

Atrocities Committed Against Innocent Civilians in the Arsi and Bale Regions of Ethiopia

A Report Compiled and Written

by

Mr. Belay Manaye (an Ethiopian Journalist)

Center for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD').

Translation of the original Amharic language text into English

by

Dr. Assefa Negash

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E-mail address: Debesso@gmail.com

A - Introduction:

Singer & artist Hachalu was killed on 29th of June 2020 at around 9 PM. Following the broadcasting of the news related to Hachalu's killing, disturbances have occurred in various parts of the Oromia regional state and Addis Ababa. In the disturbances that ensued and attacks that have been carried out subsequently, human lives have perished and properties destroyed.

Between 30th of July and 1st of August 2020, the Association of Ethiopian Orthodox Church Clergy and Parishioners, along with representatives of civic organizations and journalists, have paid visit to the areas affected by the disturbances. I (Mr. Belay Manaye – producer of this report) had participated in this journey to the said areas (of Oromia regional state) to contribute to the effort of the Centre for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy

(CARD²) in order to collect evidences pertaining to these disturbances. I have presented the evidences I gathered in the following manner.

This report shows what particularly transpired in Arsi and Bale areas of Oromia regional state. In these areas I have particularly been able to see what has happened in Arsi Derra, Assela, Gedeb Assasa, Robe, Goba and Agarfa towns.

Owing to what transpired in these regions, I have been able to understand that killings, robbery and burning of property that targeted the ethnic and religious identities of the victims have taken place. I have heard from eye-witnesses that for hours on end the local police members were watching silently while attacks were being carried out. The police said that “they have no orders” to intervene and stop the attack. In some areas there are still worries regarding the security situation in these areas. Owing to these apprehension and insecurity, especially in Arsi Derra, Gedeb Assasa and Agarfa many people still find themselves sheltered in the premises of churches and schools. The displaced people have expressed their misgivings regarding the inadequacy of the effort the government has made by way of assuaging or dispelling their worries.

1 – Arsi Derra

In Derra town, killings, robbery and burnings of properties have taken place. The day after the attack on the town, up to 400 civilians were sheltered in the premise of the Medhani Alem Ethiopian Orthodox church. Now after one month, the number of civilians still sheltered in the church has dropped. Some of these civilians have left their original area and moved elsewhere. According to the administrator of the Medhani Alem church, the number of civilians that

² - This report was compiled and written by Mr. Belay Manaye who has been detained following the appearance of this report on public media. After I read this report, I translated it into English so that the international community may be aware of what is going inside Ethiopia. I ask anyone who reads this report, to forward it to human rights organizations, politicians of Western governments, senators, journalists, etc so that the wanton killings going on in Ethiopia would be known to the world and pressure can be applied on the incumbent Ethiopian regime whose very constitution engenders these killings and which as a government has failed to protect a section of the Ethiopian society that is being targeted because of its ethnic and religious identity.

have sought refuge and are still sheltered in the church amounts to more than one hundred and fifty (150) persons in number.

In an attack that was launched on June 29 at mid night at Dera town, 4 civilians were killed. Hotels and residential houses were burnt down. Robbery of property has been carried out. The whole thing started with screams and gun shot. **Mrs. Abebetch Feleke** resident of Derra, who has escaped the attack and finds herself sheltered in the premise of Medhani Alem church, said the following about what transpired on this date:

“As news of Hatchalu’s death arrived, screams followed in the town. There were many civilians who heard the scream and went outside. Later the youth, who were threatening saying that we would also kill began to gather. Subsequently the town was convulsed by the sound of gun fire. We thought that the police and the Ethiopian army were coming to help us. On the contrary, it was the youth who were entering the town aboard cars. In this way, the youth gathered in the town. Residential homes and hotels belonging to Ethiopian Orthodox Christians³ were

