



## MORESH WEGENIE AMARA ORGANIZATION

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### **A Study Summary on the Crime of Ethnic Cleansing Perpetrated on the Amhara of Ethiopia, 1991-2016**

**Moresh Wogenie Amara Organization (MWAO)**, which sponsored the study on the Crime of Ethnic Cleansing Perpetrated on the Amhara of Ethiopia, 1991-2016, is an Amhara Organization based in America. It is legally registered in Maryland, USA, as a civic society and has branches all over the world. The Amhara is one of the two major ethnic groups in Ethiopia. MWAO aspires to share the plight of the Amhara with nations who stand for justice in general and with concerned human rights organizations in particular.

**The aim of the study** is to collect tangible evidence on the magnitude of the genocide and ethnic cleansing perpetrated on ethnic groups, especially the Amhara, for the last twenty-five years. The study hopes to expose the perpetrators living in Ethiopia and abroad (including European countries and North America) to demand that the perpetrators face trial, and that the survivors be adequately compensated.

**The study methods** included professionally prepared questionnaires answered by surviving victims of the crimes and documents including pictures and videos. Participants who have provided the sample information have understandably requested their identity to remain undisclosed.

**Regions where the study was conducted:** Harar, Arsi, Bench Maji, Jimma, Wellegga, Kemash, Metekkel, Affar (Abbay Neges), and the cities of Bahr Dar and Gonder.

**Source Documents** include

- Reports of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO);
- Letters written by Professor Asrat Woldeyes, the former president of All Amhara People Organization (AAPO);

- Letters written in Amharic and Oromigna to the regional administration and the Federal Government by residents of the regions where the crimes were committed;
- A document which lists the names, addresses, and workplaces of people who directly or instrumentally decimated the Amhara, especially in the region of Harar and are now living outside Ethiopia, especially the USA;
- The study has documented names, addresses, and workplaces of some of people who committed major crimes and are now living in Ethiopia;
- A document which lists part of the names of people killed, the place they were killed, and the manner of their execution.
- Reports by international media sources; for example Sum Sahara TV reports that over 12,000 from Gumuz and 22,000 Amhara from Gura Farda have been displaced.

**Photographic evidence** includes documentation of:

- Properties, including confiscated buildings whose Amhara owners were killed;
- Amharas mentally affected as a result of the loss of their relatives by execution;
- A few of the murders;
- A murderer mentally affected for killing innocent Amaras (he has slaughtered 20 Amharas);
- Monasteries and churches destroyed;
- Remains of Amharas killed as ethnic cleansing;
- Rivers and precipices to which Amharas were hurled alive; one of them is Titso Gedel from which about twenty sack of skulls were collected;
- Amharas displaced and victims of ethnic cleansing;
- Burnt Amhara houses;
- Closed houses to which their displaced Amhara owners have not returned;
- As well as other pictures are included with this study.

### **Findings:**

This study has gathered information about inhuman acts unimaginable that they would ever be committed in Ethiopia. It is difficult to document the exact extent of the injustices committed on the Amhara. However, the evidence gathered testifies that the number is very high. The brunt of the destruction has fallen on peasants who strive to live by farming or trading, young men, women, children, and the old. It has taken place across similar regions regularly as well as sporadically and has remained actively covered up.

### **Harar**

The study shows that Harar is where the highest number of crimes committed on the Amhara and the most gruesome manners of execution have taken place. In West Harar only, (Gelemso, Anchar, Daro Lebba Wofi, and Danse,) 10,000 to 15,000 Amharas have been annihilated.

During the rainy season of 1991 (1999 AD), 16 monks and disciples of the monastery of Asebot, were hurled into a precipice with their hands and legs bound. In the city of Dire Dawa a large number of Amharas have been killed since 1992 (2000 AD), accused of being members of the legally registered All Ethiopia Organization (MEAD).

