

Fresh round of violence rocks Moyale town, leaving unknown number of casualties and fresh displacement in its wake

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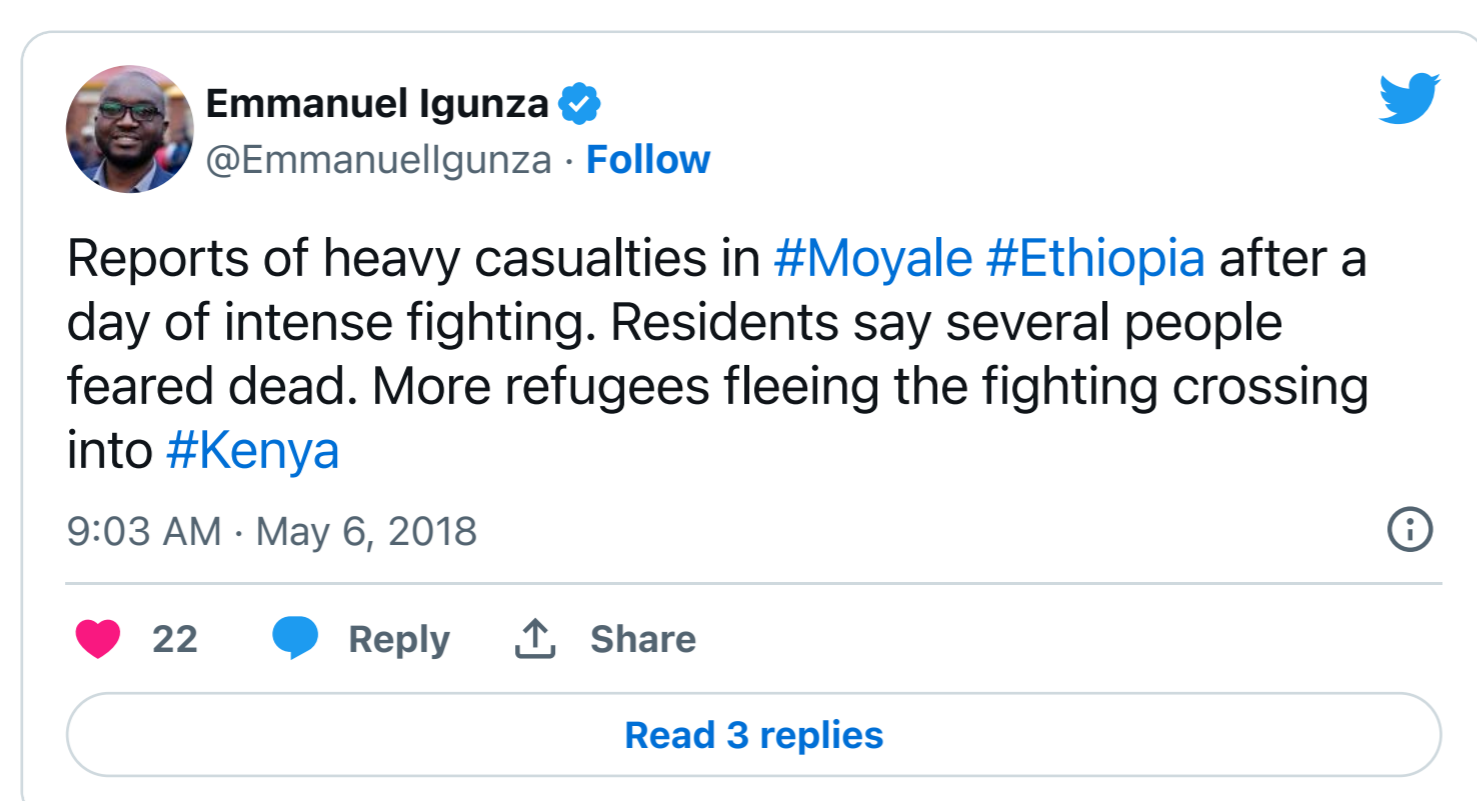
Pictures received by Addis Standard from sources in the town of Moyale after clashes erupted yesterday

Liyat Fekade

Addis Abeba, May 06/2018 – A fresh round of violence involving two ethnic communities, the Garre of Somali origins and the Oromo, in Moyale town, 790 km south of Addis Abeba, in the border between Ethiopia and Kenya, has left unknown number of civilian casualties and a fresh displacement in its wake.

