

URGENT ACTION

OROMO CIVILIANS KILLED, WOUNDED BY THE MILITARY

At least 22 members of the Ethiopian Oromo community have been killed or wounded by military officers in two separate incidents.

On 11 February, six trucks carrying between 50 and 60 soldiers and loaded with food supplies arrived at the Hamaressa camp for internally displaced people (IDP) in Ethiopia. Internally displaced **Ethiopian Oromos** at the camp surrounded the trucks and some tried to access the vehicles as they entered the camp. A confrontation ensued between the military personnel accompanying the trucks and the Ethiopian Oromo IDPs. The military personnel then opened fire on those who had surrounded the trucks. Two people were killed at the site – one of them being a local police officer who had asked the military to leave the camp. After the incident, a nearby hospital confirmed that a total of four people had died as a result of gunshot wounds they sustained during the struggle between the military and the IDPs.

In September 2016, hundreds of Ethiopian Oromos left the Somali region of Ethiopia, as ethnically based inter-communal clashes broke out between them and Ethiopian Somalis. Many Ethiopian Oromos fled after they saw their fellow ethnic community members being evicted, rounded up or killed. Thousands of Ethiopian Oromos remain displaced in IDP camps in Oromia.

On 12 February, in response to tensions between Ethiopian Oromo youth and Ethiopian Somali herders in Madawalabu city in Oromia, military personnel patrolling the area opened fire in an open market killing four and injuring at least 14 people, all of whom belong to the Ethiopian Oromo community.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the excessive and unlawful use of force by the Ethiopian military in the above cases.

Please write immediately in English or Amharic:

- Calling on Ethiopian authorities to ensure that the security forces stop using unlawful lethal force during policing exercises;
- Urging them to conduct an independent, impartial, credible, transparent and thorough investigation into the killing and wounding of Ethiopian Oromos in the two incidents and ensure anyone found responsible is brought to justice in trials that meet international standards without recourse to the death penalty; and
- Calling on them to ensure the victims and their families receive reparations for harm done.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 3 APRIL 2018 TO:

Minister of Defense

Siraj Regassa
FDRE Ministry of Defense
Ras Damtew Desta street
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
P.O.Box 1373

Fax: +251-111240308

Email: info@fdremod.gov.et

Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General

Getachew Ambaye
Jomo Kenyata St.
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
P.O. Box 1370
Email: justabr@ethionet.et

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAILEMICHAEL ABERRA AFEWORK, Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 17 Princes Gate SW7 1PZ, 020 7589 7212, Fax 020 7584 7054, info@ethioembassy.org.uk, www.ethioembassy.org.uk, Salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Ethiopian security forces have frequently employed excessive force to clamp down on mass protests that have gripped the nation since November 2015. On 2 October 2016, hundreds of people from Ethiopia's Oromo ethnic group died while attending the annual Irrecha (Oromo Thanksgiving) Festival in the town of Bishoftu following a stampede that was triggered by security forces use of tear gas canisters and live bullets to control a restive crowd. Among the dead were some who were shot by security forces.

The government responded to the mass protests by declaring a state of emergency which lasted for ten months until it was lifted in August 2017. Within two weeks, renewed mass protests took place in many cities and towns in the Oromia region. On 26 October 2017, security forces killed at least 10 people and injured 20 in Ambo town, West Shewa Zone of the Oromia Region. Gadisa Desalegn told the Voice of America (VOA) that the special anti-riot unit of the defence forces commonly referred to as "Aghazi" were responsible for the killings. Amnesty International's sources confirmed that Aghazi forces shot and killed at least one protestor and injured another. The national defence forces were also implicated by the Oromia Regional State authorities for the death of 15 protestors in Chelenko town in Oromia's East Hararaghe Zone on 12 December 2017.

On January 20 2018, at least four people were killed in Woldiya town, some 510 km north of the capital Addis Ababa, in the Amhara Regional State during a religious festival. It was reported that members of the national defence forces opened fire on a crowd of youth chanting anti-government slogans. The incidents sparked a week long protests in Woldiya and the neighbouring towns of Kobo and Mersa in which more deaths were reported.

In mid-February 2018, the government released many political prisoners and declared another six month state of emergency in the country.

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