-07-November-2024.pdf>

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ https://addisinsight.net/2024/11/devastating-drone-attack-in-north-gojjam-leaves-dozens-dead-including-women-and-children/#google_vignette

⁵⁵ <https://www.eepa.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Situation-Report-EEPA-Horn-No.-595-9-December-2024.pdf>

⁵⁶ <https://borkena.com/2024/12/08/ethiopia-govt-claims-37-government-officials-killed-in-amhara-region/>

Another drone strike killed at least 11 in a school and destroyed crops in a village near Debre Birhan on 6 December. As before and in Oromia Region, witnesses and relatives of victims were warned not to speak to media. ‘Those who do speak are detained and never seen again’ said one witness to *The Reporter*.⁵⁷

On 18 December, a bomb explosion at a government rally in Bahir Dar killed one and injured several, as Fano militants targeted government supporters, while over 10,000, including young children in Bugna district were experiencing severe food shortage.⁵⁸

Detention

On 6 October, the EHRC reported that many government employees and members of political parties, media and civil society were being arbitrarily and illegally detained in the cities of Bahar Dar and Gondar.⁵⁹

EEPA stated on 10 October that 10,000 civilians had been arrested and held *incommunicado* in military camps. *Amnesty International* stated on 6 November that the four makeshift detention camps in which they were held, were being extended.⁶⁰

Refugees attacked by Fano and ENDF



Human Rights Watch wrote on 17 October of lethal attacks on Sudanese refugees since mid-2023.⁶¹ Refugees were exposed to repeated attacks by Amhara militia and/or Fano, and subjected to robbing and beating. Three had been killed.

Over 1,000 left two camps at Awlala and Kumer, West Gondar, in May 2024, but were prevented by police from reaching Gondar city and were forced to live in a roadside forest. UNHCR moved over 2,000 from Awlala and Kumer to a new site, Aftit, also in West Gondar, in July.

Refugees in Awlala forest refused to move, fearing more violence, but were attacked by gunmen ‘almost daily’ until compelled to move nearer the border at Metema town. Although initially allowed to live in roadside makeshift shelters near Metema, they were beaten and their shelters destroyed on 21 August, compelling them to move to the town’s transit centre.

ENDF soldiers told them to go back to Sudan, if they didn’t like staying in Ethiopia. ‘Several hundred’ were forcibly returned to Sudan.

On 1 September, fighting between Fano and ENDF increased in the area of the Metema transit centre and Aftit camp.

Eritrean refugees at Alemwach camp, North Gondar, told *The New Humanitarian* of constant robberies, kidnappings, and physical attacks from Fano or regional militia. Some were

⁵⁷ <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/43155/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.eepa.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Situation-Report-EEPA-Horn-No.-598-19-December-2024.pdf>

⁵⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/100069542521688/posts/852209163773827/#?chb>

⁶⁰ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/11/ethiopia-end-the-month-long-arbitrary-detention-of-thousands-in-amhara-region/>

⁶¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/10/17/ethiopia-fighting-abuses-putting-sudanese-refugees-risk>

stabbed and shot while the attackers stole mobile phones, cash, and other items. At least nine had been killed in the last year.⁶²

Aid withheld from Oromo refugees

Addis Standard described Oromo IDPs being deprived of food and assistance in a camp near Debre Behan city, on 29 October.⁶³

Government support to 714 Oromo households in Bakelo IDP camp was withdrawn because IDPs had refused to return to Oromia, due to conflict and insecurity. Over 5,000 others at the camp continue to get assistance.

Three camps around Debre Birhan house 23,000 IDPs. Another 7,700 live without shelter or support in the city. There are 418,000 IDPs in Amhara Region; in 88 camps and living among host communities.

Nearly 4,300 were returned to East Wallega, West Wallega and West Showa in three waves between February and May. The government aimed to repatriate many more, 60-70,000 Oromo IDPs from Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regions, according to the report.



