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# 10 dead in Ambo clashes

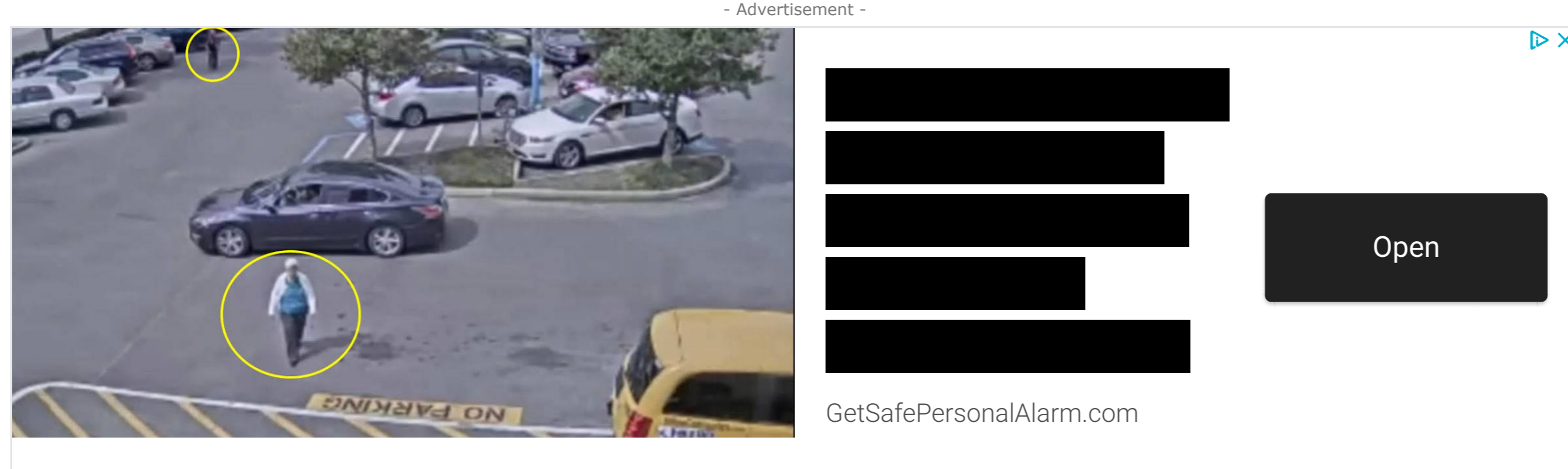
By **Dawit Endeshaw** October 28, 2017



As Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn addressed parliament Thursday on his first appearance before the body this current session, Ambo, a town 120km west of Addis Ababa, was rocked by violence, leaving 10 dead and 23 injured in its wake.

In addition to the above, the death of two other individuals has yet to be confirmed by officials.

The violence was a result of youth frustration following reports of sugar-laden trucks from Wollega crossing the towns of Ambo, Ginchi and Guder en route to Addis Ababa. Angered, the youth then blocked the road considering the dearth of the commodity in the area, with a kilo selling for up to 60 birr.



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The youth think that it is not fair to allow the vehicles to pass through these towns, forcing them to put up roadblocks, according to Gadisa Dessalegn, head of Ambo City Communication Bureau.

Starting Wednesday, October 25, a group of young people engaged in blocking the road using large rocks and logs.

Things then turned ugly when units of the national army began to enter into Ambo from two directions – one from Addis Ababa and the other from Guder.

It was then that the youth clashed with security forces, resulting in the death of 10 civilians.

A similar incident happened in Guder, a town usually associated with imprisoned opposition politician Merera Gudina (PhD), a constituency he has been running in, managing to represent it once in the federal parliament.

Though casualties were not nearly so grave as in nearby Ambo, civilians still suffered gunshot injuries in Guder, said a resident of Ambo whose name is withheld given the sensitive nature of the case.

Security personnel from Ambo were trying to peacefully handle the situation when the youth tried to block sugar-laden trucks, said Gadisa.

However, things went out of control when the army got involved, he said.

According to him, of the 16 people who sustained injuries during the clash at Ambo, 15 suffered from gunshot wounds from bullets fired by members of the national defense force. These people were later sent to a private clinic in Ambo.

Yet again, given the seriousness of their injury, five people were referred to the Ambo City Public Hospital.

