

Put a Stop to Racial Agitation

Special Report No. 91

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Introduction

EHRCO conducted an investigation, at the spot, regarding the recent conflict that arose, in the name of race and religion, in Kore Town and its environs, Kofele Wereda, Arsi Zone, Oromiya region.

The inhabitants of the town and its environs belong to the Oromo, Tigrai, Amhara and Guraghe ethnic groups. They earn their living partly as cattle breeders, tillers of land, and traders. These inhabitants lived together in peace in the area for a long time, tolerating each other, and managed to own immovable properties. However, on Nov. 16/2005 at 8:30 in the evening in that area got together and entered Kore Town, and identifying the houses and organisations of the Christian inhabitants, burnt their houses and properties by sprinkling them with benzene and looted their properties, there was also loss of human life.

The root- cause of the conflict

Nov. 6/2005 being the annual celebration day of Amanuel, in the Trinity Church of Kore Town, the Christians of the area celebrate it at a high magnitude. Among the arm bearers of Kore Town assigned to keep the peace during the celebration, one of them fired a shot in the air at 8 o'clock in the evening by way of celebrating the occasion. The inhabitants of the area who heard the shot left their homes and heeded towards the house of the armed man wounding why he fired a shot in the peaceful atmosphere that reigned, and throw stones on his home as well as the houses of his neighbours.

On the other hand, on Nov. 15/2005 people discovered leaflets strewn in a Kore mosque that read, thus "What are you waiting for Amharas? Why don't you rise up and destroy Arsi?" Elders in the area from both the Christian and Muslim Communities have been invited to investigate the matter through the Kore kebele office, on the same day at 11 A.M., while the elders were investigating the matter, on Nov. 16/2005 other leaflets were found strewn in Kore high school, that read thus: "The descendants of Menelik, what are you waiting for? Arise!" As a result of this, a conflict arose between the Muslim and Christian students. However, the conflict subsided right away through the intervention of the school authorities. On this same day, at 8:30 in the evening, young students of Arsi Oromo raided Kore town, and burnt down the houses and organizations of the Christians and looted their properties.

The situation got worse when human life was lost while the shop of Ato Abiti Tula, a resident of Kore town, was being looted. Oromos angered by this act, raised the question, "How can you live with us after killing one of us?" and going into the town on Nov. 17/2005 burnt and looted shops, restaurants, mead selling houses, Bars and dwelling

houses of the Christian inhabitants. On top of that, using machetes, blades and spears they killed 10 persons although the names of three of these are not available. The injuries inflicted in this incident are given here below.

Table 1. Persons Killed

S.No.	Full Name	Detailed description
1	Eshetu T/Haimanot	Head of a family of 11, aged 78. He belonged to the Amhara ethnic group and was killed with blades and spears. His funeral service took place at Kore Trinity Church
2	Beriso Negusse	Head of a family of 5, aged 30. He belonged to the Amhara ethnic group and was killed with blades and spears
3	Getaneh G/ Ghiorghis	Head of a family of 10 aged 72. He belonged to the Amhara ethnic group and was killed with blades and spears.
4	Tesfaye G/Kidan	Head of a family, aged 40. He belonged to the Amhara ethnic group and we killed as a result of the conflict that arose in the area. His funeral service took place as Tedge Michael Church.
5	Sintayehu	Aged 40. He belonged to the Amhara ethnic group and was killed as a result of the conflict that arose in the area. His funeral service took place at Tedge Michael Church.
6	Student Million Mazengia	A 7 th grader aged 15. He belonged to the Amhara ethnic group and was killed with a blade.
7	Student Feyissa Dalo	A 9 th grader aged 17. He was killed by a bullet shot as a result of the conflict of the day, and he belonged to the Oromo ethnic group.

