

## ADDA BILISUMMAA OROMOO (ABO-WBO)

**OLF-OLA HIGH COMMAND**

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جبهة تحرير أرومو

رقم

### Regarding the Situation in East Walaga

It has come to our attention that the current prevailing media narrative on the situation in East Walaga has been heavily distorted from the facts on the ground. Again we are seeing the media fall into the trap of being misled by the well-organized propaganda campaigns of the irredentist National Association of Amhara's (NaMA) diaspora wing. This has happened before in regards to coverage of events in Wollo, Metekel, Horo Guduru, and West Walaga. We want to set the record clear on what exactly has been occurring in East Walaga this month and the events that have led up to it.

First, it is important to note that the situation in East Walaga is different from what occurred previously in Horo Guduru and West Walaga. In those cases, government-aligned militias working in coordination with Oromia Special Forces committed horrific massacres of Amhara civilians intending to blame the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). As the Oromia regional state government and the Ethiopian federal government became more focused on the Tigray War, we have seen a complete halt to those false-flag operations- a hint to who was responsible. Since then, as was the case before, Amharas continue to live peacefully in OLA-administered areas without any issue. As we did at the time and repeatedly since then, for the sake of justice we are still demanding an independent investigation into those massacres- we are confident the truth is on our side.

In regards to the situation in East Walaga, over the last year, we have seen the rise of well-trained Amhara militias arriving in the area. Specifically, they have been operating in the part of East Walaga that lies between Nekemte and the Blue Nile (which is the border to Amhara Regional State). On April 15th, armed Amharas drove out Oromo farmers and burned their

crops in a place called Mender 10 (also known as Lalistu Angar). The extent of the fires was large enough to be caught on satellite which shows over 3000 hectares of farmland being burned as well as homes (refer to this thread:

<https://twitter.com/Quen10Tarantino/status/1384417207912906755>). In the same month,

seemingly in coordination, armed Amharas launched attacks further north in East Walaga- specifically the towns of Agamsa and KIRAMU. The situation was dire enough for both the East Walaga Zone Communication Bureau and the Gida Ayana District Communication Bureau to issue similar statements on Facebook decrying the actions of this militia ((i)

<https://www.facebook.com/wdhkm.godinawallaggaabahaa/posts/499574804786826>, (ii)

<https://www.facebook.com/giddaa.ayyaanaa.9/posts/895531644324976>). According to these

statements, the militia had targeted and killed 13 Oromo civilians and destroyed 65 structures (including 47 homes). The statements refer to the militia as a “radical force” trying to agitate revolt among Amhara communities that had been resettled in East Walaga during the famine of the Derg era. They also state that the militia, which wore “pale uniforms” and carried an “illegal flag with the symbol of a lion”, was trying to instigate ethnic clashes between Oromos and the Amhara communities in the area. Flyers were being posted in the town of Gutin stating that Oromos had to “leave the ancestral land of Amharas”.

According to our sources, the militia consisted of fighters without uniforms as well as fighters wearing the tan uniform of the Amhara Special Forces. While the civilian administration of the East Walaga zone denounced their operations, the Oromia security officials did not commit to stopping their activities because the militia was also clashing with OLA forces. It was only after the Amhara militia killed 4 Oromia Special Forces unprovoked that the security forces began to take measures. They evicted many Amhara communities not just from Mender 10, but also from further north in KIRAMU. The militia was also driven off the main roads and they remained dormant until the beginning of this month. According to the account given by a resident of KIRAMU to BBC (<https://www.bbc.com/afaanoromoo/oduu-58313687>), the male

members of the evicted Amharas left their wives and daughters in Amhara regional state and returned to KIRAMU, Agamsa, and Haro carrying weapons. According to our forces, a large contingent of armed Amhara men in civilian clothing were seen arriving in KIRAMU, Sire Doro, Agamsa, and Amuru after crossing the Blue Nile on August 13th - exactly one day after Oromia Special Forces retreated from the area. Their arrival in KIRAMU on that day is substantiated by eyewitness accounts to the BBC. Since then they have been active throughout the area, driving people out of their homes and burning the houses down. For example, in Lalistu Sombo (near KIRAMU), they burned down 18 homes belonging to the following individuals plus two others whose names are currently unknown.:

- 1) Guddataa Jabeessaa
- 2) Gammachuu Jabeessaa
- 3) Fiqaaduu Gammachuu
- 4) Faqqadaa Gamachuu
- 5) Shaggaa Gammachuu
- 6) Baabbee Gabulee
- 7) Dammashaa Girshoo
- 9) Lammii Jabeessaa
- 10) Waaqooo Jabeessaa
- 11) Katamaa Jabeessaa
- 12) Badhasaa Nagarii
- 13) Bukkuu Galataa
- 14) Margaa Abbuyee
- 15) Tamasgeen Abbuyee
- 16) Hordofa Abuye

When our forces arrived in KIRAMU, it was these Amhara fighters that began engaging them in a firefight. They were armed not just with AK-47s but had heavier weaponry such as DShK (locally known as Dishkas) and Dragunov snipers. It was only after they sustained heavy casualties that they were driven out of KIRAMU. That same day, in Sire Doro, these newly arrived fighters slit the throats of 7 Oromo civilians accusing them of passing information to OLA forces. It took several engagements with these forces to drive them out of Sire Doro, Agamsa, and Amuru.

