

የሃይማኖት ተቋማት የወንጀለኞች መሸሸጊያ ሊሆኑ አይገባም!!

የሃይማኖት ተቋማት በሕዝብ ላይ በደል ሲፈጸም ከተገፉና ከተበደሉ ወገኖች ጋር አብሮ መቆም ሲገባቸው፣ በደርግ ስርዓትም ሆነ በቅርቡም በወያኔ/ኢ.ሕ.አ.ዴ.ግ መንግስት ወንጀል የፈጸሙ ባለስልጣናት በተለያዩ የዓለም ክፍሎች በሃይማኖት ተቋማት ዙሪያ ተሸሸገው ይገኛሉ።

በቅርቡም የወያኔ ጠ/ሚንስትር የነበሩት አቶ ታምራት ላይኔ በሙስና ወንጀል ተከሰው ለ12 ዓመታት ከታሰሩ በኋላ ከእስር ቤት ተፈተው በዴሞክራሲ ከተማ ይገኛሉ።

የወያኔ ባለስልጣን በነበሩበት ጊዜ፣ የኢትዮጵያን ሕዝብ በዘርና በሃይማኖት በመከፋፈልና አንዱን ጎሳ በሌላው ላይ በማሰነሳት፣ በርካታ ወገኖቻችን እንዲጨፈጨፉ አስተዋጽኦ አድርገዋል። ለዚህም ምሳሌ መጥቀስ ቢያስፈልግ፦

- እኤአ በ1991 ዓም በሐረርጌ ክ/ሀገር በበደኖ አካባቢ ቁጥራቸው 130 ለሚደርሱ የአማራ፣ የኦሮሞ፣ የጉራጌ እንዲሁም የትግራይ ተወላጅ የሆኑ ኢትዮጵያውያን ጉድጓድ ውስጥ ተጥለው እንዲያልቁ ምክንያት ሆነዋል፤
- እኤአ በ1991 የኤርትራን መገንጠል በመቃወም ሰላማዊ ሰልፍ የወጡ የዩኒቨርሲቲ ተማሪዎች እንዲጨፈጨፉ አድርገዋል፤
- በጎንደር አደባባይ ኢየሱስ ቤተክርስቲያንና በአዲስ አበባ አንዋር መስጊድ ለብዙ ወገኖቻችን መጨፍጨፍ ምክንያት ሆነዋል

እንዲሁም ተመሳሳይ የሆኑ በርካታ ወንጀሎችንና የሙብት ጥሰቶችን ፈጽመዋል።

አቶ ታምራት 12 ዓመታት የታሰሩት በሙስና ወንጀል እንጂ በኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ላይ ላደረሱት ወንጀል አለመሆኑ በግልጽ ሊጤን ይገባዋል። በኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ላይ ለፈጸሙትም በደል በሕግ ፊት ተጠያቂ ናቸው።

የሃይማኖት ተቋማት አሁንም ሆነ ወደፊት የወንጀለኞች መሸሸጊያ መሆናቸው ቀርቶ ለሰው ልጆች ፍትህና ርትዕ አስተዋጽኦ ማድረግ ይገባቸዋል፤ የእግዚአብሔርም መንገድ ይህ ነው።

Ethiopia will prevail!  
እግዚአብሔር አምላክ ኢትዮጵያን ጠብቃት!!

የኢትዮጵያን ወንጌላዊት ቤተ ክርስቲያን በደንበር

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ተከስተ ጌትነት

15150 E EVANS AVE AURORA, CO 80014 Ethiopia will prevail!

# An Account of the Bedeno Massacre as Told by Survivors

Documented and Prepared

By

The Ethiopian Information Service Network In Holland (SHINE)

SHINE - Amsterdam, Holland - November 1996

<http://www.ifi.uio.no/~abie/bedeno.html>

## A Prelude

### I - Introductory Notes

The following account is by no means complete. Officially 154 innocent people, mostly Amharas, were believed to have been brutally killed and dumped in the now famous Enquftu ravine although survivors from the area estimate the number of people killed and dumped in Enquftu to be between 200 and 300. The fact that people from the area who could have identified many of the victims did not make part of the search team which descended into the Enquftu ravine to identify the dead bodies, has made the task of identifying many victims difficult. The inhabitants of the area were warned by OLF that they would risk punishment by death should they dare to make part of the search team that was trying to identify and dig out the remains of the victims dumped in the Enquftu ravine.