According to locals who spoke to *Addis Standard*, the clashes, which began on Sunday at around 10:40 AM local time, lasted throughout the day. "We know of at least five people who were killed and several hundred who fled the eastern district of the town," said one resident of the town who spoke on conditions of anonymity. However, despite involving the two ethnic communities, the clashes were first "provoked by the involvement of members of the Liyu Police," our source said.

In a message sent via WhatsApp to *Addis Standard*, another resident wrote: "The fire exchange started as early as 10:40 am before noon today. The shooting was started by Somali Leyu force and Garri tribe in intention of opening fire on Oromia Police station which [is located] adjacent to Somali residents on the Eastern side of Moyale town. The Oromia police station covered an area of approximately around 2,000 square meters. And this always [served] to block members of the Liyu Police from passing to the western side of Moyale town where many ethnic communities including the Oromo live. On [many] occasions this side of the town was their target and [was] always blocked by [the] presence of Oromia police station."



Clashes between the two communities is not unusual in the past, but residents of the town believe an uptick in the involvement of members of the Liyu Police have increased both the frequency and the intensity of these clashes in recent months. The same message sent on WhatsApp also blamed lack of action by members of the national defense force stationed in a military camp near the town. "Immediately after the Liyu police opened fire on the police station the Federal police force known as Tsire Shibir (Anti terrorism force) tried to intervene but after losing one of their members in between they decided to move back to their camps. Although it's difficult to clarify accurately some there were casualties from the Somali side."

In a short message [posted in his Facebook page](#), Dr. Negeri Lencho, communication head of the Oromia regional state, said that "the ongoing attack against our people in Moyale town is not acceptable...the responsible body should take the necessary measures to stop the attack in its early stage." However, Dr. Negeri provided no further explanation and our attempts to reach him were to no avail.

Security in Moyale town remained fragile after the killing on March 10 of at [least a dozen civilians by members of the military](#) implementing Ethiopia's current state of emergency. The attack, which the Command Post in charge of the state of emergency blamed on mistaken intelligence, has also left tens of thousands of civilians displaced. Many remained in refugee camps on Kenya's side of the border where they are being cared for by the Kenyan Red Cross and host of international aid organizations.

And on April 17, a grenade explosion at the bus station had killed at least three and wounded more than 50, according to information from the Oromia regional state administrative & security bureau. The town's communication office blamed members of the "Liyu Force", a [controversial paramilitary force](#) operating in Ethio-Somali regional state, while the statement from the Oromia regional state administrative & security bureau blamed "military forces armed by the Ethio-Somali regional state."