#### *The manner of the crime:*

The crime of ethnic elimination was at times committed against individuals and at times against groups. For example, in Gelemo, 21 Amharas were killed together. In the steep of Jilleta 32 Amharas were shot with their hands chained in the back and their eyes covered. Among the dead were sons, fathers, and brothers. 40 Amharas were slain with a dagger.

#### *The ways the crimes were committed:*

Hurling people live down precipices: In one example, a high number of Amharas were hurled down the precipice of Enquftu, at the edge of Bedenno. So many people were murdered that their remains were gathered one whole week later, identified by the stench in the surrounding area that had been treated with some kind of chemical. In addition to victims drawn from the local Amhara residents, many Christians who came from the different parts of the country to celebrate the Archangel Gabriel at Qullubbi were also victimized.

Another way members of the Amhara ethnic group have been murdered, especially in the region of Gelemso, West Harar, is by dismembering their bodies bit by bit and forcing the victims to eat their own flesh. Since the number of the victims is so high, many of the 25 survivors are without relatives.

Regarding mutilation and dismemberment of bodies, Mrs. Etaferrahu Dejene, a business woman in Gara Mulleta, who was killed in this manner, can be taken as an example. Her murderers were attracted to her initially by her property. Her murderers first stripped her clothes, severed parts of her body, starting with her breast that they forced her to eat, and killed her. To save bullets, they hack people with daggers and pierce them with spears. As they were taking the beautiful lady, Mrs. Almaz, to the precipice where they would hurl her down, they killed her by opening her belly with a bayonet because she was too heavy for them to drag up the hill. The researchers were unable to reach the fourteen women in Feddisa and Burqa alive whose breasts were cut off. Many Amharas were slaughtered by kitchen knives. About 100 Amharas were killed on the road as they came from Ambossa to Nazareth to report on their plight to the Federal Government.

- Outside of Harar, the murderers tied the hands of two Amharas to their backs, stripped their clothes, cut off their male organs, and put the pieces in the victims' mouths.
- One body found in the woods was that of an Amhara woman who had been gang raped, taken to the woods, and killed by nailing her with wooden nails.
- There is a famous example of a Amhara woman in Gelemso. They killed her beloved son and confiscated her trucks. As a result, her mind was affected, and she is suffering, living in the streets as homeless.
- The horrendous manner the murderers killed the monks of the Monastery of Asebo and Christians who served in that church: in: They tied their eyes and told them to run to escape death by shooting off the precipice of Jerti.
- The criminals accused many Amharas of murder, put them in jail, and confiscated their properties. This crime has been widely practiced. One group of events precipitating the crime committed in Harar are the provocative speeches made by the then Prime Minister, Mr. Tamrat Layne, in Yekkatit 1985 EC (1992 AD) at Chat exporters' hall, on 1 street, in Dire Dawa, and in Miyazya (of the same year) at the Jijjiga Squire. He encouraged the trouble makers among the ethnic groups of Somali, Issa, Affar, the mixed Gorgora, and Oromo to commit crimes against the Amhara by saying, "Why do you keep silent against the Neftegna (code name for Amhara) who used to despise you as camel driver and ones who were skirt (like women)?"
- A few Oromo who opposed the crimes committed against the Amharas have also been victimized. For example, there was a resident of Weter Lange, called Mr. Amdish Mume whose business was transportation. Because he opposed the crime committed on the Amhara, they accused him of giving rides to the Amhara to safety, and killed him with Amharas. The other Oromo is the Muslim Mr. Kemal Genna. Because he opposed the crime committed on the Amhara, they falsely accused him of giving information to the Amharas and he was killed on Tiqimt 17, 1984 EC (10/28/1991AD) in the region of Worenso by the command of the army commander.

### **Arsi**

As the study shows, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Oromo People Democratic Organization, EPDF's affiliate (OPDO), have incited the Oromo people of Arsi to kill the Amharas among them and loot their properties. They have succeeded in inflicting heinous destructions.