³ - **Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC)** - In ethno-nationalist discourse, and particularly in the false narratives elaborated by the Oromo ethno-nationalists, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is considered as a repository of pan-Ethiopian nationalism they very much resent. Secondly, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) is seen historically as being part of the what the Oromo ethno-nationalist call a colonial empire building political project of the late emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia. As such they see the Ethiopian Orthodox church as a legitimate target for destruction as an institution which has always identified itself with a pan-Ethiopian concept of Ethiopia. Today, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), which upholds the unity of Ethiopia as a country and considers all its people as citizens of one country, has become target of ethno-nationalist political forces that are incensed by institutions such as the EOC that uphold and harbor pan-Ethiopian views. The pan-Ethiopian philosophy of the EOC is at loggerheads with and diametrically opposed to the quest of Oromo ethno-nationalists to carve out an independent Oromia state by the deconstruction of present-day Ethiopia. Hence attacking the EOC, which is deeply wedded to the concept of Ethiopian national unity, by Oromo ultra-nationalists represents a strategy of removing a potential enemy that opposes the realization of an independent Oromia state. It should be clear to readers that followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, who have been made targets of killings and harm, were not only ethnic Amharas but also members of other ethnic groups such as Gurages, Oromos, Gamos; Welaitas, etc residing in the Oromia regional state. A survivor of the recent genocidal attack at Shashemne town said that the Oromo ethno-nationalists attacked the EOC because they think that this the EOC converts its believers into citizens that believe in and uphold the unity of Ethiopia as a country. An Oromo ultra-nationalist by the name of Dr. Gemetchu

*selected and burnt down. Ethiopian Orthodox Christians were persecuted under the slogan of **Not a single Neftegna⁴ should be spared.** It was a terrible suffering.*

Megeresa was on record on LTV television saying that what the EOC has been doing by Christening Ethiopians is converting them into Amharas – the ethnic group Gemetchu and the Oromo Liberation Front he supports deeply resent and viscerally hate as people.

⁴ - **Neftegna** – literally, it means arm bearers. In previous centuries, when Ethiopia had no modern standing professional army, it was this class of people who used to defend the country. Later this name was given to all those who participated in the creation of a centralized Ethiopian state in the 19th century under the leadership of the Ethiopian emperor Menelik. In actual fact the Neftegna did not denote any particular ethnic or religious group as the arm-bearers who participated in the defense of Ethiopia hailed from various ethnic groups. But later under the influence of the Ethiopian radical student movement and particularly the political propaganda of ethno-nationalist political movements that emerged to challenge the Ethiopian central government, the word Neftegna has been used to negatively portray and pillory the members of the Amhara ethnic group who find themselves in many parts of what is the Oromia, Southern, Somali, etc. regional states. The term Neftegna has come to represent negatively stereotypical view of particularly members of the Amhara ethnic group dotted across many parts of Ethiopia outside the so-called Amhara regional state. During the last 29 years and courtesy of Tigrean and Oromo ethno-nationalists who designed and crafted the political program of the transitional government of Ethiopia in May 1991, this term has been used abusively and maliciously. Its use has led to the demonization of the entire Amhara ethnic group as evil-doer. The TPLF regime, which ruled over Ethiopia with an iron hand, used the word Neftegna to instill an institutionalized hatred against the Amhara people. The word Neftegna was used in such a negative way to misrepresent the identity, history and culture of the Amhara people. The word Neftegna has been made to symbolize Amharas as being rapacious, genocidal, oppressive, exploitative, etc thereby putting them out of the scope of morality and empathic treatment. In the school curriculum being used in the particularly in the Oromia and Tigray regional states school children have been taught to hate the so-called Neftegnas (read Amharas) whose ancestors are criminalized and demonized for allegedly cutting the breast of Oromo women when these Neftegas, under the leadership of the late emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia allegedly colonized what is now the Oromia regional state, southern Ethiopia, etc. A monument symbolizing the suffering of Oromo women whose breasts have been allegedly cut by Neftegas under the leadership of emperor Menelik II (he united modern Ethiopia as we know it today) has been constructed in Anole, Arsi by the defunct TPLF regime that presided over Ethiopia from 1991-2018. Today this place of hatred is revered as a sacred shrine by Oromo ultra-nationalists or radical nationalists. Hundreds of poisonous and divisive songs with polarizing themes that inflame passions against those dubbed Neftegas have been produced by Tigrean and particularly Oromo ethno-nationalists that harp on the alleged genocide conducted against Oromos by the Neftegnas. The major media outlets controlled by the TPLF regime and now by the

The army arrived after a lot of harm had been done. I am someone who was born and grew up here. I do not know what wrong we have done”.