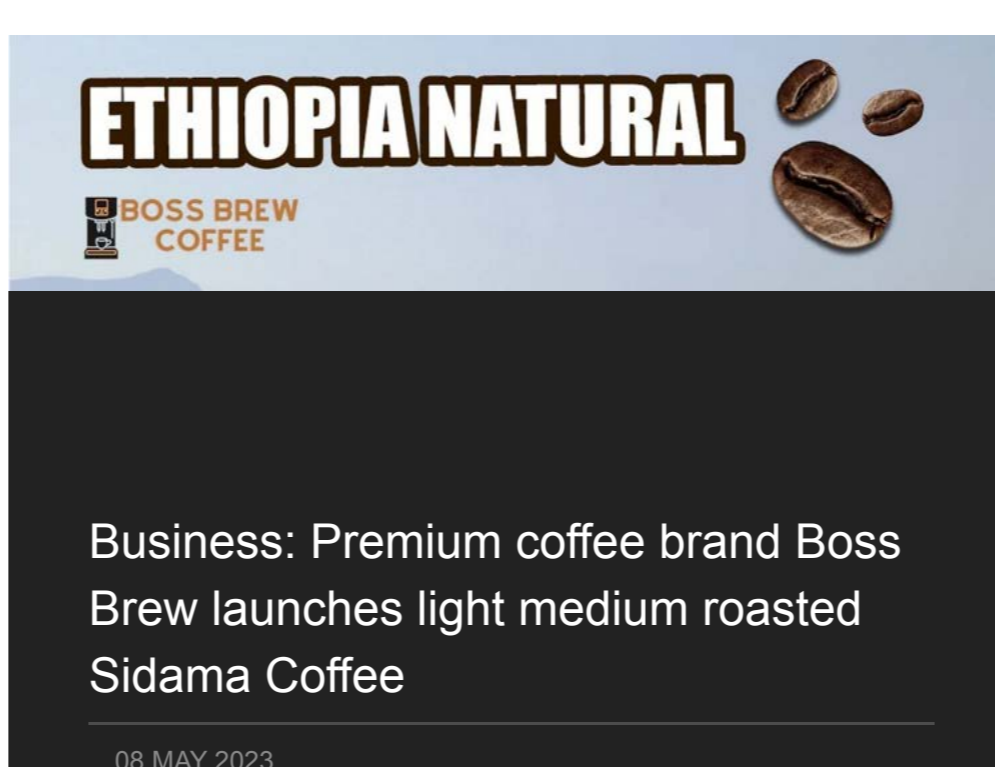
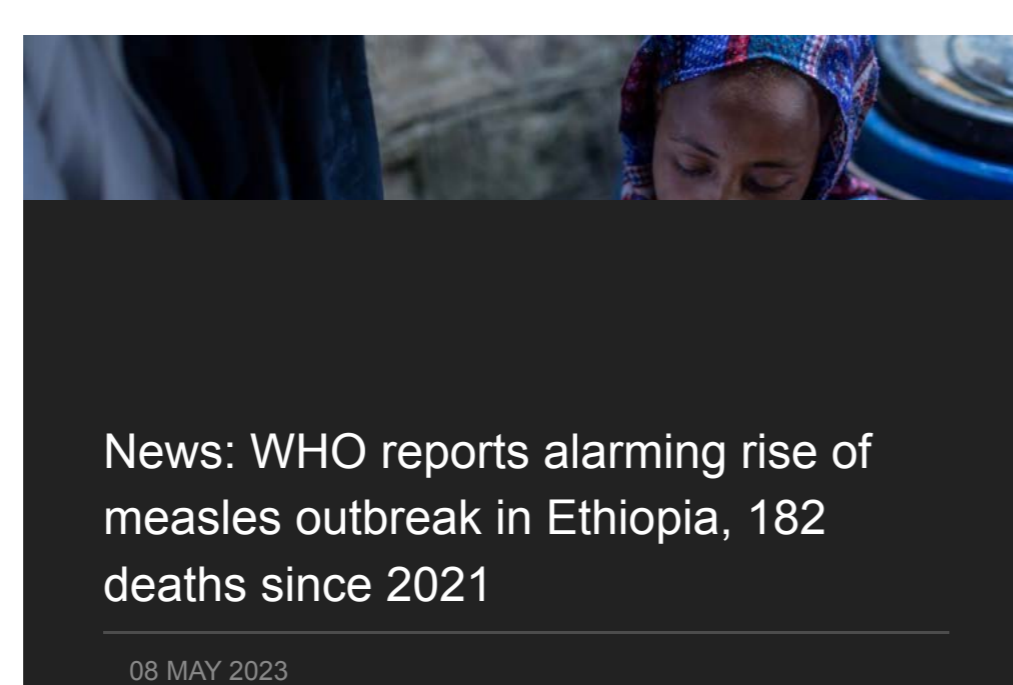
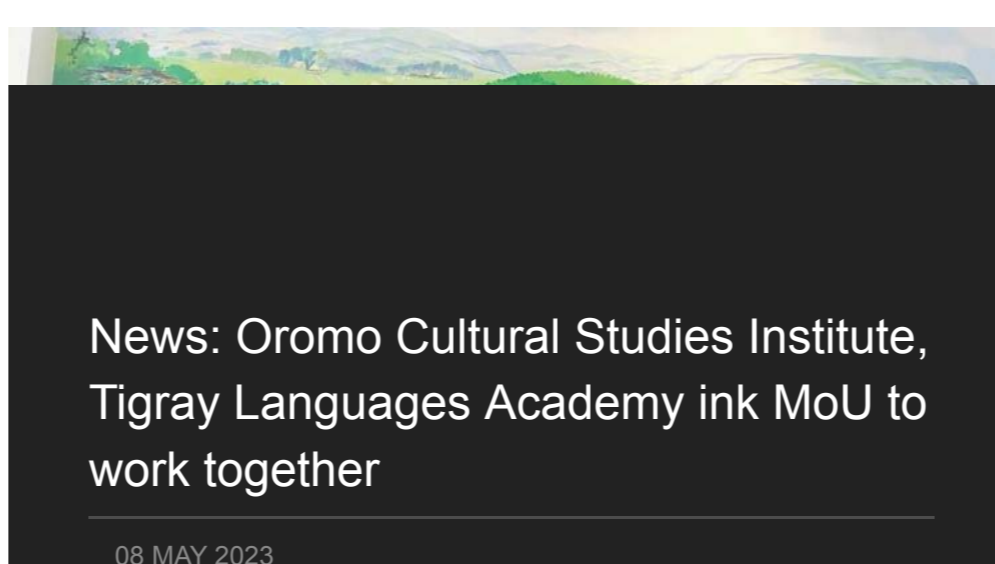
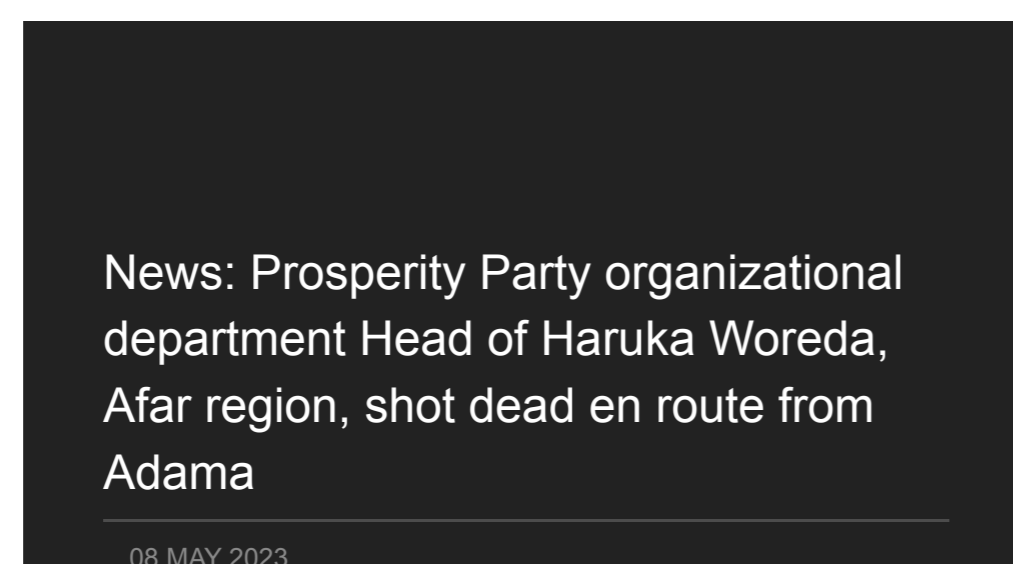
The clashes yesterday happened at the same time when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was meeting with the Muhamud Ali, the Governor of Marsabit County. PM Abiy was accompanied by, among others, Lemm Megerssa, President of the Oromia regional state and Workneh Gebeyehu, Foreign Minister.

The BBC's Emmanuel Igunza quoted The Daily Nation as saying "a Kenyan has been killed and three Ethiopians injured in ethnic clashes in Moyale, residents however say deaths much higher across border." The Daily Nation reported the news quoting the Kenyan police.

Our attempts to reach the town's mayor were not successful. **AS**

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CONTACT DETAIL

Address: Leul Taz Building 3rd Floor Off No. 302 | Opposite CMC Compound | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
Phone: +251 118 951 323 / 116 609 329
Mobile: +251 976 010 631
E-mail: info@addisstandard.com / addisstandard@gmail.com

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