

Ethiopia: Christmas eve and other news

December 27, 2023



DiGiNews360

WISHES a MERRY CHRISTMAS

and a

VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR

to

ALL ITS READERS

EDITORIAL COMMENTS: www.DiGiNews360.com stands for strengthening of Democracy in the Global South so that the people can lead a life of dignity, with a critical pride in their respective ancient cultures. Though love, fraternity and brotherhood have been espoused for the benefit of humanity by many great saints, God's messengers and prophets, many of us remain mired in age-old hatreds of those, with a different ethnicity. As such, www.DiGiNews360.com calls upon the people of Ethiopia, and in particular to the leadership of Amhara youth militia, FANO to give up the path of violence.

FANO did play a creditable role as a protest movement against the former Socialist Ethiopian Government. Although Fano is hailed for being instrumental in bringing about the fall of Socialist Ethiopian Government through both non-violent and violent struggles, their current fight for the territorial integrity of the ethnic Amhara "homeland", centered around the issue of Western Tigray and the ethnic Amhara who lived there, must be conducted in a non-violent manner only.

www.DiGiNews360.com wants the people of Ethiopia to build a multi-cultural society, which has imbibed the **best traditions of the ancient Kingdom of Ethiopia and the finest and the most humane aspects of Oromos and the other ethnic groups**, which are included in today's Ethiopia.

www.DiGiNews360.com hopes all of us, and in particular all the Ethiopians, to whichever religion we may belong can take pride in the cultural heritage of the ancient Kingdom of Ethiopia.

----NEWS----

December 26, 2023: **Full Gospel Church**, located in Baro village of **Kombolcha district**, situated in the **Horo Guduru Wollega zone** of the **Oromia region**, Ethiopia: When members of the Church were participating in the *Ceremony of Scattering Corn on the Church Grounds* on Monday morning, 25 December, 2023, an **aerial drone assault** claimed eight lives and left three injured. The deceased included the **young artists Damena Lika**, aged 22, and **Dugasa Wakene**, aged 21. The three individuals who sustained **severe injuries** are currently receiving medical treatment at **Kombolcha City Hospital**.

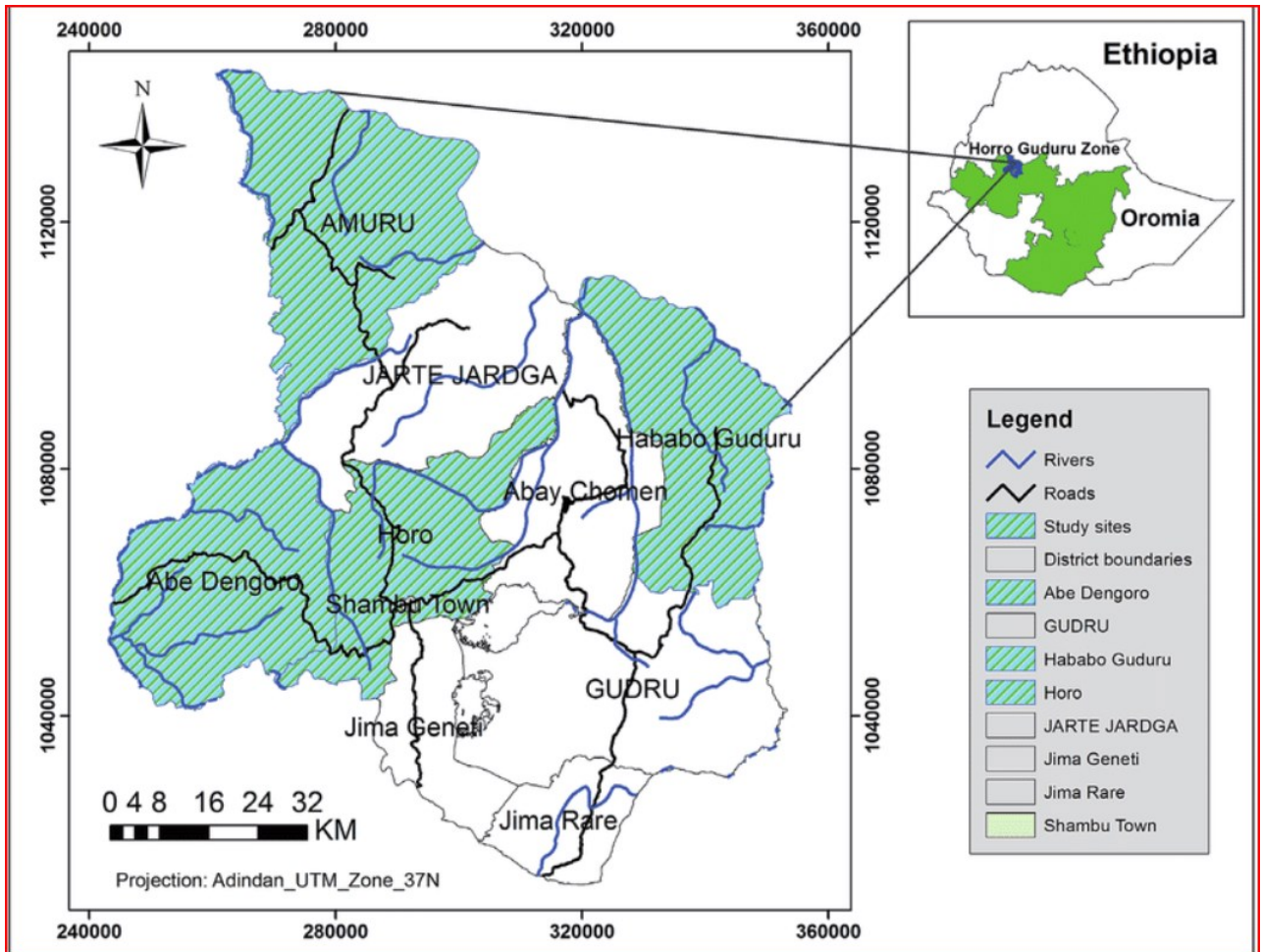
During the last year, over 100 civilians have been killed in Horo Guduru Wollega in the Oromo region of Ethiopia.