Mr. Dereje Feleke – father whose son has been slaughtered said the following:

*“They killed my son by slaughtering him. It was not possible to collect his dead body. It is difficult to speak about what happened on this day. They are still threatening us and they tell us to **leave the shelter**. Let the government punish the guilty. We want to hear that the guilty are punished”.*

Mrs. Eniye Cheru – resident of Derra town’s account of what happened on this date.

“It was on June 30 around 2 AM in the morning that I heard a scream. They called me by phone and told me that houses were being burnt down and that I should leave my house immediately. They were shooting their guns. They were running and shouting carrying machetes and swords. I speak Oromigna language. I said what happened to you? They said Hachalu has died. I returned to my home, closed the door and sat with my husband. Shortly hereafter, they came to my home and began to knock on our door violently. We tried to escape with our children via the window. They burned my home and grain mill business. But with the kindness of God, I have been able to save my children from being burnt”.

Mr. Wegene Girma – resident of Derra town has the following to say:

Oromo-dominated regime led by Abiy Ahmed have continued to portray the Neftena as a rapacious, evil-doer. Senior government officials, such as the president of the Oromia regional state, Mr. Shimelis Abdissa, at a public rally held in September 2019 claimed that Oromos have asserted their dominance and broken the back of Neftengnas after 150 years of suffering. Leaders of Oromo opposition political parties representing political parties such as the Oromo Federalist Congress, the Oromo Liberation Front, etc have been conducting inflammatory agitations against those they dubbed Neftengnas in the political rallies they held 8 months ago in different parts of Oromia regional state such as Bale, Hararghe, Arsi, Shewa, etc. It is such public statements being repeatedly uttered by senior politicians of the Oromo Democratic Party to which the incumbent leader of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed belong and agitations by opposition political leaders representing the Oromo Federalist Congress, the Oromo Liberation Front, etc that formed the back-drop to the recent horrendous killings in the Oromia regional state by targeting the ethnic and religious identities of the victims.

“I do not think that henceforth they would allow us to live in peace in this town. I am still apprehensive or worrisome. All the administrators are Muslims. There are Muslim property owners who are supporters of these attacks. Who brought the youth that participated in the rampage aboard cars into the town? Who are those who were preparing feasts and feeding the attackers? Those who are guilty of these attacks are still at large or not captured. Is it that the government has not understood our worries? After all it is four of our compatriots that have been slaughtered and thrown into a waste-carrying tube. The attackers played with the corpse of the slaughtered individuals. These attackers were dancing and singing carrying the chopped or hacked body parts of those they slaughtered. It was after the army arrived that the corpses were picked up and buried. I do not want to remember or reminiscence the pain I went through while trying to take to safety my weak mother”.

In Derra town, 76 houses have been burnt down. More than 50 business premises have been burnt down. Among those hotels burnt, feature a hotel known as Miraf hotel. It used to be owned by Dr. Nadew Tekle Tsadik. Dr. Nadew has said that his hotel was burnt down at 6:30 AM in the morning hour. His hotel used to accommodate four wedding parties simultaneously and used to occupy 2000 square meters of land.

List of names of innocent civilians killed in Derra town are:

1 - Mr. Meren Sinega

2 – Mr. Mersha Dereje

3 – Mr. Feyissa (name of his father is not known)

4 – Mr. Solomon Aberra (a hotel guest who stayed at Miraf hotel and is originally resident of Robe town in Bale).

Victims have told us that the attack carried out in Derra town was directed against those identified as Neftegnas. The attackers targeted the victims owing to their ethnic and religious identity. Although the survivors of these attacks have informed us about the possible capture of the head of the security office of Dodota district, Mr. Hayder and some other suspects, it was not possible to verify this information. However, as those who are guilty of these attacks have

not been apprehended, the victims of the attack are still apprehensive about the possibility of being attacked once again.

Residents of Derra town have said that a cylinder had exploded. As a consequence of this explosion, two perpetrators of the attack on the town have lost their lives. Residents have said that, in addition to this, lives were lost in consequence of the shootings by the Oromia special forces which tried to control the violence. However, we have not been able to verify this information with the local administration.