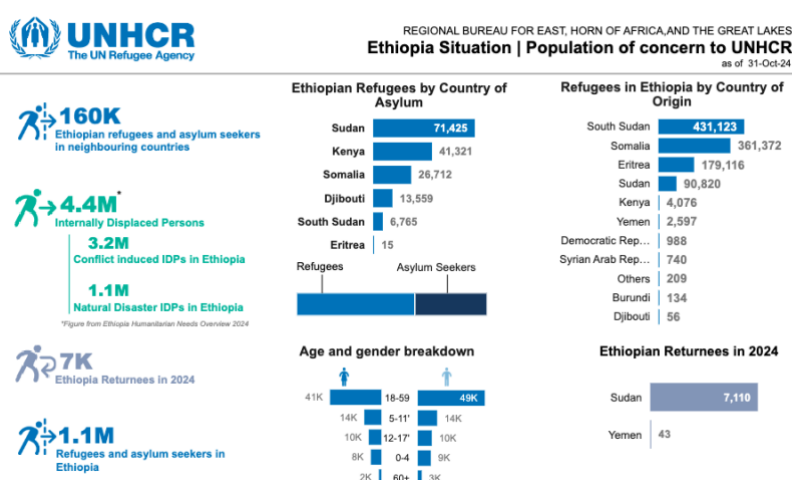
Over 1,000, who were reported in March to have been forcibly returned to Oromia, described being 'embroiled in turmoil and conflict' in East Wallega. Many returned to Debre Birhan.

Those who returned again to Debre Birhan told of difficulties obtaining aid. One described being forced to sell some of the family's monthly flour ration of 15 kg in order to pay rent.

Refugee situations

At the end of October, UNHCR reported there were 160,000 registered asylum-seekers and refugees from Ethiopia in neighbouring countries (see right).⁶⁴

The largest numbers were in Sudan (71,425), Kenya (41,321) and Somalia (26,712) with fewer in Djibouti (13,559) and South Sudan (6,765).



Countries which do not border Ethiopia but which host significant numbers of the country's refugees (Egypt, Yemen, South Africa, for example) are not included in this analysis. Also, difficulties in obtaining accurate and up-to-date figures, especially of unregistered migrants,

⁶² https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2024/11/21/refugees-ethiopia-amhara-region-continue-face-almost-daily-attacks?utm_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm_campaign=21cc16122c-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_ENGLISH_AFRICA&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-21cc16122c-75432817

⁶³ <https://addisstandard.com/over-700-families-at-bakelo-camp-in-amhara-region-struggle-as-aid-runs-dry/>

⁶⁴ <https://reporting.unhcr.org/east-and-horn-of-africa-and-great-lakes-ethiopia-situation-population-concern>

lead to the underestimation of affected populations. Furthermore, UNHCR does not differentiate between populations from different regions of Ethiopia and does not publish figures for Somaliland separately from Somalia.

Thus there is limited and patchy information about these vulnerable and unrepresented people.

Despite increasing global demand, with over 36 million refugees and 62 million IDPs, the funding for UNHCR has been cut. It is the only UN body which has to find its own funds and donor governments have slashed their contributions.

Underfunded and understaffed, UNHCR is in the process of handing over its registration and status determination work to host governments in Djibouti, Somaliland, Egypt and Kenya. This is overdue, because delays for UNHCR appointments are approaching or exceeding one year; unacceptable for vulnerable, destitute people.

Status determination for Oromo asylum applicants is hindered by Amhara disinformation that the current government of Ethiopia is ‘an Oromo government’ and that persecution of Oromo is exaggerated. This has resulted in high refusal rates, at least until recently, in Djibouti, Somaliland, Egypt and Kenya.

Conflict in Tigray, Amhara and Oromia regions is driving a lucrative trafficking trade. The driving forces are most extreme in Tigray, where there are over 970,000 IDPs,⁶⁵ social infrastructure is devastated from the war, there is 80% youth unemployment and starvation is the most common cause of death.⁶⁶

Traffickers are abusive criminals who predate on migrants with lethal violence, rape and robbery. Organ harvesting of kidneys, if extortion of relatives failed to raise money, occurred at least up to 2012.⁶⁷



There are three main routes for those fleeing Ethiopia. Refugees take the ‘first gate open.’

The **northern route** (see left) is hampered by the civil war in Sudan. Hundreds of thousands now head for Egypt from Sudan and Palestine. Presently, there are about 900,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt and 30,000 more arriving each month, according to local NGO sources. In 2022, OSG was told there were about 10,000 Oromo among nearly 16,000 from Ethiopia, in Egypt,⁶⁸ where the newly-signed refugee law, handing registration of refugees over to the Egyptian government, is soon to be tested. Thousands of Sudanese refugees were rounded up in Egypt in early 2024, detained and sent back to Sudan.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ <https://tigratv.com/en/nearly-one-million-idps-havent-returned-to-their-homes-in-tigray-mekelle-branch-of-ethiopia-institution-of-the-ombudsman-reports/>

⁶⁶ <https://x.com/addisstandard/status/1800846351955099732> and <https://www.eepa.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Situation-Report-EEPA-Horn-No.-598-19-December-2024.pdf>

