



8 May 2019
Press Release

Re: Requesting urgent intervention to uphold the rights of Benshangul Gumuz civilians

We have confirmed that Benshangul Gumuz civilians are increasingly targeted and executed by the highly armed and well-trained Amhara militia. They were trained, radicalized and fully armed with modern machine guns by a National Movement for Amhara (NAMA).

According to the eye witnesses, over 500 Shinasha people in Benshangul-Gumuz Region, Jawi Woreda, were suddenly executed; tens of thousands of civilians were also made to flee their own villages for their lives between May 1 and 2, 2019. The main victims were civilians including children, women and elderly. Homes were also torched in that outbreak of violence.

We have also observed that the civilians are getting killed for no apparent reasons by a highly armed Amhara regional special force in Benshangul Gumuz regional state. This armed group is not only targeting solely indigenous and legitimate owners of the land; but also, hundreds of children and elderly are getting summarily executed for a simple reason of being different from their killers in the aspect of their culture, skin colour and political beliefs.

The Ethiopian Government neither condemn the killings of civilians nor asked for apology for failing to safeguard them. Although some authorities claim the restoration of the order, this is far from the truth as the Government hasn't so far take any justifiable action against the killers and forces behind these tragic executions.

Background information

Recently, the Amhara Special force further threatened the Oromo people in relation to the ownership claims of Finfinnee (Addis Ababa). These group further vowed to repeat their success in Benshangul in Wallo and other parts of Amhara-Oromia borders.

In 2003, for instance, between 430 and 500 unarmed civilians were massacred by those who colonised their land for a simple reason of silencing them whilst expropriating their resources and land in Gambella region. The same massacre is now unfolding in Shaka zone on a Shakacho people by the same highlanders. Tens of thousands of Oromo, Ogaden Somali and Sidama civilians were executed in the last 27 years alone.

Call of Action

Advocacy for Oromia, a non-profit advocacy organisation working to ensure that the people's rights and wishes are respected, has deeply admired much of the work done by both regional and federal government to restore peace and stability in the region.

In fact, political differences may divide some of the regional states in the country. But upholding human rights is in the interest of every state. Peoples of these regions also seek a common agenda: rights, peace, security, justice, freedom, and sustainable development.

We firmly believe that human rights are a powerful medicine, which heals wounds and develops resilience. Thus, we show our consistent and unrestricted solidarity until justice is served on their behalf by bringing those who have killed and maimed their sons and daughters to an independent justice.

Advocacy for Oromia, therefore, unanimously condemn with the strongest possible terms such barbaric actions toward the unarmed civilians, children, women and elderly of Benshangul Gumuz. Furthermore,

1. We urge the Amhara's regional state to exercise utmost restraint and lawfully handle its anarchically behaving special forces that has been primarily trained to maintain law and order. There won't be any peace and security as long as some groups are fighting to dominate and dehumanise fellow mankind.
2. We demand the federal government to immediately intervene and stop the on-going execution of powerless civilians whose lives are put at the mercy of their barbaric assailants.
3. We urge the federal government to immediately investigate and bring those responsible for such horrific and inhumane actions to civilians to justice.
4. We advise the international human rights group and western countries politicians to earnestly bring this unsettling massacre of civilians to the attentions of obviously sleeping Ethiopian authorities by urging them to take meaningful and corrective measures as a matter of urgency.
5. We call up on all Ethiopian peoples to unconditionally condemn such barbarism and demand the Amhara regional state to stop its inhumane actions to the unarmed civilians.

We will always continuously work for and speaks up for the voiceless people.

Press Release by Advocacy for Oromia,

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