II – Assela –

In Assela town, a sawmill business belonging to Mr. Mesfin Tibebu has been burnt down. Mr. Mesfin has said that property worth more than 12 million Ethiopian Birr⁵ has been destroyed. He said that his office has also been burnt down.

Ato Mesfin has this to say:

“I was born and grew up in Assela town. My sawmill factory had been repeatedly attacked because I am a member of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and because I am accused of supporting this church. The attack was carried out on the basis of a well thought-out or premeditated plan. Those who perpetrated the attack on my sawmill factory are youth who were brought from the countryside into the town aboard cars. When the local residents tried to put out the fire, police warned and prevented them from putting out or extinguish the fire by saying “you cannot get close to the sawmill factory which was on fire”. The police and the local government administrators are collaborators of the attackers. The chairman of the dwellers’ association in the locality in which the factory is located was the main participant in the burning of the factory. He showed or indicated the location of the sawmill factory to those attackers who came aboard cars from the countryside. This chairman of the dwellers’ association later came back wearing another clothe and joined the attackers. His was a clear act of collaboration with the attackers. I think he is now in prison. This sawmill factory has been the target of destruction

⁵ - One US dollar = 35.36 Birr and one Euro = 41.62 Birr

twice. On 2nd of October 2019, this sawmill factory was burnt down. It is with the help of loan I got that I restarted this sawmill factory”. According to Ato Mesfin, this sawmill factory used to provide employment to 40 permanent employees and 60 temporary employees. Mr. Mesfin said that he still feels insecure and accordingly he does not sleep at his own house. His house has been pillaged and robbed on the day they burnt his sawmill factory. The attackers or perpetrators carried out their attack by shouting slogans such as these: **“Neftegna, emperor Menelik’s supporter.**

III – Gedeb Assasa –

Gedeb Assasa is one of the Western Arsi zones which has witnessed the killings of civilians and destruction of properties. Such attacks have been carried out in eleven districts. In the town of Assasa alone, three (3) men and one woman – a total four (4) innocent civilians were killed in a gruesome or horrendous manner. The killing was carried out by cutting the neck with a knife, hacking or chopping the body into pieces, by repeatedly stabbing the victims with sharp objects and killing with bullets.

The names of the individuals killed in Assasa town are:

1 – Mr. Teferi Belayneh

2 – Mr. Metoria Lakew

3 – Mrs. Sinqinesh Gebreyes

4 – Mr. Tamirat Adugna

Among those killed feature the elderly man Mr. Teferi Belayneh, who was 87 years of age, and his wife Mrs. Sinqinesh Gebreyes. They were beaten to death in their own home. Subsequently, the perpetrators of these heinous act have hacked their bodies and dragged their hacked bodies on the street. Their corpses were collected hours later following the arrival of the army. The young man Mr. Tamirat Adugna was killed by machete and a sharp knife. His killing in the morning hour is related to the continuation of the violent attack into the next day i.e. the 1st of July 2020.

Surviving victims of the town of Assasa have said that on the 30th of June 2020 while the youth were burning tires in front of the police station, the police were watching them silently. According to the surviving victims, the violent attack on the town had the support of the local administration and the local police. The attackers had already a list of names of the Neftegnas (particularly Ethiopian Orthodox Christians) who were already selected for attack.

Burning of properties and robberies had taken place in the town. According to the survivors, individuals known for their support to the Ethiopian Orthodox church were the main targets of the attack. There were also attackers who were brought into the town from the countryside. The violent attack that was carried out in Assasa began early in the morning at 6 AM local time on the 30th of June 2020.

On the morrow of the attack, more than 300 survivors of the attack have been sheltered in Assasa Gabriel Ethiopian Orthodox church. According to the head of the church, many have now left the premises of the church by moving out of the area and seeking shelter with friends. This has led to a decrease in the number of survivors sheltered in the church premises. Those sheltered in the church are still worried about eminent attack that may befall them. Although residents have said that there were persons killed by gun fire while efforts were being made to control the violence, it was not possible to confirm this information with the local administration.

IV – Bale Robe

In Robe town, no harm has been caused to human lives. However, one residential home and three business premises have been burnt down. These businesses have been previously burnt due to the violent disturbance that transpired on 22nd of October 2019. Mrs. Mimia Balcha who happens to be a surviving victim has said that paradoxically victims whose properties have been burnt down in October 2019 are still languishing in prison.