⁶⁷ OSG Report 61, p.28, <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Report-61-25-January-2023-Abuse-in-Ethiopia-and-abuse-in-Egypt-a-rock-and-a-hard-place-Accounts-from-83-Oromo-refugees-in-Cairo.pdf>

⁶⁸ OSG Report 61, <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Report-61-25-January-2023-Abuse-in-Ethiopia-and-abuse-in-Egypt-a-rock-and-a-hard-place-Accounts-from-83-Oromo-refugees-in-Cairo.pdf>

⁶⁹ *New Humanitarian*, 25 April 2024

To the west of Egypt, Libya hosts at least 725,000 migrants,⁷⁰ at least 5,000 of whom are detained illegally in centres where exploitation, slavery and extortion are rife. EU money and equipment, including coastguard vessels, were given to Libya in late 2017. This reduced Mediterranean refugee boat traffic by 80%. Nonetheless, over 31,000 are known to have drowned in the Mediterranean since 2014, trying to reach Europe. Up to twice that number die in the Libyan desert on their way to the coast.⁷¹ Tunisia, too, abuses refugees, rounding them up on the shore and from the sea, again with EU-funded coastguards, and dumping them in the desert on the Algerian border.⁷²

The **eastern route** (right) is similarly fraught with danger and insecurity at many points in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Red Sea and Yemen. Guides taking refugees across deserts and borders with Djibouti and Somaliland cheat, rob and rape them. In Djibouti, *en route* to Yemen, migrants are exposed to extortion and rape, but over 97,000 made the perilous boat trip in 2023 and this number is likely to have been higher in 2024, although not at the 2019 peak of 138,000.⁷³



Since 2014, IOM has recorded 1,300 deaths by drowning on this route, including 337 from January to August 2024, going to and from Yemen.⁷⁴



Ethiopian migrant repatriation centre in Yemen, May 2024

Addis Standard reported on 30 December that nearly 185,000 crossed from Ethiopia into Djibouti in 2024, *en route* to Yemen, an increase of 50% from 2023. Tigrayans accounted for 39%, Amhara 36% and Oromo 18%.⁷⁵ Danger of extortion, torture and ransom by traffickers is increasing.

Yemen has a migrant population of 308,000.⁷⁶ Of its 33.7 million population, 23.4 million (73%) depend on aid: there are over 4 million IDPs and nearly 96,000 refugees and asylum seekers.⁷⁷ Forced conscription for the Houthi insurgents and aerial bombardment aimed at

Houthi strongholds are among the risks they face. Hundreds have been shot dead by Saudi border guards,⁷⁸ when attempting to enter Saudi Arabia, the desired destination.

Thousands opt to stay southwest of the Red Sea, to join the relatively stable, predominately Oromo, communities in Djibouti and Somaliland and, to a lesser extent, Puntland and Somalia. In Djibouti, there are about 10,000 Oromo among 13,000 from Ethiopia and 13,500

⁷⁰ <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/libya-migrant-report-52-march-may-2024#:~:text=IOM%20Libya's%20Displacement%20Tracking%20Matrix,IOM%2C%20Libya> .

⁷¹ *InfoMigrants*, 10 July 2024.

⁷² *Washington Post*, 21 May 2024.

⁷³ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/article/2024/may/08/soaring-number-of-migrants-trapped-in-yemen-face-abuse-and-starvation-say-ngos>

⁷⁴ <https://eastandhornofafrica.iom.int/news/45-dead-and-134-missing-tragic-incident-djibouti-coast#:~:text=This%20underscores%20the%20urgent%20need,the%20appeal%20remains%20severely%20underfunded>.

⁷⁵ <https://addisstandard.com/deprived-of-economic-opportunities-thousands-of-tigrays-youth-migrate-abroad-only-to-face-exploitation-torture-by-traffickers/>

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/countries/yemen>

⁷⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/08/21/saudi-arabia-mass-killings-migrants-yemen-border>

from Somalia.⁷⁹ In Somaliland, there are approximately 15,000 registered and 10,000 unregistered Oromo.⁸⁰

The **southern route** involves exposure to extortion and violence at the border crossing to Kenya and severe abuses from traffickers taking migrants further south, eventually to South Africa.⁸¹ Corrupt police and/or UNHCR officials profit from refugees in Kenya. According to UNHCR, Kenya hosts over 41,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from Ethiopia, among a total of 796,000, mostly from Somalia and South Sudan. About 45% are in Dadaab camps and 40% in Kakuma. Only 16% are urban refugees.⁸² Dwindling food rations for those in camps and violence from corrupt police were reported in OSG Report 65.