Enquftu is the name of the ravine into which the bodies of these victims of OLF's atrocities has been dumped. It is such a deep crevasse that the local people have given the name Enquftu to this

ravine. Enquftu is an Oromo word which literally means that which is not satisfied and filled. OLF is a secessionist organization that strives for the independence of what it calls Oromia - a fictitious geo-political entity that never existed in the past. OLF perpetrated these atrocities when it was already the second largest and powerful member of the transitional government of Ethiopia that was created following the ouster of the now defunct Dergue regime in May 1991.

Following the signing of the now infamous Charter of July 1, 1991, OLF was allowed a free hand or *carte blanche* to do anything in the newly carved out "Oromia region" - a geographic chunk where millions of people of non-Oromo origin also live together with and interspersed among the Oromos. In what amounts to an ethnic cleansing, the OLF embarked upon targeting non Oromos and particularly Amharas thereby killing and torturing innocent Amharas and Amharic speakers. The Bedeno massacre is one of the many massacres that have been perpetrated in central, southern, eastern and western Ethiopia by the OLF forces. Although the Bedeno massacre is one of the only little known massacres that took place in Ethiopia, many similar massacres have been perpetrated in other areas of Ethiopia such as Hararghe (Deder, Bebleleti, Hirna, Kuni, Gara Kufa, Bedessa, Gellemsa, etc) , Wollega (Assosa - a town where over 300 Amharas including helpless mothers, babies, children and elders were forced to assemble in a church and put into fire in 1991 few months before the fall of the Mengistu regime, Mugi - small road-side town in Wellega region where more than 200 Amharas were massacred by OLF troops in 1992), Shoa (Arsi Negehele, etc), Arsi (Arba Gugu, Ticho, etc).

Despite the horrifying deeds of the narrow ethnonationalists, to this date, all these genocides have neither been properly documented nor attempts were made to bring the perpetrators to

justice. In 1992, the so-called transitional government had tried to set up a commission to investigate the atrocities of the Bedeno incident and reportedly the OLF has pleaded that its lower ranking members have carried out the execution without receiving orders from the leadership. To our knowledge, the OLF has not openly denounced this ruthless and massive genocide on innocent Ethiopians nor taken any steps to penalize those who committed the heinous crime on humanity. The transitional government has not also made its investigations public despite the widespread public outcry. In fact, the ethnocentric regime in Ethiopia continues to fan ethnic differences with increasing vigor for political gains and many Amharic speakers continue to be victims of ethnic cleansing intentionally galvanized by the cadres of the ethno-nationalist groups in the Oromo areas, in the south and eastern parts of the country.

Even the Bedeno massacre is not fully documented although the remains of some of the victims have been dug out and filmed in 1992 by the state television in Ethiopia. In what follows we attempt to document the names of some of the victims of this massacre so that the world may be acquainted with the names and backgrounds of these 154 victims of the Bedeno massacre. This is just a skeletal documentation and we hope to flesh out this skeletal presentation as we get more information about the identity of those victims of this gruesome atrocity that came to pass in Bedeno.

Our goal is to draw the attention of the world to the atrocities omitted in the name of ethnic democracy - a dangerous experiment that is currently being financed by western democratic governments of Holland, UK, Scandinavian countries, Germany, Italy, USA, Canada, etc and international financial institutions, such as the IMF, World Bank, etc. It is also imperative to realize what kind of destructive and deadly political agenda ethnonationalist groups like OLF, IFLO, TPLF, etc have and what kind of disaster these political agendas can spell for Ethiopia and Ethiopians that have now been turned into experimental guinea-pigs of "ethnic democracy" since May 1991.

The following report is based on an interview which was conducted by SHINE with a survivor of the Bedeno massacre who narrowly escaped death thanks to the humane protection offered to her by an Oromo individual who, like many of the Oromos in the Bedeno area, rejected OLF's attempt to physically eliminate Amharas and Amharic speakers. The degree of non-complicity of the Oromo inhabitants of the region is corroborated by the fact that some 30 of the 154 people dumped in the Enquftu ravine were themselves Oromos whose interest OLF claims to uphold. These Oromos were mercilessly butchered and dumped into the ravine by OLF because they refused to condone the death of their brothers and sisters of non-Oromo origin (Amharas, Gurages, etc) just because they were non-Oromos.

