



Preliminary report on late August 2026 identity-based violence in East Wollega

Updated September 1, 2026

Overview

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) has received reports and extensive footage highlighting severe human rights violations targeting civilians across districts in western zones of Ethiopia's Oromia Regional State. The violations occurred amid ongoing armed conflict between *Oromo Prosperity Party* (OPP) regime allied forces and opposition forces led by the *Amhara Fano National Movement* (AFNM). According to available information, between August 18th and 29th, 2026 a coalition of regular and irregular forces affiliated to the OPP regime conducted widespread identity-based attacks on communities across various towns and rural neighborhoods of Gida-Ayana, Limu-Gelila and surrounding areas of East Wollega Zone (Oromia Region, Ethiopia). Based on preliminary accounts, over 68 civilians were confirmed killed, several others were injured and a significant number were displaced. The vast majority of victims were ethnic Amhara and/or followers of the *Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church* (EOTC) however numerous Tigrigna language speakers and followers of the Islamic faith were also among

the victims. The casualty toll is expected to rise once remote/blockaded rural settlements are accounted for, therefore only partial casualties are summarized by locality/kebele as follows.

- In the Central locality (Mender 22 Kebele), 23 civilians were killed, including church administrator Komos Aba Tadesse, multiple clergy members, monastics, and 85-year-old Aba Ayele Arega alongside his wife, Emahoy Eskedar Gelaw, who were both dismembered inside their home.
- In Mender 3 Kebele, 21 civilians were killed in targeted sanctuary raids and household executions, claiming the lives of local monastics as well as ethnic Tigrayan residents, including Ato Kasai Bisrat and his entire immediate family.
- In the Ali locality (Andode Kebele), 17 civilians were killed during raids on farmsteads and residential quarters, claiming the lives of young residents and agricultural workers such as 23-year-old Megdes Tamiru, and 38-year-old Gojjam Yenealem.
- In the Bechbech locality (Mender 22 Kebele), five civilians were killed, including senior church elder 74-year-old Ato Gebeyehu Tarekegn and nun Woizero Askale Mariam.
- In Anger-Gutin Town, two civilians were killed.

In addition to casualties, the attacks resulted in extensive property losses, and displacement of residents. Among the targets were four historical EOTC churches which were completely burned to the ground, including Kidist Selassie, Lemi-Teklehaimanot, Kidus Giyorgis, and Abuhe Churches. At the time of this reporting, insecurity has persisted across the zone and neighboring areas.

Context and Incident Details

According to available information, the attacks involved regular and irregular forces allied to the OPP regime (regime forces) including *Ethiopian National Defense Force* (ENDF), Oromia Region Forces [including *Gada Commandos* (GC), *Oromia Special Forces* (OSF), militias, etc], and Qeerroo (violent Oromo ultra-nationalist mobs). The attacks targeted civilian populations, local religious institutions, and private property through heavy artillery shelling, targeted shootings, house-to-house executions, physical assaults, arson, and commercial looting. While ethnic Amhara residents and EOTC sanctuaries were primarily targeted, the casualties included ethnic Tigrayan households and local Muslim worshippers.

Prior to the attacks, on August 18, regime forces deployed army contingents and heavy artillery into rural areas of Andode-Dicho, Fendika, and Waja within Gida-Ayana Woreda, as well as neighboring areas of Limu-Gelila Woreda. Regime forces simultaneously mobilized from Anger-Gutin and Gida towns toward the Teklehaimanot locality (Andode-Dicho Kebele), triggering intense firefights with AFNM units that continued throughout the day until evening, resulting in combatant casualties. Following heavy exchanges and the subsequent withdrawal of AFNM units to surrounding areas, regime forces, particularly GC units, entered Fendika. Upon entry into Fendika and surrounding rural settlements, regime forces carried out extensive retaliatory attacks against local civilians. Troops set fire to numerous private residential homes, killed livestock, looted household property, and fired directly at fleeing residents. The following day (August 19), regional officials and Oromo nationalist political factions initiated a coordinated incitement campaign on various media channels alleging that Fano forces committed abuses against ethnic Oromo civilians. The incitement triggered widespread mobilization and violent protests across neighboring urban hubs, including Uke, Tulugana, and Gida.