Mrs. Mimia Balcha, whose husband Mr. Teka Asfaw is in prison and whose property has been destroyed, said the following:

“Just because I am an Ethiopian Orthodox Christian, my residential home has been burnt twice. There are those who have been imprisoned for allegedly contributing to the construction of a church. Those imprisoned in October 2019 have not yet been released from prison. On the other hand, those who tell us that they have burnt down our houses go scot-free and have not been brought to justice or have not been charged so far. I do not know what is going on. I am now in dire straits or great trouble along with my 7 children. I do not know when they are going to harm us again. We are worried”.

Survivors have said that compared with the violent attack perpetrated in Robe town in October 2019, the attack that came right on the heels of Mr. Hatchalu Hundesa’s killing has been very significant. The survivors of Robe town still remember the brutal killings of 5 the inhabitants of Robe and Dinsho towns on October 23 and October 24, 2019.

Those individuals killed in October 2019 were:

1 – Mr. Belay Adere

2 – Mr. Eshetu Getahun

3 – Mr. Damtew Zerfu

4 – Mr. Tesfaye Diriba

5 – Mr. Tamirat Bekele

The residents have added that the destruction of property at that time was staggering.

V – Bale Goba

In Bale zone at Goba town no harm has been done to human life. However, Yilma hotel, the most famous hotel of the town has been destroyed by fire. According to Mr. Tesfaye Yilma, owner of the hotel, Yilma hotel had 33 permanent employees. Temporarily, the employees have been sent home. The hotel used to provide service since the 1960’s. According to Mr. Tesfaye Yilma, it would cost 10 million Ethiopian Birr in order to restart the hotel.

“When the hotel was attacked (set on fire), police could have prevented the burning of the hotel. The Bale police head office is here in this town. However, the police did not do anything to prevent the destruction of the hotel. This saddens me very much” said Ato Tesfaye Yilma.

Although Yilma Hotel sustained the most severe damage, light damages including the smashing of glasses, have been caused by the attackers to 46 shops and houses in Goba town.

VI – Bale Agarfa

In the Bale zone, among the areas severely affected by the damage caused through violence, the Ambetu locality in Agarfa district features prominently. The number of survivors who have survived the violent attack and have sought shelter at the Agarfa Agricultural and Technical college is big. According to the survivors, who have been forced to seek refuge or shelter at the college, the number of displaced people amounts to 1253 (one thousand two hundred and fifty-three) individuals. Mr. Shimeles Tolossa, the representative of the Prosperity Political party (ruling party of Ethiopia), the figure pertaining to the number of displaced persons is 1144 (one thousand one hundred and forty-four).

In Agarfa Ambetu locality, 5 innocent individuals have been brutally killed. Residential homes, grain mills, motor bikes and other properties have been burnt down. Pillaging and robbery of property has taken place.

List of persons killed at Agarfa Ambetu locality:

1 – Mr. Aschalew Ababu

2 – Mr. Asfera Tirfe

3 – Mr. Solomon Belayineh

4 – Mr. Haile Getachew

5 – Mrs. Tigist Asrat

I (the writer of this report) was told that Mr. Aschalew Ababu has been killed after he was beheaded. His eyes were gouged out and later his body was burnt down. Likewise, they had cut the neck of Mr. Haile Getachew and had thrown

his body on the ground. They did not allow anyone to pick up his corpse. The perpetrators said that his corpse could not be buried there (at Agarfa Ambetu). Subsequently, his body parts were eaten by wild beasts. Only remains of his body were collected and buried three days later following the arrival of the Ethiopian army on the third day after his gruesome killing. Mr. Asfera Tirfe and Mr. Solomon Belayineh were also killed after they have been slaughtered in a similar manner as the two individuals mentioned above.

Mrs. Yenenesh Mammo, wife of Mr. Solomon Belayineh said the following:

“Mr. Solomon Belayineh is my husband. Together we have got children. Both he and me are Oromos. But the attackers persecuted us saying that they do not recognize an Oromo with a piece of thread around his neck⁶. They used to say that Oromia is Saudi Arabia. My husband, Mr. Solomon, refused to tear down the thread around his neck (a symbolic mark that identifies followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox church) and remained steadfast in his faith. That is why he was beheaded. I remain with our four children in such difficult situation. The attackers said that it is only he/she who prostrates with us before Allah for prayer is considered an Oromo”.