In West Arsi, several thousands of Amharas have lost their lives in an untold manner and several thousands of houses have been set on fire. In Jeju 6,000 houses were set ablaze, and a huge amount of property has been looted. In the region of Asensabo Weshabo 1115 cows were looted.

The number of ethnic Amharas who resided in six districts of Arbagugu was very high. While many have died in a fight in self-defense, the remaining have been scattered in different directions. In Arba Gugu, in Guna region, at least 500 Amharas were hurled alive down the precipice of Mosa Giyorgis.

The type of sufferings inflicted on the Amharas include:

- Displacement;
- Slaying with any sharp weapon;
- Forcing to abandon their ancestral religion;
- Disarming;
- Looting private properties and setting houses on fire;
- Assaulting Christian girls sexually, forcing them to embrace Islam and marry a Muslim.

In West Arsi, two waves of destruction have been inflicted on the Amharas since 1983 (1991 AD). The first took place in 1983/4 (1991 AD), and the second in 1998 (2005/6 AD). An attempt to interview survivors failed because the survivors feared retaliations. But, it was possible to verify from EHRCO's report that a high number of Amharas have suffered destruction.

### **Jimma**

It has been very difficult to record the appalling sufferings inflicted on the Amharas in 1999 (2006/7AD). It happened while they had gathered together in Beshasha to celebrate the annual Tiqimt feast of St. Gebre Menfes Qiddus. At dawn a group armed with daggers attacked and chopped to pieces children, women, men, the elderly, and the clergy. Many were annihilated, as there was no force to control the criminals.

In the district of Shebe, in Jimma zone, about 400 heads of families have been displaced with 2,000 of their household members. The district of Shebe is 83 KM from the city of Jimma on the road to Bonga and Mizan. Not one single Amhara is now to be found in this district to report the details of the destruction. Falsely accused of destroying the woods, they were driven out and their properties destroyed. According to witnesses, the number of the Amharas displaced in 2004 (2011/2 AD) and 2005 (2012/3 AD) is as high as 20,000.

### **Gurra Ferda**

Gurra Ferda is a district located in Bench Maji zone in South Killil. It is the major district responsible for spilled Amhara blood while inflicting ethnic cleansing on the local residents of the Amhara.

- Even according to the report of the Office of Women and Children Affairs, in 2007 (2014/5 AD), over 33764 children and women, some of whom were pregnant, were displaced within one month. 860 children less than 5 years old were left on the streets.
- In 2004 and 2005 (2012 and 2012/3 AD), over 20, 000 Amharas were displaced. The Sub-Sahara TV reported that the number was over 22,000.
- Another well-orchestrated mass killing and mass displacement of the Amhara took place in 2007 (2015/5 AD). First, the regional administration confiscated arms owned by the Amhara. Second, it armed the tribes of Mejenger, Men'it, and Sheko with the confiscated arms. During the assault that took place on that date at least 600 Amharas were murdered. It is common and allowed for members of the tribes Mejenger, Men'it and Sheko to carry a dagger, but not so for the Amharas from whom it would be confiscated if found and sometimes returned to them if they pay 100 Birr. There are many local officials who enrich themselves by selling to the Amharas properties they confiscated from the Amharas. This way the Amharas live as second class citizens in their own country.

### **Wellegga**

The sufferings inflicted on the Amharas in Wellegga might be more severe than in other regions but certainly not less in their frequency.

- 40 children carried on someone's back have perished by bullets and fire. In the district of Gidda-Kiramo, 11110 Amharas were executed by a special police force of Oromia in collaboration with the Defense force. In total over 25,000 Amhara have been displaced from their life in Wellegga.