Djibouti refolement

Abdallah Ahmed Ali was abducted by Djibouti police in the middle of the night on 17 August. It was erroneously reported in Report 67 that he was not deported, but he was indeed subject to refolement back to Ethiopia, with Roba Elemo and up to 15 others.

Abdallah told OSG that he did not know where he was for the first ten days. The 48 year-old was then detained with nine others in Dire Dawa prison, apparently because he had attended a wedding in Djibouti two years previously, from where there were false reports of OLF fundraising.

Two months later, after investigations, he was released: but he was told to report to the police every week. He went to Finfinnee and thence to walk over the Kenya border, accompanied by paid traffickers, arriving in Nairobi on 29 November.

Shortly after his abduction in Djibouti, he had an appointment with Canadian Immigration officials regarding sponsored resettlement. He missed this opportunity because of his detention. Abdallah had been in Djibouti for over 13 years. He is now starting the whole process again, with his first UNHCR appointment in March 2025.

Somaliland conflicts

The 13 November election was peaceful, free, fair and transparent. Waddani opposition party leader, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi (Cirro) was elected President with 64% of the vote. He took office in a smooth transition process one month later, on 13 December.

One of the first changes was the removal of the abusive NDRA Chairman, Abdulkarim Ahmed Mohamed (Xinif) and the establishment of a new Ministry of Displacement and Humanitarian Needs to replace NDRA.

This body is tasked with registering and determining refugee status on all outstanding asylum claims within six months. Failure to attend interview will result in file closure, the Oromo community has been told.

Refugees remain destitute since the withdrawal of family subsistence support and employment remains very hard to obtain. There was social unrest in October/November in which one refugee was stabbed and killed, but no details were given. A woman refugee in

⁷⁹ OSG Report 65, p.41, <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/OSG-Report-65-14-March-2024.pdf>

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* pp.32-38.

⁸¹ OSG Report 49, <https://oromiasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Report-49-South-Africa-June-2013-Sanctuary-at-a-price.pdf>

⁸² <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/07/UNHCR-Kenya-Operational-Update-May-2024-.pdf>

Hargeisa was unconscious two days after being beaten at the end of December because she was somehow related to those affected by disturbances at the Ethiopian border (see below).

There is still bias against Oromo obtaining refugee status, compared to much higher success rates for Amhara and Tigrayan applicants.

Although the elections reflect local stability, there is concern because of international disputes following the agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia on 1 January 2024 regarding access to the Somaliland coast.

Bickering between Ethiopia and Somalia which followed the Memorandum of Understanding included expelling a Councillor from the Ethiopian embassy on 29 October and criticism at UN Security Council meetings.

Somalia announced on 23 October its objection to the inclusion of Ethiopian troops in the African Union Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) which is scheduled to take over from the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) in January 2025.

On 6 December, Somalia accused Ethiopia of moving its troops and inciting inter-clan conflict in South Gedo, in the semi-autonomous member state of Jubaland.⁸³ There had been clashes between federal Somali and Jubaland forces on 5 December, from which the national army was forced to withdraw after heavy losses.⁸⁴

Armed forces, suspected to be disaffected members of Somaliland's defence force and too heavily armed to be clan militia, crossed over the border into Harshin district of Ethiopia's Somali Region on 24 December and killed a local official and his two body guards, and then killed two of the police who came to investigate.

The Somali Region (Liyuu) police then attacked the belligerents and over a few days, at least 30 police officers and 53 civilians were killed. ENDF forced them back over the border on 27 December after a meeting between Ethiopian and Somaliland officials in Jigjiga the previous day.^{85,86}

Meanwhile, President Erdogan of Türkiye brokered talks between PM Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia and Somali's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on 11 December, in which they agreed to resolve their dispute over Ethiopia's access to the sea peacefully, with more negotiations due in February 2025. President Erdogan promised 'my brother Sheikh Mohamud will give the necessary support for accessing the sea.'

However, Somalia's objection to the inclusion of an Ethiopian contingent in AUSSOM was restated after Sheikh Mohamud made a second visit to Eritrea on 25 December.

According to a United Nations report in August, ATMIS has been reducing the strength of the AU forces from about 20,000 to under 13,000. Under the current arrangement, at least 3,000 Ethiopian soldiers are officially included in the mission to help control al-Shabab. Another 5,000 to 7,000 Ethiopian soldiers are stationed in several regions under a separate bilateral agreement.⁸⁷ What happens to these troops remains to be seen.