Mr. Kiya Tassew, a displaced young man said the following:

“The violent attack targeted a particular religious identity i.e. Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. We are sheltered here to save our lives. There were burnings and robberies. It was only the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians who were singled out and attacked. I think that two Moslems have been harmed. The harm done to Ethiopian Orthodox Christians was very severe. A human being was brutally killed and eyes gouged out. A lot of injustice has been perpetrated. There was not even someone to collect or pick up the corpses of those killed. It is after the arrival of the Ethiopian army and under the escort of the army that we were able to collect the corpses of those killed. The killers had spears, machetes and other weapons. The police did not come to help us. I think they had premeditated plans. There were Moslems who tried to protect us. It was through their efforts that we were saved/survived”.

⁶ - Ethiopian Orthodox Christians usually put a thread around their neck as a mark that symbolizes their Orthodox Christian identity.

Personal account of a young displaced man by the name of Mr. Gossa Tadereg:

“Since September and October 2019, Ethiopian Orthodox Christians have been subjected to insult and threats. They insult those who go to Ethiopian Orthodox Churches and those who tie a piece of thread around their neck. They rob the harvested grains and the cattle of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian residents of the area. The problem is chronic. What transpired or occurred on the 30th of June 2020 is only the act. What I am saying is the plan or idea behind what transpired or occurred now has been gestating or developing for a long time. Mr. Haile Getachew (who was brutally killed) was my relative. I am very young man. At this prime age, I have been forced to pick up hacked or chopped body parts of my relative and bury them. This was extremely horrible. I was also one of the persons who was listed among those who were planned to be beheaded. They have also written about me on face-book. This is because I am an Ethiopian Orthodox Christian. They say Neftegna. I was born and grew up here. Where do they want me to go?”

The displaced persons who are sheltered at the Agarfa Agricultural and Technical college for more than a month now, say that the incumbent government has not provided them enough support. They still feel very insecure and worry about their safety. Although some of the attackers have been imprisoned, the surviving victims believe that those who have supported the violent attackers with money and used their position as government functionaries in aiding the attackers are not apprehended. As such they are worried that more attacks can be launched against them.

The representative of the ruling Prosperity Party of the district of Agarfa, Mr. Shimeles Tolossa, said that in this district 347 suspects have been apprehended. Of these, 14 are members of the local police and 7 are local government officials. According to Mr. Shimeles, he could not say that the attack has been targeted against a particular ethnic group or religion. However he said it was political.

B - Limitations of this report:

This report has been compiled through a visit program organized by the Association of Ethiopian Orthodox Church Clergy and Parishioners. As it was circumscribed by the focus of the visit program, it has limitations in terms of collecting evidences about the displaced persons from different parties. In this report I have been able to include the views of the representative of the ruling Prosperity Party of Agarfa district. Owing to the prevailing circumstances and time constraint, I have not been able to collect information from different areas and verify the information by talking to the government representatives, ruling party officials or police while compiling this report.

In addition to these, although the journey to these places was accompanied by 5 Federal Police members, there were still security risks. As such it was difficult to freely move around in the towns and collect all relevant evidences. With few exceptions, we were not able to visit most of the areas affected by the violence. For example, except for talking to the displaced persons now being sheltered at the Agarfa Agricultural and Technical college, we were not able to go to the Ambetu locality where the damage has occurred.

C – Sources Use in Compiling this Report:

Arsi Derra Medhani Alme Church administrator

Mr. Dereje Feleke (father who lost his son owing to the violent attack)

Mrs. Abebetch Feleke (displaced person)

Mrs. Eniye Cheru (survivor of the violent attack)

Mr. Wegene Girma (survivor of the violent attack)

Priest Kefyalew (priest who serves his church)

Dr. Nadew Tekle Tsadik (businessman whose hotel was burnt down)

Mr. Mesfin Tibebu (businessman whose sawmill factory has been burnt down)

Administrator of Assasa Gabriel Orthodox Church

Dr. Negussu Legesse (leader of the Association of Priests and Parishioners)

