

News: Gunmen who storm a local Church kill 29 in Horoguduru, western Oromia

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Picture received by Addis Standard shows victims' bodies of the weekend killing in Horoguduru, east Wellega, in Oromia

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Addis Abeba, March 09/2021 – Twenty nine people were killed in East wollega, Oromia regional state. Residents who spoke to *Addis Standard* said that that attack took place on March 05 in Abo church in Debis Kebele, where residents were celebrating the beginning of the two months fasting season by followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church.

Hussein, a resident of Jarte Wereda of Debis Kebele, who wanted to be named by his first name only, said the attackers were members of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in what started as a storming of the local church, instantly killing the administrator of the church.


Of the victims, 21 were women, including those carrying babies, who were taken to a nearby forest before being killed. Hussein was among the men who went to the forest to recover the bodies on Sunday March 06. He said that the bodies of three of the women were found with their babies staying besides them. One among the women was released according to eyewitnesses, and she is quoted as saying she escaped rape by telling her abductors that she was HIV/AIDS positive.

Witnesses who spoke to **Wazema** radio said that 28 of the victims were taken to a forest called Gerji and were shot dead there. According to family member witnesses, Kebele security forces left the area alongside the woreda administration and members of Oromia special forces to carry out an operation targeting OLA militias. Residents of the Kebele said that the armed rebels must have been tipped off about the security forces leaving the area.

The residents of the Kebele are fleeing to neighboring woredas and kebeles because "the perpetrators are still in the vicinity." When asked if they have reported the killing to local authorities Hussein said "The Oromia special forces left after one of their members was killed by the militiamen, there's nobody here to take accountability for our lives", he said pleading, "tell the government to save us." Attempts to reach the regional government were unsuccessful. **AS**

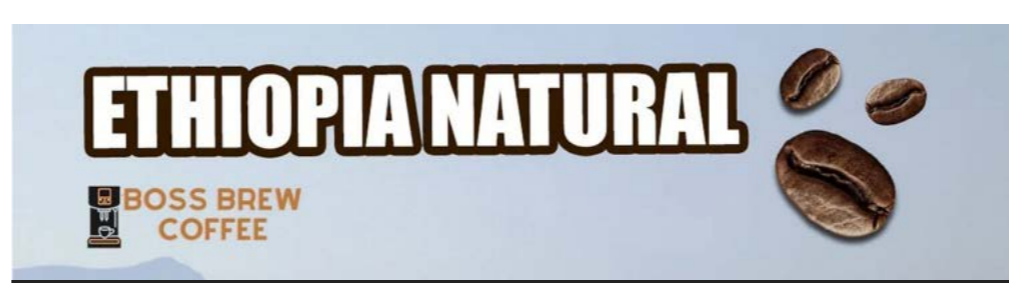
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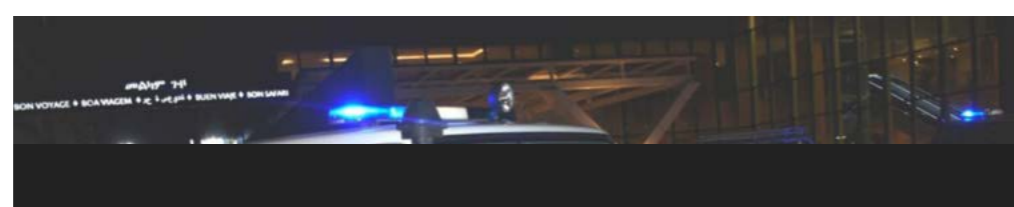
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