- In Abidengoro, four Amhara family women have been sexually assaulted. Amhara property, which includes houses, was distributed to Oromos of the region. In addition to previously planned arrangements as to who whose wife should get assaulted, they opened fire on the Amharas, indiscriminately, with the notion that there is no difference between Amhara individuals. Many have perished. Some were burnt along with their houses, locked in and unable to escape the fire. This crime includes the burning, in Garero, of a frail Amhara woman who just gave birth to a child, and her child. In Sane of 1992 EC (2000 AD), there were, in the above-mentioned districts, official calls made by the local authorities, stating: "Go home, Amhara!" Many were beaten up. The church in Garero, dedicated to Mary, was burned down. Its holy articles were looted. Cattle owned by the Amharas were looted. A 45 year old pregnant woman was gunned down.

### **Affar**

It is clear that there is hardly any ethnic group, even the Amhara, who has not risen against the Amhara. The great affliction borne by the Amharas in the region of Affar is incredible. Abbay Negisso was initially part of Amhara Killil. Because of an undisclosed reason, it was later declared part of Affar although its residents are all Amhara. As soon as the district was incorporated into the Affar, the area occupied by the Amharas was given to a developer. The Amhara whose land properties were given to the developer tried to support their families employed by the new owner as his daily laborers. But, the developer left, unable to withstand the difficulties he faced in the environment. The farm lands that were initially Amhara's, were given to 44 Affars and 16 Amharas. Yet, starting in 2000 EC (2007/8 AD), the Affars confiscated the few remaining lands of the Amharas and distribute them among themselves. When the Amharas asked why this was happening, the answer they got is that this is the country of the Affars. Mrs Beriye Negash was supposed to receive 246,000 Birr for her land and the property on it. But, the money was stolen by Colonel Abdu Ahmad, the commander of the local police force.

The number of Amharas residing in Abbay Negisso diminished due to ethnic cleansing by murder and deportation. At the time the study was conducted, this big Amhara hamlet had less than 250 heads of families. 52 have been murdered by the Affar, and 96 had to flee to Saudi Arabia and other countries. In the Affar region, an average of 20 Amharas are killed annually. Their daily life is struggling with death.

### **In the so-called Amhara Region**

The other evil face of the crime is the genocide conducted in the so called Amhara region. In the Metekkel zone where the majority of the residents are Amharas, over 10,000 Amhara have been murdered. A young man who was born and raised in Bulen has stated the following:

"The number of the Amharas annihilated by Metekkel cruel people is very high; over 10,000 people were decimated. Without any exaggerations, one was able to find a body or more with every 50 to 100 meters. The bad smell emanating from the rotten corpses was intolerable. I believe the local officials of the time have aggravated the crime. Everyone in the region knows that Demeke Mekonnen, the present Vice Prime Minister, was the major player of the attack mobilizing the people around Menta Wiha."

- Of the Amharas residing in Awi zone, in the district of Jawa, about 1,000 died within a year of Malaria due to the government's reluctance to provide adequate medical protection. In addition, 7,000 cows died of rinderpest. The people's cry for government help was to no avail.
- 60,000 Amharas were displaced from their ancestral land due to an assault in 1983 EC (1991 AD), when the TPLF took power, and again in 2004 EC (2012 AD).
- Many were burnt to ashes alive trapped in their houses that were set on fire. Many were murdered and their sex organs were taken as trophies. 270 people, men and women, old and young, were executed. 6,833 houses were set on fire within nine farmers associations, and their residents were displaced. 60,000 Amharas had to flee from their residences fearing for their lives.
- On Sene 12, 2004 (6/19/2016 AD), officials of two districts gathered the Amhara peasants and told them to pay for the price of the fertilizer they receive from the government, repay their micro finance loan, and leave their ancestral land. The victims pleaded to be given time to 30 Tirr 2005 (2/7/2013 AD) until they harvested their field. They were allowed, after complying and they signing as requested that they would leave on that date.