In this report we have been able to identify 38 out of the 154 victims killed and dumped in the Enquftu ravine. We also want to note that not all that ended up in Enquftu were shot dead before they were thrown into this horrible crevasse. Some were forced to jump into the deep ravine from a 250m cliff at gun point. In compiling and documenting this atrocity we would like to show the gruesome features of the rather pro-active and exclusive ethnic nationalisms of the OLF, TPLF, IFLO, ONLF, etc that seek not to redefine and reshape Ethiopia in a democratic fashion but rather seek to ethnicize the Ethiopian political structures in a way that is likely to duplicate the horrendous scenarios of Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Burundi, etc with all the deadly consequences thereof. It should be clear to readers that these innocent victims documented in these report were not members of any political organization nor were they in any way

"opponents" of OLF as Amnesty International would have us believe when it wrote the following in its 1993 annual report:

"In April OLF troops killed over 150 OLF opponents in Bedeno town near Dire Dawa; their bodies were later recovered from a ravine". We wonder how Amnesty International which calls itself an impartial human rights body has used the term "opponents" to describe the innocent civilian victims of the OLF. One should ask how these victims have been labeled as political opponents organized behind a certain political organization that is opposed to OLF. If so, can Amnesty International inform us to which political organizations these alleged "opponents" belonged ? What is the basis for Amnesty International's (AI) depiction of these victims as "opponents" and not even "alleged opponents" as is usually the case when AI tries to describe reports of which it is not sure ?. Does AI has any incriminating evidence which qualifies these victims as "opponents" of OLF and not just "innocent victims" ? Does Amnesty International have any concrete evidences that show that these innocent victims were in any way involved in political activities that undermined the OLF or attempted to challenge it through an armed or violent means?

These are some of the questions which we ask AI to clear for us before we accept AI's characterization of these victims as "opponents" of OLF. True OLF may paranoically "perceive" any one that does not share its ethnonationalist and secessionist political agenda as its "opponent". But what is the basis of AI's conclusion that these victims were "opponents" of OLF and not just "innocent victims" who were driven from their homes or work places to face a brutal death at the hands of OLF thugs?. Given AI's proclivity or tendency to patronize OLF and AI's positive predisposition in issuing press releases on behalf of OLF every now and then while hardly any such efforts are made by AI to bring to light victims of human rights violations in northern Shoa, Wolaita, Gonder, Wello, Gojjam, Sidamo, Gamu Gofa, etc, these labeling of these victims by Amnesty as "opponents" may not be surprising. Compare the number of press releases issued by AI in the last 5 years on behalf of OLF and its members with that of press releases issued on behalf of other opposition political organisations and their members who have been exposed to similar or even worse human rights violations under the TPLF regime.

It is sad that AI attempts to water down OLF's horrifying atrocities by choosing to present the innocent and civilian victims of the OLF as opponents.

As mentioned above this investigation is based on an interview we in SHINE conducted in 1996 in USA with some survivors among them an elderly lady who survived the Bedeno massacre thanks to the intervention of a very humane Oromo young man who saved her life by risking his own life. This feat of humanist altruism is a testimony to the existence of a loyalty to the universalistic values of humanism that cut across ethnic and primordial barriers which the present ethnocentric political system of TPLF and exclusivist opposition political groups like OLF, IFLO, ONLF, etc are trying to erect between the people of Ethiopia. Here follows the list of the victims and the condition in which they were victimized.

## **II - Victims From Bedeno Town**

Ato Abebe Mitike (lost 9 family members and two of his sons were tortured, one blinded and sent back to him. His families : W/o Asselefetch Demissie (tortured and dumped in

Enkuftu). Eight other family members (tortured, killed and dumped in Enkuftu) His two sons, Admassie Abebe and Mamoush Abebe have been tortured and crippled and sent back alive.

TKD = tortured + killed + and dumped in Enkuftu ravine

Ato Yohannes Demissie - Malaria Control and Prevention worker in Bedeno (TKD)

W/o Yeshihareg Yilma - killed near Ramis river by W/o Dehabo Abdurehman (OLF member).