On August 20, regime forces accompanied by Qeerroo, entered Shashober and surrounding rural villages including residential areas and religious compounds prompting younger and able-bodied residents to flee into the surrounding fields to escape the gunfire. However, vulnerable community members, including pregnant women, nursing mothers, young children, elderly monastics, and individuals with physical or visual disabilities, remained in their homes and places of sanctuary. Subsequently, regime forces engaged in house-to-house executions and violence targeting residents.

On August 21, regime forces and Qeerroo breached the compound of Andode-Shashober Kidist Selassie Church during active religious services. The attackers executed numerous persons inside the sanctuary, including church servants and clergy. Among the victims was Komos Aba Tadesse, chief administrator of the church, who was taken away and tortured by OSF and GC before being executed, with his body later recovered in nearby farmland. Another identified victim was Qes Addis Ayele who was killed on-site. Outside the church compound, a mother who relied on begging to raise her children was shot and killed. In addition, in Mender 22, the attackers dismembered an elderly couple identified as 85-year-old Aba Ayele Arega and his 63-year-old wife, Emahoy Eskedar Gelaw, inside their private residence.

On August 24, regime forces shifted operations to adjacent areas, while returning residents found a wounded four-year-old child next to the body of her deceased mother. The child suffered a severe gunshot wound on her thigh. On the same day, regime forces advanced into Mender 3, Mender 22, and surrounding neighborhoods, burning residential areas and religious infrastructure, including the Kidus Giyorgis Church in Andode-Dicho Kebele and Lemi-Teklehaimanot Church.

On August 25, regime forces, particularly GC units, targeted residents exiting Tofiq

Mosque after prayers, forcibly seizing mobile phones and cash while physically assaulting individuals to compel electronic banking transfers. Overnight, over 15 commercial retail shops were broken into and systematically looted.

On August 26, regime forces including GC units broke into and looted additional residential homes in Anger-Gutin town. Three days later (on August 29), regime forces killed two civilians in Anger-Gutin.

Names of Victims

AAA received names of 62 victims killed in the deadly August 18-to-29 violence in Gida-Ayana and Limu-Gelila Woredas of East Wollega Zone (Oromia Region, Ethiopia).

No.	Victim Name	Sex	Age	Locality/Kebele	Comments
1	Ayele Arega	M	85	Central (Mender 22)	Dismembered in residence
2	Eskedar Gelaw	F	63	Central (Mender 22)	Spouse of Ato Ayele Arega; dismembered in residence
3	Komos Aba Tadesse (last name unknown)	M	61	Central (Mender 22)	Church administrator
4	Qes Amare Sisay	M	58	Central (Mender 22)	Church priest
5	Tsige Mariam	F	57	Central (Mender 22)	
6	Fisseha Alemu	M	29	Central (Mender 22)	Church deacon
7	Welete-Selassie (last name unknown)	F	66	Central (Mender 22)	
8	Kenaw Abate	M	54	Central (Mender 22)	
9	Belete Mekonnen	M	71	Central (Mender 22)	Church elder/monk
10	Tesfaye Belay	M	49	Central (Mender 22)	
11	Adamu (last name unknown)	M	75	Central (Mender 22)	Church elder/monk
12	Berihun Sisay	M	68	Central (Mender 22)	Church elder/monk
13	Mekdes Abebe		21	Central (Mender 22)	
14	Abebaw Ayalew	M	69	Central (Mender 22)	Church elder/monk
15	Sisay Temechew	M	55	Central (Mender 22)	
16	Belaynesh Rega	F	41	Central (Mender 22)	
17	Goraw (last name unknown)	M	31	Central (Mender 22)	Church deacon
18	Shumete (last name unknown)	M	29	Bechbech (Mender 22)	
19	Manaye Tadesse	M	49	Bechbech (Mender 22)	
20	Gebeyehu Tarekegn	M	74	Bechbech (Mender 22)	Church elder/monk
21	Welete-Senbet (last name unknown)		71	Mender 3	
22	Ayele Bayu	M	64	Mender 3	Church elder/monk
23	Tariku Genzebu	M	51	Mender 3	
24	Alemu Geremew	M	41	Mender 3	
25	Yitay Alemu	M	45	Mender 3	
26	Berhan Bekele	M	47	Mender 3	
27	Kasai Bisrat	M		Mender 3	Tigrigna-speaker; executed with mother, wife, and children

