

The TPLF army continue killing civilians in Afar region, Ethiopia
Press Release July 21, 2008

The TPLF army continues its terror and intimidation on the Afar civilian. One of the latest victims was a 16 years old school boy Ibrahim Mohamed Suula. July 13, 2008 the army shot dead Ibrahim at village of Urissi near Gewani. Ibrahim was one of brilliant students in Gewani Boarding School and at the time he was visiting his parents during the school vacation. He was watching over the family's cattle there an unprovoked army sniper shot him to death. The other boy with him got wounded but managed to escape.

The woreda officials made a claim to hold the perpetrators accountable for the killing; however the army officials responded by stating “the *national army has the right to kill who ever they want to kill*” The magnitude of arrogance, disrespect for the human life and dignity, and human right violation by armed forces has caused outrage and bitterness among Afars.

The case of Ibrahim is the tip of the iceberg. The number of Afar civilians that have been killed by the army since 1991 is estimated to be more than 4000, but not a single case was legally tried and held accountable. Consequently, the national army stationed a long the Djibouti – Addis high way in Afar region is harbouring more that 4000 individuals responsible for killing of innocent civilians. Some sources from the local community reported that the army is using the Afar pastoralists and their livestock to train their marksmen. A motiveless assassination of Ibrahim was also believed to be part of this exercise, which is against all international treaties and the code of armed forces.

The question is which stand to take on the national army that intimidate and terrorise its own rather than protecting them?

Afar pastoralists are on their native land and move around with their livestock to make their livelihood on some of the harshest terrain in the world. The huge army settlements in Afar region have exposed the Afar community for daily confrontation with the army and, therewith for brutal harassment and human right abuse as a result. An additional factor that threatens the livelihood of the Afar pastoralists is the confiscation of 120,000ht grazing land for state owned sugar plantation, which displaced 500,000 pastoralists. Supplant Afars pastoralists are now forced to move to the neighbouring agrarian communities such as Amharas, Oromo and Tigreans; which in turn is instigating new conflicts between Afar and their neighbouring brothers.

Afar human right organisation strongly denounces the killing of Ibrahim and other civilians!!

Afar Human Rights Organisation (AHRO) calls up on:

United Nation, AU, EU, Arab league, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to investigate human rights abuses in the Afar region.

For further inquiry and support please contact “Afar Human Right Organisation”
ahro2006@hotmail.com