Table 2. Bodily-injured persons became of beating

S.No.	Name	Date of beating	Detailed description
1	Teacher Ketema Ayele	Nov. 17/2005	He belonged to the Amhara ethnic group, he was injured on his neck and other parts of his body by Oromo students wielding blades. He is at present under treatment in the Black Lion Hospital
2	Teacher Demelash Ferede		He is under medical treatment in Yirgalem Hospital
3	Ato Indale Gebto		He is under medical treatment in the Shashemene General Hospital

Table 3 Damage done to life and property in general

S.No	Type of damage	No. of Victims
1	Damage done to people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dead • Wounded • Displace because of the conflict 	7 3 2,237
2	Burning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • burnt down completely • burnt partially • property looted/destroyed • cattle raided 	194 houses and 1 church 24 houses According to the report of the victims submitted to the committee established by the administration- these are estimated to value 8 million birr. 304

Concluding remarks

As can be realised from the foregoing human lives have been lost, human bodies have been injured, and properties have been damaged as a result of the conflicts that arise between Christian and Muslim communities living in Kore town, Arsi zone, on Nov. 6/2005 and a number of people who lived for a long time in the area and owned properties have been displaced. The displacements occurred in Kore town, Shire Bole kebele, Hali Hudge kebele peasants' village, gofer, Saimena Anja kebele peasants' Association, and Mekona peasants' village.

Due to the conflict that arose, from among those who have been displaced some settled in the hall of Kore kebele 01, and other who had relatives elsewhere exiled themselves to Shashemene, Arsi Negele, Kofele and Bekoji, as ascertained from information obtained in the area.

Although the government is giving temporary aid to those displaced persons found places, are finding themselves in a very different situation as of the day this report has been compiled. The government bodies found in the area have not taken any visible steps to solve the problem that arose due to ethnic and differences, and to find permanent solution to the misunderstanding by bringing together the concerned parties and to enable them to return to their localities as of the time this report has been compiled.

Therefore, EHRCO proposes the following to the government, so that the concerned regional and federal government may:

- put the necessary attention to the misunderstanding that arose between the two parties and investigate the root- causes in order to solve the problems that had arisen.

- the concerned officials of the area who did not take any defensive steps to prevent loss of lives and damage to properties and who did not take steps against those individuals who perpetrated loss of lives and damage to properties should be brought to justice.
- if the conflict arose on grounds of ethnicity and religion investigation should be carried out in order to determine who instigated the agitation, and corrective steps should be taken so as to preclude possible consequences.
- the affected persons should be paid compensation for the damage done to life and properties during the conflict, suitable conditions should be created so that the displaced persons may be rehabilitated, and the cattle that had been raided by both parties should be returned to their rightful owners.

EHRCO calls upon individuals and sovereignty of law to write to the following government bodies and officials and put pressure on them so that the government may find judicial and lasting solution to the question of the root causes of the conflict that arose between the two ethnic groups.

Copy

- The House of peoples' Representatives of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
P.O.Box 80001, Fax (251-1) 1550900 A.A, Ethiopia
- The House of Federation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
P.O.Box 80001, Fax (251-1) 1550722 A.A, Ethiopia
- H.E. Ato Girma Wolde Ghiorgis, president of the FDRE.
P.O.Box 1031, Fax (251-1) 1552020 A.A, Ethiopia
- H.E. Ato Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of FDRE
P.O.Box 1031, Fax (251-1) 1550900 A.A, Ethiopia
- H.E. Ato Abai Tsehaye, Minister of federal affairs
P.O.Box 5608, Fax (251-1) 5511200 A.A, Ethiopia
- H.E. Ato Assefa Kessito, Minister of Justice of FDRE
P.O.Box 1370, Fax (251-1) 1520874 A.A, Ethiopia
- Parliament of Oromiya regional state
P.O.Box 101769, Fax (251-1) 513642 A.A, Ethiopia
- H.E. Dr. Kassa G/Hiwot commissioner of Human Rights commission,
P.O.Box 1165, Fax (251-1) 459290 A.A, Ethiopia
- H.E Ato Abai Tekle, Commissioner of the Ombudsman Commission,
P.O.Box 2459, Fax (251-1) 459229 A.A, Ethiopia