Family members of Mr. Metoria Lakew and Mrs. Sinqinesh Gebreyes

Mr. Tesfaye Yilma (businessman whose hotel was burnt down)

Mrs. Mimia Balcha (a woman whose property has been burnt down & whose husband is imprisoned)

Mr. Shimeles Tolossa (representative of the ruling Prosperity Party of Agarfa district)

Mr. Tadesse Idea (displaced person)

Representative of the Bale Ethiopian Orthodox Church Sermon Affairs

Mr. Kiya Tassew (displaced person)

Mr. Gossa Tadereg (displaced person the relative of whom has been brutally killed)

Mrs. Yenenesh Mammo (a displaced person whose husband was killed)

In addition to this report, visiting the affected places has been a good source of evidences. We have been able to take photographs and record video footages.

-----End of the translated report-----

After he returned from his visit to the areas affected by violence and killings that deprived the lives of many innocent victims and destruction of property belonging to them, the producer of this report Ato Belay Manaye, expressed the following on his face book page on the 4th of August 2020:

“Recently I have travelled to Arsi and Bale and heard from survivors their account of the horrendous things that had happened subsequent to Mr. Hachalu’s murder. I have been able to be present at all those sites where harm has been caused and witnessed the extent of the damage done. What happened there has shown me to what extreme a human being can go to harm another human being. It is not possible to tell about each case here. After I have seen the damage wrought there, I have not been able to sleep well”.

-----End of the translated report-----

Note of Dr. Assefa Negash who translated this report from Amharic into English language:

Mr. Belay Manaye, the journalist who has compiled and wrote this report and sent it to the Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD), has been taken out of his house along with his friend and colleague Mr. Mulugeta Amberber, by police and imprisoned in the 3rd Police Station in the capital city Addis Ababa. Mr. Belay Manaye has been incarcerated following the posting of this report he wrote in Amharic on face-book. He has been accused of inciting people against the incumbent regime. Many observers believe that these charges do not hold water. Both Mr. Belay Manaye and Mr. Mulugeta Amberber are journalists working for Asrat TV. Later two more journalists (one was former Asrat TV employee who had left the organization long ago), have been added to the list of Asrat tv station employees who have been imprisoned by the incumbent regime.

I have taken the liberty to translate this document pertaining to violence that erupted subsequent to the murder of Hachalu Hundesa in various parts of Oromia regional state of Ethiopia. I have added some footnotes to clarify terms such as Neftegna with which foreign readers of this report are not familiar with. I have also explained certain practices such as the wearing of a piece of thread by followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian faith. I have also added a footnote to explain why followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the Oromia regional state have become conspicuous target of violent attack. Let me reiterate the fact that I the translator of this report, and not the originator of the report Mr. Belay Manaye, take all responsibility for the views expressed in the footnotes added to this report. I also take responsibility for the following views I expressed about the genocide hereafter.

The scale of the destruction, the cruelty and manner by which the killings were carried out indicate that the destruction wrought has not simply been the result of a spontaneous eruption of an angry youth out to vent out their anger about the tragic murder of a singer they adore and identify with. This attack targeted particular ethnic groups i.e. Amharas and non-Amharas who speak Amharic language. It also targeted followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox church including ethnic Oromos, Gurages, Welaitas, Kembatas, Hadiyas, Gamos, etc dotted around the Oromia regional state. The violent attack that

occurred has all the hall-marks of a premeditated attack with prior knowledge and complicity of the local mayors, administrators, police, and senior government officials, etc. These local and senior officials chose not to protect the civilian that were subjected to violent killings owing to the ethnic or religious identities of the victims and survivors. Many observers hold the view that what took place in various parts of Bale and Arsi regions of the Oromia regional state visited by this journalist incontrovertibly corroborates the planned character of the violence which was visited upon innocent civilians owing to their ethnic or religious identities. The incumbent government has tried to whitewash these genocidal killings and tried to suppress any mention of the word genocide although independent human rights groups have established the genocidal intent and motivation that informed this terrible tragedy. We would like to appeal to the international community to be apprised of the looming genocide that not only affects 115 million Ethiopians but has a destabilizing effect on the whole region of the Horn of Africa and beyond. We also urge the international community and human rights groups to clamour for the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Belay Manaye and his colleagues who have been illegally detained by the incumbent regime.

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