## **Ben Shangul/Gumuz**

Taking the elections of 2007 (2015 AD) as an excuse, many of the special police force were transferred to Metekkel Zone. The police force stationed in Bulen and Wenbera started immediately arresting Amharas and imprisoning them at the police stations. The given excuse was that the Amharas had arms with which they would disrupt the elections. Many were tortured in the name of submitting the arms they did not have. The horrendous incitement of the officials was to annihilate the Amharas rather than displace them, because if they were displaced they would live to expose the criminals and crimes committed against them.

A Gumuz man was found dead in the district of Wenbera. No one knew who or what killed him. Though in Wenbera, the site was in the neighborhood of Bulen. In a way that appears preplanned, the officials separately assembled the ethnic groups of the two districts. When they came to the Amharas, they asked them to expose the murderer as if they hid him. The Amharas responded that they do not know who killed him or why. The officials who came from the two districts, handed over the forum to the Gumuz people to force the Amharas to tell the killer.

Amhara blood spilled on this occasion looked like rain of blood. On Ginbot 7, 2007 (5/15/2015 AD) death was crowned king. Up to 160 people were slaughtered with daggers and kitchen knives. Those who tried to escape by running away were gunned down. Families who were home were slaughtered to a man. Their beds were drenched with blood. Pregnant women had no chance to give birth. There were forced abortions; some fetuses were brought out with Gumuz knives from the wombs of their mothers. Arms and palms of the dead were used for beating drums. Over 10,000 Amhara living in Ben Shangul/Gumuz were murdered and over 10,000 Amharas were displaced from their ancestral land in this region.

## **West Shoa**

In the district of Nonno, in West Shoa, officials of Oromia, incited people to rise against other people. They have become directly responsible for the loss of lives. On Meggabit 27, 2007 (4/5/2015 SAD), someone announced that Ato Zewdu Endale, an Oromo, was found dead. Assuming the death was executed by an Amhara, the Police commissioner of the district of Nonno, Inspector Hailu Diriba; the chairman of the district of Nonno Alo, Ato Gosaye Gech, and Lieutenant Gennene Beyene, of the police force, coordinated the district and regional police forces to incite the public to attack the local Amhara and on Miyazya 9, 2007 (4/17/2015 AD), imprisoned 85 peasant heads of families; and on the next day, Miyazya 10, 2007 (4/18/2015 AD), they set the houses and other properties belonging to the Amharas on fire. The reports that reached EHRCO states that the imprisoned were released to go to their burned down houses after each paying 300 Bir for the fuel used to burn their houses. EHRCO's professional representatives have gone to the place to assure the veracity of the report, and the Council has submitted its report to concerned officials. Because of the exposure, more crimes were committed, including setting more houses on fire.

### **Invented Incitements to Mow the Amharas**

The TPLF and its collaborators, the Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO=OHDD) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), have inflicted the loss of untold lives, looted properties, and displacements on the Amhara people through invented incitements they widely distributed to incite ethnic groups to wage war against each other. The method has been used in every region where the Amharas have suffered.

- The criminal ethicists have inflicted heavy sufferings on the Amharas by spreading false accusations that the Amharas are culpable for people who have died from various incidents. The case of businessman Ato Dereje Bekele of Harar can be taken as an example. This owner of a hotel in Harar was tortured to confess a crime he never committed. They exhumed a dead body to prove the alleged crime and confiscated this innocent man's property. But, the man presumed killed was found alive in Addis Ababa. However, the confiscated property was not returned to its rightful owner. At least his life was saved since many people knew what has really happened.
- In West Shoa, Amhara peasants were imprisoned, asked to leave the region, and had their properties confiscated by their Oromo neighbors who were told by local officials that these Amharas enriched themselves on farmlands that should be theirs. This hate propaganda has been widely disseminated.