28	Wolde-Tsadik (last name unknown)	M	Mender 3	Tigrigna-speaker; monk
29	Welete-Mikael (last name unknown)		59 Mender 3	
30	Shegaw Aweke	M	45 Ali (Andode)	
31	Mose Belay	M	42 Ali (Andode)	
32	Gojjam Yenealem		38 Ali (Andode)	
33	Moges Wuletaw	M	49 Ali (Andode)	
34	Yidenek Bayleh		25 Ali (Andode)	
35	Kassaye Gete	M	50 Ali (Andode)	
36	Tesfaye Wase	M	48 Ali (Andode)	
37	Fente Mengiste	M	58 Ali (Andode)	
38	Tesfaye Wegaye	M	52 Ali (Andode)	
39	Mekdes Tamiru		23 Ali (Andode)	
40	Dejen Mesele	M	48 Ali (Andode)	
41	Qes Addis Ayele	M	Central (Mender 22)	Church priest
42	Temesgen Abay	M	Central (Mender 22)	
43	Shegaw Abate	M	Central (Mender 22)	
44	Berhan Gelaw		Central (Mender 22)	
45	Kassaye Sigat	M	Central (Mender 22)	
46	Goitom Nega	M	Bechbech (Mender 22)	
47	Askale-Mariam (last name unknown)	F	Bechbech (Mender 22)	
48	Nigus Kebede	M	Mender 3	
49	Tekle Hailemariam	M	Mender 3	Tigrigna-speaker
50	Tsige Teka	F	Mender 3	Tigrigna-speaker
51	Tigabu (last name unknown)	M	Mender 3	Church elder/monk
52	Berhan Gebru		Mender 3	Tigrigna-speaker
53	Dessaiegn Belay	M	Mender 3	
54	Hagos Kalatay	M	Mender 3	
55	Hagos Kidane	M	Anger-Gutin	Tigrigna-speaker/health professional
56	Belay Tadesse	M	Mender 3	
57	Yenesew Shegaw	M	Ali (Andode)	
58	Abere Gebeyehu	M	Ali (Andode)	
59	Emiyamirew Ayalew	M	Ali (Andode)	
60	Mekuanint Animaw	M	Ali (Andode)	
61	Tamene Qare	M	Ali (Andode)	
62	Zemen Getaneh	M	Ali (Andode)	

Visual Materials

AAA received numerous visual materials (video footage and images) displaying the aftermath of the deadly August 18-29 violence in Gida-Ayana and Limu-Gelila Woredas of East Wollega Zone (Oromia Region, Ethiopia). Due to the ongoing state-imposed access blockade in the region, independent investigation including on-site verification has not been possible however preliminary visual analysis indicates that the below materials

are consistent with previously uncovered visual materials. Several images are provided below.



(a) Wounded four-year-old survivor discovered next to the body of her mother.



(b) Aba Ayele Arega and Ema-hoy Eskedar Gelaw (both deceased).



(c) Komos Aba Tadesse (deceased)

Figure 1: Photographs retrieved from social media associated with the August 18-29 violence in Gida-Aana and Limu-Gelila Woredas of East Wollega Zone (Oromia Region, Ethiopia).

About the Amhara Association of America (AAA)

The Amhara Association of America (AAA) is a non-profit civic organization based in Charlotte, North Carolina that investigates and documents human rights violations in the context of conflict, violence and political repression in Ethiopia. AAA seeks to inform U.S. policymakers, international human rights organizations, journalists, researchers, and all Ethiopian stakeholders to pressure Ethiopian leaders to change laws, policies, and practices in Ethiopia so perpetrators are held accountable and victims receive justice. AAA also collaborates with Amhara organizations in the U.S., supports independent Amhara organizations in Ethiopia, and provides humanitarian aid for Amharas impacted due to targeted ethnic attacks. AAA's funding comes directly from members and supporters; the organization is not affiliated with any Ethiopian or American political or governmental entities.

- Contact us via Email: info@amharaamerica.org
- Visit our website at www.AmharaAmerica.org
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
- Subscribe to our [Telegram Channel](#)
- To make donations: <https://www.amharaamerica.org/get-involved>

