



## **Ethiopia:** Loss of Lives and Displacement Due to “Border Dispute” in Eastern Ethiopia

### HRLHA Urgent Action

May 7, 2013

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The Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa (HRLHA) would like to express its deep concern over the negligence of both the federal and regional governments in Ethiopia regarding the violence that has been going on for about six months against the Oromos in Eastern Hararge Zone of Oromia Regional State.

According to reports obtained by HRLHA from different sources, this government-backed violence that has been going on in the name of border dispute around the Anniya, Jarso and Miyesso districts between the Oromia and Ogaden regional states has already resulted in the death and/or disappearance of 37 Oromo nationals and the displacement of about 20,000 others. Around 700 different types of cattle and other valuable possessions are also reported to have been looted. The reports indicate that the violence has been backed by two types of armed forces (the Federal Liyou/Special Police and the Ogaden Militia) from the Ogadenis side, while on the side of the Oromos, even those who demonstrated the intentions of defending themselves in the same manner were disarmed, dispossessed and detained. Despite these facts, the reports also dissociate the Ogadeni nationals from the violence mentioning that they have never made claims of ownership of the piece of land in the name of which the government-backed violence has been taking place. HRLHA has also learnt that the said piece of land was demarcated and declared to be part of Oromia Regional State during the 1996 referendum.

Among the 37 dead and/or disappeared Oromos **Mohamed Kasim and Kadir Ali** were local Oromo elders who were killed by the armed government forces in an effort to resolve the violence in a peaceful manner. According to HRLHA informants from Anniya, the hundreds of thousands of displaced Oromos from **Rasa Harre, Marfata, Qillee, Mulqee, Dirraa, Waldayyaa, Biqqoo and Libee community** fled to the highland areas in Eastern Hararge Zone in search of temporary shelters and other basic needs. The reports add that the displaced Oromos did not get any kind of help from any local, regional, or federal sources. More worrisome is that there are no hints as to when and where the violence against innocent civilians is going to end. Besides, the fact that the governments at various levels turned blind eyes and deaf ears toward such deadly and destructive violence for this all time strengthens the

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allegations that the federal government and the ruling party are behind the conspiracy of clearing the area suspected of harbouring armed opposition groups of anything on it.

The Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa urges the Ethiopian Federal Government and the Regional Government of Oromia to discharge their responsibilities of ensuring the safety and stability of citizens by taking immediate actions of interference to bring the violence to end facilitate the return of the displaced Oromos back to their homes. It also calls upon all local, regional and international diplomatic and human rights organizations to impose necessary pressures on both the federal and regional governments so that they refrain from committing irresponsible actions against their own citizens for the purpose of political gains.

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