W/o Asselefetch Demissie, the wife of Ato Abebe Mitike was likewise killed by W/o Dehabo Abdulrahman an OLF cadre at Dertu Goshima area by bullet.

Others killed by OLF bullets were :

Ato Webiye Haile Gebriel

Ato Tilahun Zeleke

Ato Sintayehu Wolde Tsadik

Memire (priest) Tsegaye Abebe

W/o Bekeletch Mekonen

Among those whose bodies were dumped in the Enkuftu ravine after they have been brutally murdered by OLF cadres were:

Ato Mengiste Tessema - He was the father of 10 children and a poor man. He pleaded with them to save his life but they did not spare his life.

Hamsaleka (corporal) Webishet Zegeye

Ato Engida Zegeye

### **III - Amharas Abducted From Lange and Murdered in Bedeno**

Lange is a town on the main road to Harrar city. 13 Amharas, whose names have not yet been identified, were taken away and killed and their bodies dumped in the Enkuftu ravine. W/o Yeshi, who was an inhabitant of Lange town, was also taken away from Lange and murdered and dumped in Enkuftu.

Another Amhara woman, whose name was not identified, was also taken away from Lange, murdered by OLF soldiers and her body dumped in Enkuftu.

The woman who was leading the massacre of Amharas and Amharic speakers was known by the name of Asli. She, as a cadre of OLF, was the chief executioner of the massacre and she is believed to have come from another region outside Bedeno. On one Friday morning, the OLF cadres announced that all Amharas should assemble at the market place in Bedeno. Some Oromos, who were privy to the planned massacre of Amharas, warned their Amhara neighbors

and friends not to go out of their houses and to remain within their homes. Those who were not warned of the looming danger and massacre went to the assembly place as ordered by the OLF cadres and were taken from there to Enkuftu where they were brutally murdered and dumped into the Enkuftu ravine. A. M. N.\* a courageous and humane Oromo from Bedeno, leaked to the person who related this interview to me that she should not leave her home and go to the meeting where Amharas were ordered to assemble by OLF cadres. He told this Amhara woman who brought him up just like his mother and whom he fondly calls as Ayo (mother) that he will do

all he can to save her life and that they will only be able to kill her after they have killed and taken away his life. It was an exceptional feat of human commitment to a fellow human being at a time when OLF had such a great sway and control on the life of the inhabitants of Bedeno and the neighboring countryside.

On this same day that OLF cadres ordered all Amharas living in Bedeno town to assemble for a meeting, W/o Asli, the chief OLF cadre in the area broke into the shop of Ato Berhe by force and ransacked the shop. This was how anarchy and chaos was allowed to reign in the town of Bedeno. The OLF had an army stationed in Bedeno area from where it was able to spread panic and terror among the Amharas, Amharic speakers and Oromos the latter of whom refused to massacre their fellow Amharas.

Later the corpses of the following people were dug up:

Ato Mengiste Tessema

Ato Engida Tessema and the bodies of some of those who came from Lange.

Two brothers were killed and dumped in the Enkuftu ravine. These were:

Ato Abebe Webeneh

Ato Asnake Webeneh

Both brothers were killed in Bedeno at a place known as Iliko. The wife of Ato Abebe Webeneh survived after sustaining various bullet injuries that damaged her jaws and teeth.

Ato Mengesha Bogale - an Amhara inhabitant of Water town was told to pay a sum of five thousand Birr (\$1000 US Dollars). This he had to pay as bribe to the OLF cadres so that they would spare his life. However after they got the 5000 Birr which he dutifully paid he was brutally murdered by these same OLF thugs.

W/o Yeshi was likewise murdered by the OLF thugs after she paid 1000 Birr so that they would spare her life. However after they got the money, the OLF thugs killed her too like all other Amhara victims which they killed in a similar fashion.

W/o Genet Endaylalu was killed in her own house by these OLF thugs.

#### **IV - Victims Who Later Died As A Result Of The Torture They Underwent**

The following people died of the torture which they underwent in the hands of OLF soldiers.

Ato Lealem Girma (who died of the severe injuries he sustained while he was tortured by the OLF thugs).

Ato Mersha Beyene (who likewise died after having sustained severe injuries. He used to pass off blood with urine). This is a condition which is medically dubbed hematuria and is in this case a result of the damage done to his kidney in consequence of the trauma (physical torture) to which he was subjected.

