

Ethiopian Human Rights Council

54th Special Report

September 6, 2002

Human Rights Violations being Perpetrated against citizens must be stopped!

It is to be recalled that an armed group had recently launched an attack against one government official, and three other government employees in Sidama zone, South Ethiopia Region. One regional Council official, a teacher and a driver working with the Regional Council were killed, and another teacher was wounded in the attack that was launched against them on July 22/2002 while on their way to Awassa from Liku town. Members of the armed group who launched the attack against the victims at a spot located two kilometers away from Morecho township, had worn masks to conceal their identities. These rebels laid in wait for the car the victims were using. When the car arrived at the spot, the rebels shot at the car and flattened its tyres. The car was then forced to stop. They ordered the four persons out of the car, shot three of them to death and seriously wounded the fourth person. The identities of the victims and type of harm inflicted are indicated below.

Schedule 1- Persons who were killed

No.	Full Name Of Deceased	Age	Address	Details
1	Ato Fotela Wetola	38	Awassa town, Higher 20 Kebele 07	Head of family of 4; he was member of the central committee of Sidama People Democratic Organization (SPDO) and head of Sidama Zonal Education Department
2	Teacher Bekele Batiso	40	Tula town, kebele 07	was head of a family of 7. He was a sports teacher at Kassa Ber Elementary school
3	Ato Legesse Hifamo	28	Awassa town, Higher 2	Worked as a driver with Awassa Supreme council

Schedule 2- Persons who were injured

No.	Victims Full Name	Age	Address	Details
1	Teacher Sahlu Dimtsu	40	Awassa Town	He was a teacher at Leku Secondary school. He was seriously wounded by bullets shot by the armed group. Through the assistance of inhabitants of the area, he was taken to Yirgalem Hospital where he received medical attention. His life was saved as a result.

From the standpoint which it advocates, the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) strongly condemns the brutal action that was launched against the victims. Any destructive actions that are, for any reason aimed at human life or body and property would only harm the Ethiopian people. Any individual or group that may have complaints against the government's administrative practice should, through the proper legal channel, put the offender before the court and get him punished. It is inappropriate to use terrorist and violent action. Many illegal acts have been committed in this area before the attack that was described above took place.

It should be called to mind that EHRCO has issued its 51st Report on June 4/2002 entitled "Gross (Brutal) human rights violations committed against Awassa residents and its surroundings". The causes of the gross human rights violations had been indicated in the report. Details of the harms that have been inflicted and damage caused have been given in that report. After having issued the 51st Report, EHRCO has been closely following the human rights situation in the area. As it is to be recalled, government armed forces had taken illegal measures against residents of Awassa and its surroundings who staged peaceful demonstration on May 24/2002. A lot of harm has been caused as a result of the illegal action that was taken by the government. Up until the date of issue of this report, many human rights violations have been committed in reaction to the violent action that was taken on July 22/2002. Government armed forces have committed illegal acts against innocent citizens in Awassa. The Special armed detachment that has been posted in the area has been committing illegal acts. This has been a threat to public security and safety in the area. EHRCO has established that residents of Awassa town are, wherever they go, during evenings, being arrested, intimidated and mistreated by the special armed forces. Awassa residents could not any more move freely in Awassa in the evenings because of these intimidations and mistreatments. As a result of the attacks

launched by the special armed forces, two people have lost their lives, other peaceful people have been clobbered and many others have been detained without due process of law.

Schedule 3. Persons killed by government armed men in Awassa Town

No.	Full name	Address	Details
1	Markos Honja	Higher 1, Kebele 06	He was 13 years old. He used to earn his living as a daily labourer. On July 18/02, Markos and his four friends had stayed at a wedding party in his neighborhood. At 8:30 p.m. Markos and his friends were on their way back home. When Markos was only a few steps away from his home, a defense army vehicle stopped near him, members of the defense army immediately stepped out of the vehicle aimed their weapons at Markos and ordered him to stop. The small boy separated himself from his friends and stood alone. Members of the army shot and killed Markos.
2	Wadu Angelo Duda	Higher 1, kebele 05	Wadu was a 25-year old car driver. On the night of July 21/02, at 10:00 p.m., while on his way home from his relatives' residence, Wadu saw, in front of him, members of the special army forces walking fast towards his direction. He was so terrified by the soldiers' aggressive advance and tried to escape by running away. Wadu was shot and killed by the armed men. Members of the army loaded Wadu's body on their own car, shipped it to the area known as the former air strips and dumped it there. Wadus' body that was partly devoured by hyenas and badly mutilated was later discovered. It was hardly possible to identify the body.

Acts of torture and beatings have been committed against persons whose names are listed below in violation of Article 18 (1) of the FDRE Constitution which stipulates “Everyone has the right to protection against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” and Article (5) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Schedule 4. Persons tortured and beaten by members of the army

No.	Name of victim	Address	details
1	Semate Kassa	Higher 1, kebele 06	Semate is 30 years old. He is a daily labourer. On the night of July 21/2002, at 10:00 p.m. Semate Kassa was chatting with his friends in the area of his residence. Meanwhile, members of the special armed forces came to the spot where he and his friends were standing. Semate, who was frightened by the aggressive advance of the armed men tried to escape. Members of the army left the others aside pursued Semate and put him under arrest. They then clubbed him when he became unconscious, they put him in their own car and dumped him in a field located in the area called Tobacco Mono;oly situated in the outskirts of the town. When Ato Semate regained his consciousness, he crawled from the spot where he was dumped to a place where there are people and saved his life.
2	Lukas Gagamo Ke-ah	Higher 2, kebele 05	Lukas is 35 years old. He works with the Sidama zonal Industry and Tourism Department. On the night of August 7/2002, at 11:30 p.m. Ato Lukas, who had stayed outside with his friends and was making his way home when he was stopped by members of the special armed force that is patrolling the town. The armed men picked up Ato Lukas from among his friends and beat him brutally. Lukas, whose forehead was badly injured as a result of the beatings, received medical treatment at Awassa Health Centre.

Conclusion

The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) strongly condemns the illegal action being committed by government security forces and other armed groups against innocent citizens residing in Awassa and other towns in the surrounding areas. EHRCO strongly demands that government organs that have committed illegal acts against innocent citizens be held accountable before the law; that the armed men who had launched brutal attacks against the persons whose names are indicated in the Schedules should be remanded in to custody and put before the law.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) calls on government and non-governmental organizations to write letters to the Ethiopian government officials and bodies enumerated below, requesting them to see to it that respect of citizens' human and democratic rights are ensured and illegal action are brought to a halt.

- House of Peoples Representatives
P.O.Box 80001 - fax (252-1) 550900, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- House of the Federation
P.O.Box 80001 - fax (252-1) 550722, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- H.E. Lt. Girma Wolde Giorgis, FDRE President
P.O.Box 1031, fax (252-1) 552020, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- H.E. Ato Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of FDRE
P.O.Box 1031 - fax (252-1) 552020, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- H.E. Ato Harka Haroye, FDRE Minister of Justice
P.O.Box 1370 - fax (252-1) 520874, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- South Ethiopia Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State Council
P.O.Box 18 - fax (252-1) (06) 201950, Awassa, Ethiopia