Similarly, further south in Uke Karsa and Horo Aleltu, in what again looks like coordinated activity, a unit of uniformed Amhara Special Forces alongside federal forces clashed

with the OLA. Following that clash, they severely beat random young men in Uke Karsa, killing 3 of them. From what we know, the federal military's coordination with this force has caused a rift between the federal military and the Oromia regional forces due to what had happened in Mender 10 back in April of this year.

Our forces are still engaging with this newly deployed Amhara militia who have been undertaking a campaign of burning down the homes of Oromo civilians to intimidate them into leaving the area. So far over a hundred homes have been burned. These fighters are a well-armed, well-trained group with a clear objective to agitate the peaceful Amhara communities in East Walaga into revolt by sparking ethnic clashes. Even though this militia does not wear uniforms and often operates by blending with the existing Amhara communities that have lived side-by-side with our people for almost a century, our forces have gone above and beyond to ensure no innocent civilians are harmed.

However, we are now seeing the usual cabal of diaspora-based propagandists working on behalf of NaMA and the irredentist elements of the Amhara Regional State government to push a false narrative in the interest of their political agenda. Due to this, the contrast between the current prevailing media narrative and the facts on the ground are night and day. They are purposefully presenting the casualties suffered by the Amhara militia as the victims of random, wanton attacks by the OLA on innocent Amhara civilians. It is deeply disappointing and worrying that the Amharic Program of a reputable media organization such as Deutsche Welle has echoed this propaganda and passed it on as a substantiated fact. If there were any innocent civilians caught in the crossfire, we are prepared to accept responsibility and we will do what we can to assure there is justice. We once again demand an independent investigation by the United Nations or any other concerned third party so that the world can understand just how easily the truth gets distorted.

Moreover, we would also like to point out that what is happening in East Walaga right now is not a unique case in Oromia; Amhara state security forces have crossed the border and

launched an invasion in Fantale, Karrayu- located in the northeastern part of Oromia. There has been heavy fighting between Karrayu Oromo civilians and Amhara security forces which have encroached several kilometers into Oromia. In that situation, we have seen the resettling of people from Amhara state into the captured land in Oromia. This is all part of a trend we are seeing throughout the country: claims of “ancestral ownership” made by the radical, powerful elements in the Amhara regional state’s government are being enforced by the state’s security apparatus. That has resulted in the terror we have seen in Western Tigray, Metekel, Wollo, and now East Walaga and Karrayu. It has been a significant destabilizing factor in the region. When enabled and allowed to reach its objectives; we will see the kind of brutal ethnic cleansing that has happened in Western Tigray be repeated throughout the country. It should be remembered that Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonen- himself a senior official of the Amhara Prosperity Party- not only publicly called for the arming and organizing of Amhara civilians- but personally oversaw training sessions in Metekel

[\(https://addisstandard.com/news-deputy-pm-recommends-arming-civilians-in-metekel-benishangul-gumuz-region-as-spate-of-attacks-by-armed-men-leaves-dozens-killed/\)](https://addisstandard.com/news-deputy-pm-recommends-arming-civilians-in-metekel-benishangul-gumuz-region-as-spate-of-attacks-by-armed-men-leaves-dozens-killed/). In Wollo, Amhara regional forces launched several attacks on Oromo communities over two years intending to spark a large ethnic clash to use as a pretense to disarm and occupy the local Oromo farming communities

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/93ybyy/they-set-everything-on-fire-the-paramilitary-forces-killing-people-theyre-meant-to-protect>). There was a horrific case of mob violence when an ambulance carrying injured Oromo civilians from Wollo to the federal capital city (Finfinee) was attacked and everyone inside was brutally murdered

[\(https://addisstandard.com/analysis-horrifying-accounts-of-violence-in-amhara-region-fed-ombudsman-slams-regional-govt-performance-says-303-killed-so-far/\)](https://addisstandard.com/analysis-horrifying-accounts-of-violence-in-amhara-region-fed-ombudsman-slams-regional-govt-performance-says-303-killed-so-far/). It was only when the Oromo farmers began to defend themselves that the NaMA’s propaganda arm began to promote a heavily distorted account of events. This has been an extremely irresponsible undertaking on

the part of the Amhara elite implemented with no regard for the lives of everyday Amhara and Oromo civilians. OLA forces do not consider any nationality or people their enemy, they are on a mission to save this region from the brutality of this oppressive regime and remain committed to that cause.

The international community and media must act responsibly and do their due diligence when covering and considering these events. We live in an age of fake news and propaganda, it is easy to fall prey to the specter of legitimacy that propagandist outfits funded by the Ethiopian state (for example; the Global Ethiopian Advocacy Nexus (GLEAN) and the “Genocide Prevention in Ethiopia” organization) rely on to have their falsehoods accepted.

Victory to the Oromo and All Oppressed Peoples!

OLF-OLA High Command

August 25th, 2021