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Politics - Commission presents long-awaited Oromia, Amhara protests report

Commission presents long-awaited Oromia, Amhara protests report

By Staff Reporter June 16, 2016



The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission on Friday presented long-awaited report regarding the responses taken by security forces that resulted in the death of hundreds protesters in different parts of Oromia Regional State and in North Gondar Zone of the Amhara Regional State.

In a lengthy report read by the Commissioner, Addis Gebregziabher (PhD), it was revealed that 173 people were killed including 14 security officers with 616 people sustaining injuries in Oromia. However, the Commission said the police had used proportional measures. Addisu said that the situation could have worsened if it was not contained by members of the Federal Police and the National Defense Force, which were deployed upon request by the regional administration. According to Addisu, if the measures were not taken, it might have led to religious conflicts and ethnic clashes.

The Commission also said that the protests in Oromia were caused by lack of good governance, human right violations by security forces at zonal and wereda level, and the escalating unfair justice system in the region.



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However, their legitimate questions and protest has been hijacked by the outlawed group, Oromo Liberation Front (ONL), and anti-peace elements from abroad and at home.

In addition, local political parties registered under the country's law have taken part in violence and protests, Addisu told MPs.

He further indicated that in addition to civilians' role in the protests in Oromia, various police officers and administrators in various weredas and zones of the region have directly involved in instigating the protest. He, then, urged that these responsible police officers and others at various administrative levels be brought to justice.

In a separate report, the Commission confirmed that some 87 people including two police officers were killed during protests in Amhara while 87 were injured in Chilga, Lay Armachiho, Metema Yohannes and other weredas of North Gondar. The protests were sparked after a self-administration request was made by Kimant nationalities residing in the region. Among the dead are children, women and elders including monks.

Unlike Oromia, the Commission held the Amhara Regional State Special Security Force accountable for taking disproportional responses, which eventually led to fighting among residents in various places particularly in Mawura and Ayikel districts. However, the report also indicated that some members of the Kimant community were accountable for instigating clashes and deadly attacks.

He further said that the killings and injuries could have been avoided.

The report has also cleared the Amhara region from taking part in the killings. However, the commission urged the region to publicly apologize to both the Kimant community as well as the entire people of the region.

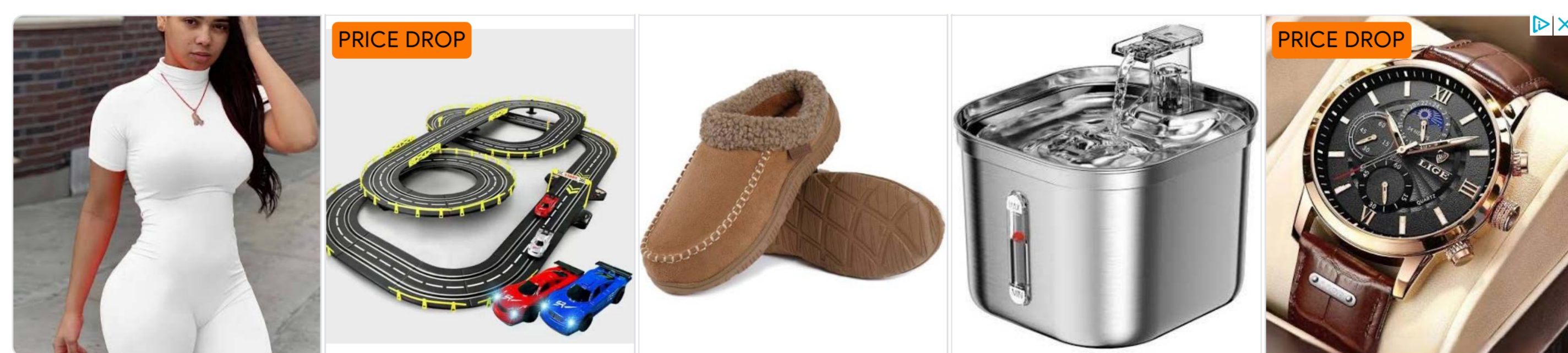
He also said that legal actions should be taken on officers and individuals in the region who had refused to cooperate with the commission during the investigation.

The Law, Justice and Administration Standing Committee welcomed the Commission's report without reservation. The Committee further called on all concerned bodies covered in the report to accept and implement the Commission's recommendations and proposals. On the other hand, the House in its afternoon session has endorsed the both the findings and recommendation of the report with ten abstaining votes.

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