## **V - More Victims From Bedeno**

Corporal Engida Zegeye (aged 58 years) was abducted on Megabit 3, 1984 EC (March 11, 1992) and killed on Megabit 13, 1984 EC (March 21, 1992).

Ato Mengiste Tessema (aged 60 years) was abducted on Megabit 8, 1984 EC (March 16, 1992) and killed on Megabit 13, 1984 EC (March 21, 1992). He was a head of a family of 11 and used to earn a living by writing appeal letters in a court.

Corporal Woubishet Alemu - an inhabitant of Bedeno town was abducted on Megabit 2, 1984 (March 10, 1992) and later mercilessly mutilated and dumped in the Enquftu ravine.

W/rt Ayne Ahmed - this is a young girl who used to support her blind mother by taking up jobs in different areas such as Bedeno, Girawa, Kurfachele. The nature of her work forced her to move between these places. Her movement from place to place in search of work as the only bread winning member of her family made her suspect. The OLF accused her of as an EPRDF agent and informer and abducted her and brutally killed her and dumped her body in the Enquftu ravine.

Mr. Beyene Birhanu was a merchant in Bedeno and head of a family of seven. He was taken from his home to Enquftu and murdered and dumped there.

Mr. Hailu was an old man who used to be an inhabitant of Bedeno. He was killed together with his wife and his 10 year old daughter after OLF soldiers broke into his home and shot them dead. An 18 year daughter of Mr. Hailu was beaten by the OLF thugs and her two legs broken but her life was spared.

Mr. Abera Wolde Mariam - father of three children was killed in Bedeno although he is not inhabitant of Bedeno. He came to Webera awraja to visit his sister who lives in Bedeno.

W/o Yeshihareg Yilma - was a 58 years old woman who was an inhabitant of Bedeno town. The OLF soldiers who came to her house looking for her husband, took her away when they realized that her husband was in Dire Dawa for medical treatment. The fact that her husband traveled to Dire Dawa was misconstrued by OLF as an attempt on his part to give information about OLF to the EPRDF authorities in Dire Dawa. The OLF that has a pathological hatred for the Amhara people used to consider all Amharas as EPRDF spies.



Mr. Mengistu Amare - employee of the Ministry of Coffee and three who was imprisoned with 18 former Dergue militias the latter of whom refused to fight alongside OLF against the EPRDF government soldiers were all killed and dumped in Enquftu ravine.

Aleka Tafesse Wolde Mariam was a pensioner. He was killed and dumped in the Enquftu ravine.

Mr. Yohannes Demisse - employee of the Malaria Control Program of the ministry of Health used to be an inhabitant of Bedeno. He was abducted from Bedeno town and brutally killed and dumped in the Enquftu ravine.

W/o Abebetch Tesfa was also likewise abducted and later killed and dumped in Enquftu ravine.

W/o Asselefetch Demisse (an 80 years old lady) was abducted with 5 other family members and killed after all her property has been confiscated by the OLF.

The people that have been brutally killed and dumped in the Enquftu ravine of Bedeno were all taken from the following areas i.e Bedeno, Lafto, Burka, Genemi, Grawa, Water, Lange, etc.

#### **VI - Amhara Merchants And Inhabitants Abducted From Water Town And Later Killed.**

(Water town is located in Hararghe.)

Mr. Werke Abebe aged 55 was abducted on Nehassie 2, 1983 EC (August 10, 1991) in Water town. He was a merchant and head of a family of 12.

Mr. Mengesha Bogale - was abducted on Nehassie 2, 1983 EC (August 10, 1991) in Water town. He was a merchant by profession.

Mr. Mullugeta Tirfe was abducted on Nehassie 2, 1983 EC (August 10, 1991) in Water town. He was a merchant by profession.

W/o Yeshe Desta was abducted from Water town on Nehassie 2, 1983 EC (August 10, 1991). She was owner of a hotel in this town.

\*A.M. N. is an abbreviated name referring to the young Oromo inhabitant of Bedeno who saved his elderly Amhara neighbor by telling her not to assemble at the Bedeno market place as has been ordered by OLF. For the security of this man's life (against possible OLF vendetta), we have not mentioned his full name.

End of the Documented Report by SHINE
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