

News: Armed men kill 12 civilians, displace more than 11, 000 in Amaro Wereda, SNNP region

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Amaro Wereda in SNNPRS

Addis Standard Staffs

Addis Abeba, April 08/2021 – Communication affairs bureau of Amaro Wereda, one of the Weredas in Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Regional State (SNNPRS), said sustained attacks since last week by armed groups left at least 12 civilians killed, eight injured and more than 11, 000, mainly the local Koore community, internally displaced.

The Bureau blamed the the recurrent violence, deaths and displacement of the civilians on a joint attack mounted by armed groups who are attempting to change the defunct Segen Area People’s Zone “into Gumayde Special Wereda” and “Guji armed groups illegally operating inside the Nech Sar National Park.”

Amaro Wereda was one of the Weredas along with Konso Special Wereda, Ale, Burji, and Derashe Weredas in SNNPRS which were regrouped to establish the Segen Area People’s Zone in 2011. The decision has led to multiple protests including the Konso protests. The demand by Konso to secede from Segen Area People’s Zone and become a Zone on its own, which began in 2014, was accepted and approved by then SNNPRS Council in 2018. The decision also saw the remaining four Woredas: Amaro, Derashe, Ale and Burji to become separate woredas on their own, leading to the defunct Segen Area People’s Zone and the Segen City Administration, which had 17 Kebeles.

“The restructuring caused disappointments in those who opposed the “dismantling of the Gumayde Woreda” and a “Gumayde Peoples Special Woreda Return Committee” emerged shortly after. The people who consider themselves “Gumayde Peoples” and who live dispersed across the former 17 Kebeles, oppose the separation or organization along ethnic based boundaries and argue that the “Gumayde Peoples Special Woreda Structure” allowed easy access to social and public services, that the people share a common psycho-social makeup and that they would have been capable of choosing one official/administrative language. They feel that rather than dismantling the Segen City Administration it should be given a Special Woreda status,” according to a recent report by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

There has been intermittent violence elsewhere, most notably the recent similar violence in Konso, which are also attributed largely to armed groups who opposed the decision of splitting the Konso zone.

The Amaro Wereda communication bureau further said that civilians living in Bunit, Alfacho and Abulo Kebeles (small districts) of Amaro Wereda were the primary targets