Since Tuesday morning of 26th December, “intense hostilities” between OLA combatants and government troops have started.

BACKGROUND: September 27, 2022: **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** (EHRC) said that the civilians were being killed by armed groups operating in the Horo Guduru zone of Oromo region since August 31, 2022. EHRC thinks that the Ethiopian government was not taking adequate measures to protect civilians. On 27th September, over 100 civilians were killed in the Umuru district of Horo Guduru zone in the Oromo region of Ethiopia.

There has been a recurring massacre of ethnic Amhara farming communities in the Horo Guduru area. Thousands of civilians have been killed in the Oromo region in the past four or so years.

EHRC had said that private properties including cattle were plundered and several thousand were displaced from the area during the Sept 2022 attack. Daniel Bekele, the Director, EHRC, called for authorities to consider enhancing security measures to the level that is needed to tackle the problem.



Ethiopia: Horo Guduru zone of Oromo region:

AMURU and UMURU are two spellings for the name of the same district

December 21, 2023: Addis Ababa: The government admitted that the radical ethnic **Oromo Liberation Army** (OLA) killed civilians in the Horo Guduru area. The government claimed to have killed one of the leaders of the rebel groups whom it identified as **Jal Urji**.

PM **Abiy Ahmed**'s administration claimed that the latest attack on civilians in the region, by the OLA militia, is meant to be a retaliatory action over the killing of the leader of OLA— among other factors.

OLA has announced that it has formed a military alliance with the **Tigray People's Liberation Front** (TPLF). The TPLF military commander, **General Tadesse Worede**, confirmed it during a recent press statement with media operating in the Tigray region.

The OLF-Shane, the irregular forces from the Amhara region were also said to be active in the area.

BACKGROUND: The **Oromo Liberation Army (OLA)** and the Ethiopian Government: OLA is an armed group that has been fighting the Ethiopian government since 2018. The group is classified as a “terrorist organization” by the Ethiopian government.

The OLA split from the historic **Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)** in 2018 when the latter renounced armed struggle that year when current Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power. The OLA has been **fighting for greater Oromo autonomy** in Ethiopia’s largest and most populous regional state, Oromia. The OLA is estimated to have a few thousand men, and its numbers have grown considerably in recent years. However, observers consider it insufficiently organized and armed to represent a real threat to Ethiopia’s federal power.

The Ethiopian government and the OLA have been in negotiations to end the five-year insurgency in Oromia. However, the second round of negotiations ended without agreement. The OLA had made several proposals for a genuine change in the governance of Oromia, but no agreement with the Ethiopian Government could be reached.

OLA says that the Prime Minister **Abiy Ahmed** has been centralizing power in a way that is reminiscent of Ethiopia’s imperial past. Abiy used his Oromo cultural affinity, the Qeerro/Qaarree movement, and the **Oromo Democratic Party (ODP, formerly the OPDO)** to manipulate the **Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)** and become the Prime Minister. OLA has accused Abiy’s Government of carrying out a “**new massacre**” of **civilians in the western Oromia state**. Abiy Ahmed has accused the **OLA of inflicting damage on civilians** as its fighters fled from an offensive by security forces in Oromia.

December 20, 2023: **Addis Ababa: The African Development Bank (AfDB)** withdraws foreign workers from Ethiopia after assault: AfDB has decided to withdraw all its international employees from Ethiopia following an assault on its workers by government security forces.

Last month, AfDB filed a formal complaint with Ethiopia's authorities. AfDB detailed the physical assault and hours-long detention of two of its employees on 31 October in a "very serious diplomatic incident".

Ethiopian state finance minister **Eyob Tekalign** says his government regrets the incident.

Headquartered in the Ivory Coast, AfDB is one of the largest development institutions in Africa. It provides financing to governments and private companies which invest in the continent.

The AfDB's **portfolio in Ethiopia comprises 22 projects worth \$1.2bn.**

December 18, 2023: **Addis Ababa: Ethiopian military gives Award to Turkish drone maker:** Ethiopia's military has awarded the head of Turkish drone company **Baykar** a "medal of honour" for its assistance in boosting the country's air force during the two-year civil war in Tigray.