The ten people confirmed dead are those who were sent to one hospital and clinic inside Ambo.

Of the total deceased, eight of them (seven men and one woman) were confirmed dead in hospital and the remaining two at a private clinic.

The two who later died at a private clinic were shot point-blank, one in the forehead and the other in the chest, according to Gadisa.

“We were told by members of the public that there are two more individuals who were killed,” said Gadisa. We have yet to confirm this information.”

Of those civilians who were killed, five were buried in Ambo on October 27, 2017.

Following the incident on October 26, the situation in Ambo seems calm but the future remains uncertain with the national army still deployed in the city.

In addition to the loss of lives, vehicles belonging to Dangote Cement and Ethio Telecom were torched.

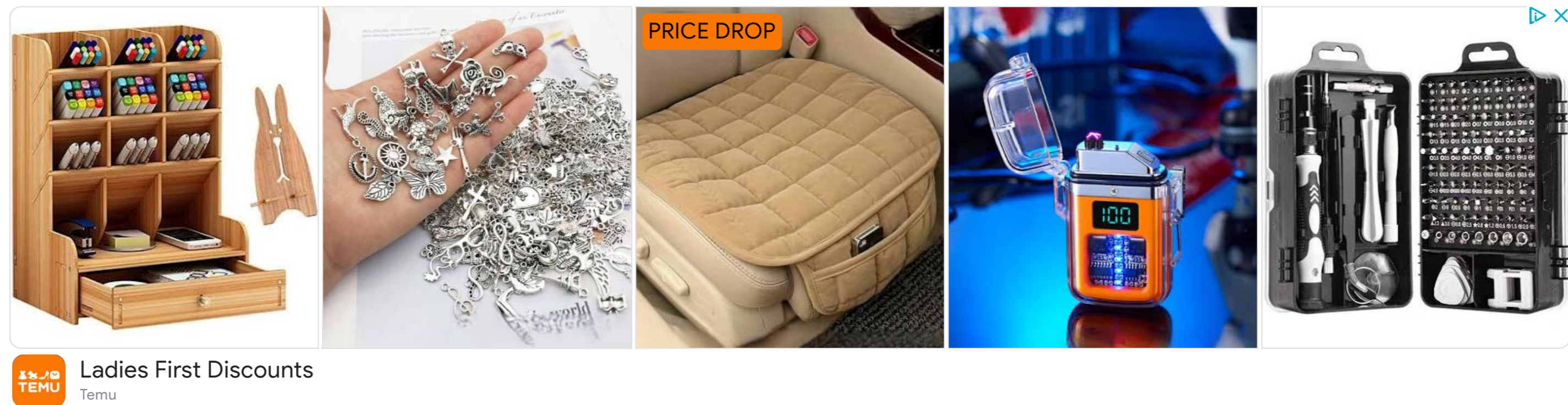
“Accusations have been flying as to who is behind the clashes, with some accusing the military while others blaming the youth,” said Gadisa.

“We are still investigating the issue,” he added.

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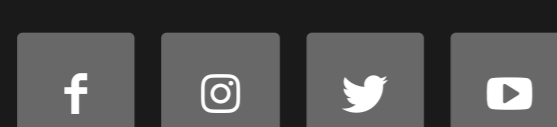
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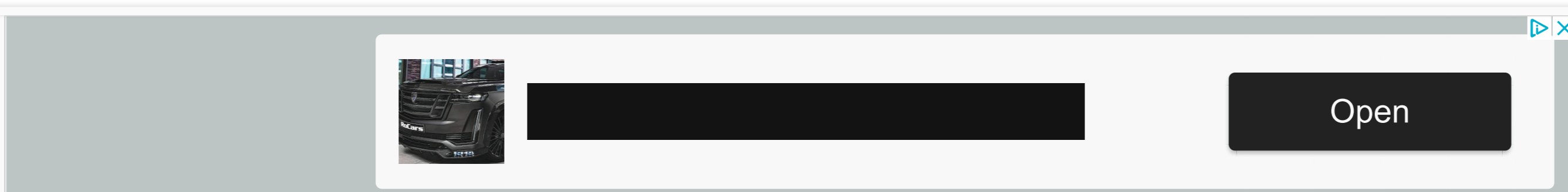
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