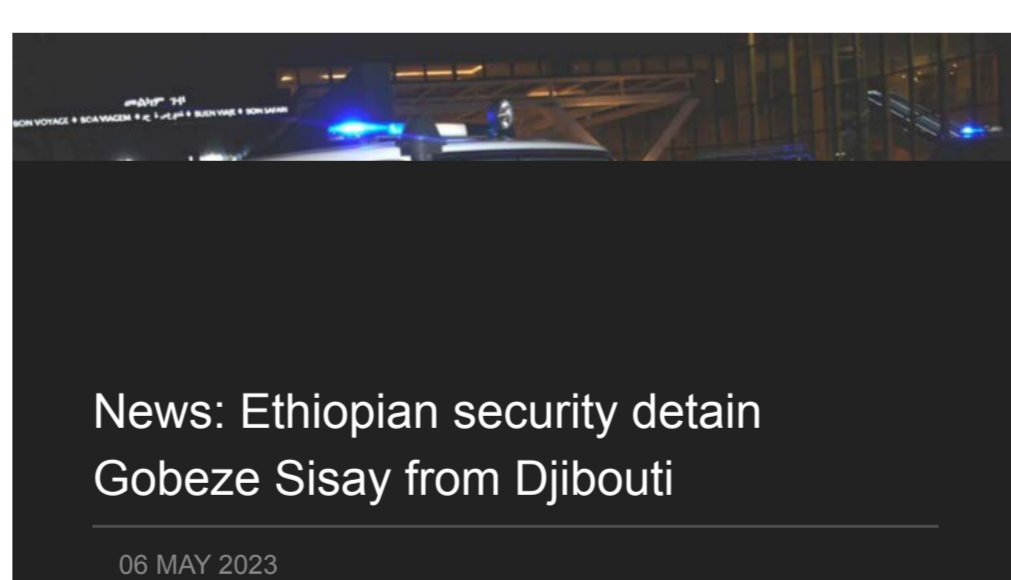
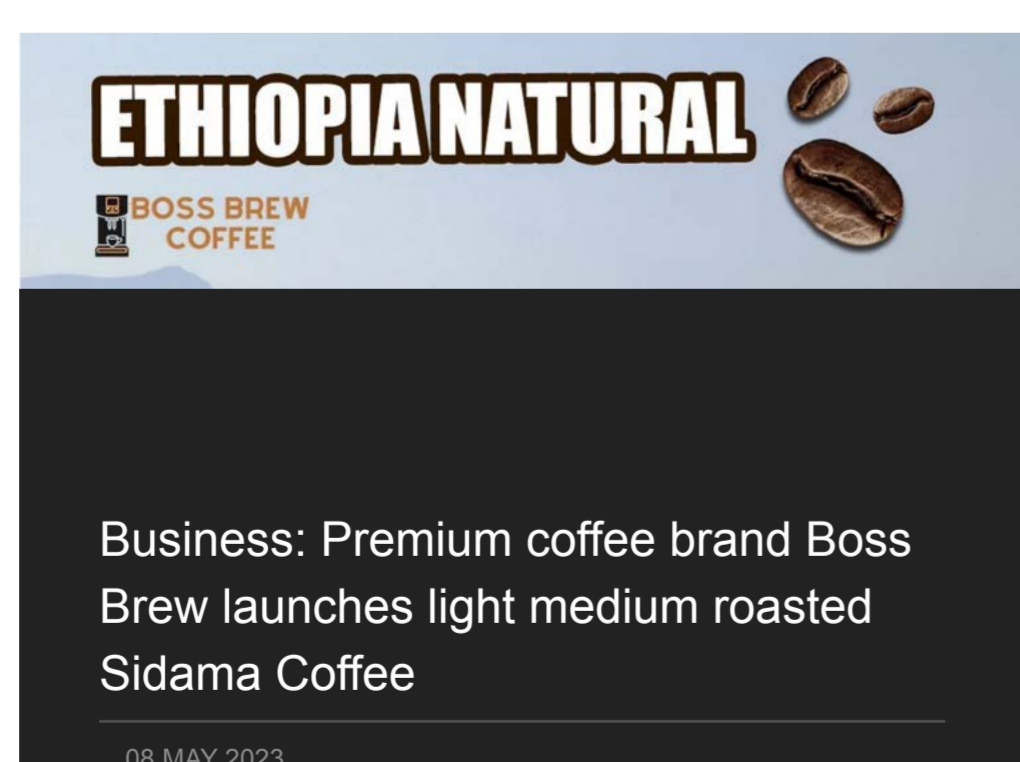
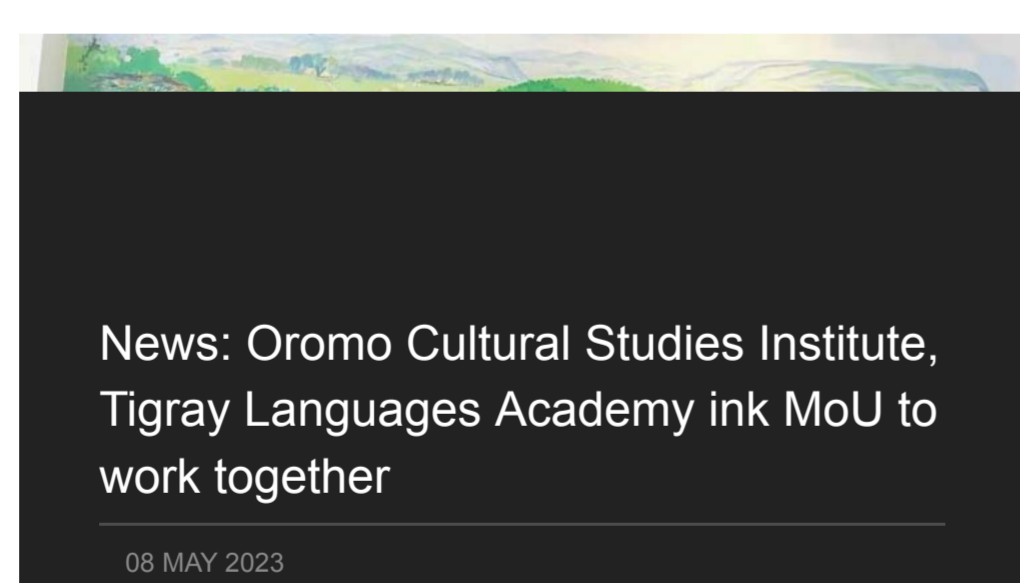
The Amaro Wereda communication bureau further said that civilians living in Bunit, Alfacho and Abulo Kebeles (small districts) of Amaro Wereda were the primary targets of the joint armed groups attacks. Survivors who spoke to DW Amharic said their plight is compounded by the fact that the area is experiencing rainfall and the displaced are in hiding in bushes and forests. Officials of the Wereda said discussions with SNNP and Oromia regions administrations were ongoing, but more needs to be done to dispel the attackers from inflicting more harm on civilians.

According to EHRC, although, for many years, the area has been prone to border squirmishes, the decision to disassemble the Segen City Administration has made the conflicts more complex and drawn out by creating a divide between those who support and those who oppose the move.

“Since the former Segen City Administration is an area that borders the Woredas of Konso, Derashe, Burji and Amaro, any conflict that begins in the area spreads to all other ones and disturbs the peace and security of all the people in the surroundings.” AS

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