Ethiopia's army chief handed over the award to **Haluk Bayraktar** during an annual air force show in **Bishoftu, near the capital, Addis Ababa.**

Armed drones had helped turn the tide in the civil war in the Federal Government's favour. The conflict ended in November 2022, after a peace deal was signed in South Africa.

December 14, 2023: Addis Ababa: Ethiopia defaulted on its scheduled interest payment on Eurobonds on December 11, 2023, following the end of a grace period on Monday. It thus joined Zambia, Ghana and Sri Lanka in recent years, in becoming a defaulter. "The government wanted to treat all creditors in the same way," said **Ahmed Shide**, Ethiopia's Minister of Finance on Thursday. Hence, it didn't make a \$33 million "coupon" payment on its only International Government Bond on Monday.

In its counterproposal for a restructuring, Ethiopia asked bondholders to extend the maturity to amortize from July 2028 through to January 2032, and to reduce the coupon to 5.5% from the current 6.625%. However, the face value is to remain at \$1 billion, meaning creditors **won't need to swallow a haircut on their holdings.**

Ethiopia has reached an in-principle agreement with bilateral creditors to suspend debt payments, having sought to rework its liabilities **since 2021 as a civil war in the northern Tigray region soured investor sentiment and sapped economic growth** on the basis of the **G20 Common Framework**.

The **G20 Common Framework** is a debt treatment initiative that was announced in **November 2020** to deal with the issue of unsustainable debts faced by various countries due to the impact of COVID-19. It is the Common Framework for Debt Treatments *beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative* (DSSI). The G20 put in place the DSSI to temporarily pause official debt payments to the poorest countries, followed by the Common Framework to help these countries restructure their debt and deal with insolvency and protracted liquidity problems. The **Common Framework** is available to all **International Development Association-eligible countries** and **UN Least Developed Countries** current on their debt service to the IMF and World Bank.

The G20 has also called on private creditors to participate in the initiative on comparable terms, but **only one private creditor participated**.

Debt Service Suspension Initiative Estd May 2020 (DSSI): DSSI is a program of the **World Bank** and the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** to help countries concentrate their resources on **fighting the COVID-19 pandemic** and safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of millions of the most vulnerable people. The initiative helped the world's poorest countries **by suspending debt-service payments** owed by participating countries to their creditors.

The DSSI was available to countries that were eligible to receive assistance from the **World Bank's International Development Association**, and to all nations **defined as 'least developed countries' by the United Nations**. **73 low- and lower middle-income countries** have been identified for the facility. The initiative has **suspended \$12.9 billion in debt-service payments from May 2020 to December 2021**.

DSSI borrowers committed to using freed-up resources to increase social, health, or economic spending in response to the crisis. They pledged to disclose all public sector financial commitments (involving debt and debt-like instruments) and committed to limit their non-concessional borrowing under the IMF arrangements and the **World Bank's Sustainable Development Finance Policy**.

Paris Club (Estd: 1956): Paris Club is a club or group of officials from major creditor countries. It was established in the year 1956. It aims to find sustainable solutions to the difficulties faced by debtor countries in payments. It is trying to bring non-members like China into it fold.

Economic turmoil and instability have curtailed Ethiopia's FDI inflows, according to a report by Ernst & Young.

The **Institute of International Finance** (the "IIF") estimated that debt service payments owed by DSSI-eligible countries between 1 May and the end of 2020 amount to approximately US\$11 billion for official bilateral lenders, US\$7 billion for multilateral lenders and US\$13 billion for private creditors. IIF is a **US-based trade association** representing **the private creditor community**, with 450 members, most of which are financial institutions

A group of 25 private creditors, representing over \$9 trillion in assets under management, has formed the **Africa Private Creditor Working Group** (the "APCWG") to provide a forum for the negotiation of debt relief for African countries.

Both the IIF and the APCWG said that a "one-size-fits-all" solution would be counter-productive, as it risks cutting many countries off from international commercial debt markets and could lead to an overall increase in the cost of capital for all emerging market sovereign and corporate debt issuers in the future.

December 4, 2023: **Addis Ababa**, Ethiopia: Announcement from the office of the **Chairman of Candidates Recruitment Committee**: "**Melatework Hailu** and **Tadesse Lemma** are the final candidates who run for the position of Chairperson of the **National Election Board of Ethiopia** (NEPE)."

The two candidates will be presented to Prime Minister **Dr. Abiy Ahmed**. The Prime Minister will name one of the two candidates as the Chairperson of NEPE and then the appointment will be approved by the **House of Peoples' Representatives**.

(Reference: <https://borkena.com/2023/12/04/ethiopia-committee-makes-public-names-of-final-candidates-to-lead-national-electoral-board-of-ethiopia/>)

Note: Please see "*Ethiopia: Regains Control of Lalibela, Other Important News*" dated December 5, 2022 at <https://diqinews360.com/ethiopia-regains-control-of-lalibela-other-important-news/>