⁸³ <https://www.news24.com/news24/africa/news/somalia-accuses-ethiopia-of-interference-inciting-conflict-among-clans-20241206>

⁸⁴ <https://www.eepa.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Situation-Report-EEPA-Horn-No.-596-13-December-2024.pdf>

⁸⁵ <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/43150/>

⁸⁶ https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Dec/199528/ethiopian_military_closes_border_with_somaliland_as_fighting_erupts_in_somali_region.aspx

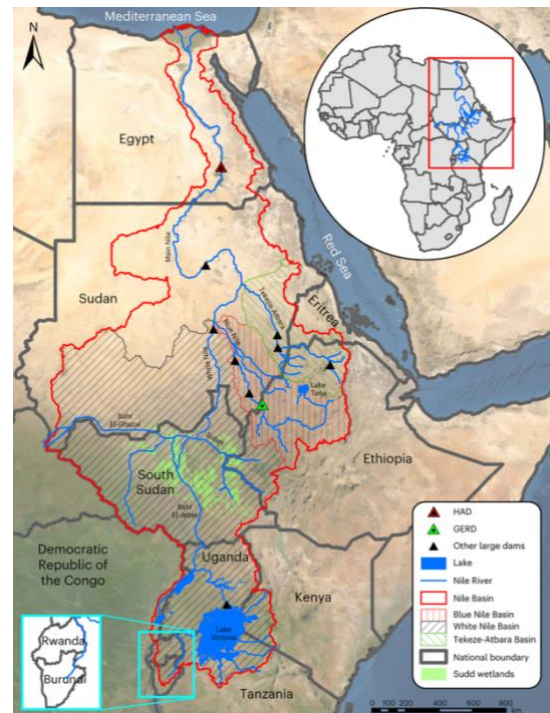
⁸⁷ <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-insists-ethiopia-not-be-part-of-new-au-mission-/7858887.html>

Nile basin agreement and GERD

According to the Nile River Basin Cooperation Framework Agreement,⁸⁸ and an explanatory video by *Real Life Lore*,⁸⁹ nine countries have been discussing the use of the waters of the Nile for over a decade, joined more recently by South Sudan. Eritrea also has observer status.

Egypt and Sudan have rejected the agreement reached by Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo), which was formalised by the African Union on 4 September and officially adopted by Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda on 13 October.

The Blue Nile arises in the Ethiopian highlands and constitutes 59% of the Nile water in Egypt. The White Nile, which contributes the other 41%, begins in the Great Lakes, taking water from Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, DRC, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan before joining the Blue Nile in Khartoum.



95% of Egypt's 102 million population live along the Nile, which contributes 97% of the country's total water supply. Unsurprisingly therefore, Egypt is concerned about the use of the Nile's waters upstream. In particular, the country is concerned with the rate of filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the GERD, which is now near completion.

Britain bargained with Egypt for control of the Suez Canal, in the 1929 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, and in exchange guaranteed Egypt's right to all of the Nile waters, without consulting any of the other nine countries through which it flows.

Instead of negotiating the rate of filling of the GERD with Egypt, Ethiopia took advantage of the power vacuum following the 2011 'Arab Spring' revolution and began construction without consultation.

Egypt later requested that the filling of the GERD reservoir would take place over 20 years, to minimise the effect on Egypt's water supply. In 2023, it reduced its demand to 11 years. In 2020, Ethiopia decided to fill the reservoir over seven years. Egypt asked the UN, African Union, USA and EU to mediate, but Ethiopia refused to cooperate.

Filling the reservoir has occurred in each rainy season, July to September, since the dam was completed in 2020. The fifth filling has just finished.

The USA reduced its aid to Ethiopia by \$100 million because of its unilateral decision to begin filling. A few months after the second filling in 2021, Egypt and Sudan referred the situation to the UN Security Council. A larger amount was added to the reservoir in 2022.

⁸⁸ <https://nilebasin.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Announcement%20of%20the%20Entry%20into%20force%20of%20the%20CFA%20%20on%2013%20October%202024.pdf>

⁸⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2928515370620015&rdid=7O4I1owMANIX4QYF>

Fortunately, exceptionally heavy rains occurred in 2019 and 2020. However, Egypt will be left without options if there is now a drought. Ethiopia's air-force of outdated MiG-23 and SU-27 aircraft will be no match for Egypt's better equipped air-force should aerial attacks be launched on the GERD.

Sudan has already taken over the al Fashqa triangle (bordering Tigray and Amhara regions) and expelled its farmers back to Ethiopia, in 2020. Egypt allegedly supplied the TPLF with weapons to fight the Ethiopian forces before it was defeated in 2022.

Meanwhile, the GERD began producing 540 megawatts of electricity in early 2024 and Ethiopia expects it to produce over 5,000 megawatts when at full capacity – enough to power Ethiopia and export electricity to its neighbours.