- During the 1992 (2000 AD) election, pamphlets of inflammatory false accusations against the Amhara people were distributed in the region of Kofile. These pamphlets stated that the Amharas have destroyed the country of the Oromo. Because of this wicked propaganda many Amharas were put to death by the dagger. To add insult to injury, the investigation of the incident by the officials put the blame squarely on the Amhara residents. The surviving residents were sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment.
- In West Ari, in a scheming design to eliminate the Amhara people, officials incited the Oromo people at the occasion of the 97 (2015 AD) election with the statement “Kinijjit (=CUD) Party is the race of Menelik. The Amhara are coming back to subjugate you. The Oromo people should not fall again under the Amhara feudal system.” This propaganda has resulted in the death of many Amhara people. At the end of the election, they distributed another pamphlet at market places, but this time in the name of the Amhara people, stating, “Rise, O race of Menelik, the bones of Solomon will pierce you; do not hand over your authority to the Oromo people. Authority belongs to the Amhara people.” This resulted in the spilling of more Amhara people’s blood.
- In Jimma, Amharas in many thousands were annihilated with the pretext that they had destroyed forests.
- In East Wellegga, the Oromos authorities who came from different regions have forced the Amharas to leave the entire Oromia by Sene 8 to 16, 1992 (6/15-23/2000 AD) and go to the region designated for them and from which they came to avoid paying for the fertilizer they took from the government and with which are now destroying this region’s forest.
- In the region designated for the Amhara people, farmland has been denied to a number of Amharas under the pretext that they are remnants of the feudal class.
- In Wellega one still hears OPDO (=OHDD) officials crying, “Amhara, go home.”
- Pamphlets filled with slurs denigrating the dignity of the Amhara people were sent out in all Oromo regions.
- In Metekkel, an official of the district was heard saying, “You, Amhara people, are about to destroy our people by multiplying yourselves like fleas. The flow of the waters of Abbay (River Nile) has been stopped by a dam, but when and how will your migration stop?”
- In Benji, it is customary that people burn the forest during the month of TIRR (January-February). The herds do so for new grass to grow for their cattle. At one of these occasions, the local official divided the Amhara residents into three: (1) illegal settlers; (2) settlers who came to the region without permit; and (3) settlers who do not live peacefully with the indigenous people.

### **The Psychological Impact of the Persecution**

The psychological impact of assault inflicted on the surviving Amhara people is witnessed by the following list of evidence:

- In a place called Weter, in Harar, when a man whose father and brothers were killed by assailants was interviewed about the incident, he denied knowledge of the incident because of the enormity of fear that fell on him by saying, “I have never heard what you are talking about even in the radio, let alone that I have ever seen it.”
- Another gentleman said, “But I am still amongst them. Please do not record my voice and image. Just write my words on paper.”
- There was another 80 years old man who survived when many perished. He could not move because of the severity of the torture he suffered. When the researcher asked him why he did not want his voice to be recorded, he expressed his fear as follows, “But what would I do if I met the calamity that fell on Abebe Mitikie?” Abebe Mitikie was an Amhara resident of the city of Beddenno who gave information concerning the annihilation of the Amhara people in his region to journalists during the Meggabit 1984 (May 1992 AD) elections. When the OLF officials heard this, they took nine members of Abebe Mitikie’s household and hurled them alive down the Enquftu precipice. He could not go on any longer. He killed himself.

### **In Summary**

Reading the report summarized here affects the felling of any human being. It shows what unimaginable damage hatred combined with ignorance can do to others. This unequalled crime has to stop. The criminals must face justice. The responsibility of a government is to safeguard the life and human rights of its citizens. It does not have to be inevitably democratic to do this. It is the minimum expected of government traditionally and historically. However, the major activity of the TPLF is centered in ethnic cleansing and the annihilation of the Amhara people with a plan put in place before it took power. These governors do not have what it takes to be leaders, let alone what it takes to stop this crime. Therefore, making an end to this crime is the responsibility of peace loving Ethiopians in general and Amhara people in particular. **Moresh Wogenie Amhara Organization** invites all to support its efforts to be well organized to defend the victims by all means and to bring the criminals to the court of law.

Respectfully,



Tekle Yeshaw Mekonnen

Chairman/Moresh Wegenie Amara Organization

