

News: Security forces kill scores of civilians, arrest several in Metekel after attack by rebels killed three, wounded seven; Ethiopia accuses Egypt & Sudan for persistent violence

MARCH 8, 2021



SEARCH HERE [Search Icon]



By Siyanne Mekonnen @siyanne

Addis Abeba, March 08/2021 – An eyewitness told Addis Standard that on February 26, 2021 members of the military opened fire on civilians killing 26 people including women and the elderly in Albasa kebele of Dibate Woreda, Metekel zone, Benishangul Gumuz regional state.

Temesgen Gemechu, a resident of Dibate woreda said "We have never seen anything like it. Community leaders, elders and even a blind man was not spared." The area is still unstable and gunshots could be heard until two days ago, according to him, and burials have not been carried out for the deceased. The residents of Albasa kebele have fled their homes and are still in the woods a week after the attack. Temesgen said that he is unable to confirm the full number of the deaths because no one is allowed to go in.

Other witnesses who spoke to VOA Amharic also said that 26 civilians from the Gumuz community were killed in crackdown. Niguse Feyisa, a resident of Albasa kebele said that government security forces arrived in the area on the night February 26 searching for armed men operating in the area. The offensive took place at dawn, according to the witness, but none of the people who were killed were armed. According to Temesgen, armed rebels barely operate in Dibate woreda unlike neighboring woredas such as Wombera, Hiphar, Bulan, Guba and Gligel beles woredas.

He said that the government forces crackdown on civilians is a response to an earlier attack on security forces in the hands of the armed rebels, recalling an incident where three government forces were killed and seven others were wounded at a place called Tulu Dimtu. He also spoke of the Oromo community in Gandaqorqa kebele who have been beaten and arrested for over a week now since the attacks. A couple, Abera Wirtu and Abebech Atiba, and a 13 year old boy named Kefyalew Dibaba are among the arrested who haven't been brought to court for over a week. Families haven't been able to visit them, either, he said. Samuel Genete and Surafel Wakjira were severely beaten resulting in the death of Samuel while he was being taken to a detention center.

In an interview with VOA Amharic, the regional police commissioner Abdulaziz Mohammed denied the involvement of government forces in the killing, although he admitted that measures are being taken on Gumuz People's Democratic Movement militants that operate in the region. Addis Standard's attempt to reach zonal and regional police were unsuccessful, while the administrator of Dibate Woreda declined to comment.

Egypt and Sudan behind deadly violence in Metekel

In a related development, a committee set up by the House of People's Representatives (HoPR) to evaluate and provide solutions to the unrest in the Metekel Zone said that Egypt and Sudan backed the conflict. The chairman of the committee Abdullahi Hamu, made the remarks on the briefing held by the committee on the ongoing conflicts outside the Tigray region and other areas.

Abdullahi said that the committee was able to learn from the community and the command post in Metekel Zone that there had been illegal arms trade and training operations for militia on Ethio-Sudanese border. He also spoke of unspecified groups who have agendas operating in the region in the name of investment. The conflict is not recent, but has been a well thought out affair since the eve of the reform, [2018] according to him, and these groups have been advocating for people to get armed by speaking of an imminent invasion and the dismantlement of the regional state.

He said the militants who fled in most of the woredas have returned and 3,000 militants have surrendered to fight peacefully and have returned to their homes. More than 68,000 Gumuz people who fled the clashes to the woods have returned. The chairman of the committee spoke about the participation of the community in peacekeeping by way of recruitment and training over 10,000 militias.

The command post informed the committee about the measures taken on the officials at all levels who were said to have participated in the conflict. They have been removed from their positions and efforts were being made to bring them to justice.

According to Abdullahi, the committee was able to understand from the meeting it held with the community that the conflict was not among the people but was created by groups with political agendas. He said that people who have been displaced and lost their properties are receiving humanitarian assistance at various shelters they are stationed at.

The number of internally displaced people has reached 125,000 according to the chairman of the committee set up by the HoPR. Despite the organization of a technical committee working with the Federal and Regional Disaster Risk Management Committees, there are still areas that could not access humanitarian aid due to the high number of displaced people

Finally, he called on government and non government organizations to adequately deliver humanitarian aid to the IDPs. He urged the government to focus on rehabilitating IDPs and bring the perpetrators to justice. AS

Recent related articles from our reporters Siyanne Mekonnen & Etenesh Abera

News: Benishangul Gumuz region ruling party admits ethnic targeted killings in Metekel, issues an apology & sacks senior members

News: As killings of civilians continue in Metekel, authorities in Benishagul Gumuz, Amhara regional states step up blames

News: Ruling party members speak of need to repeat Tigray military operation in Benishangul Gumuz as Amhara region gov't, NaMA ramp-up calls for actions

News: Benishagul Gumuz region "begins taking decisive measures" against armed groups after deadline to surrender ends; more than 10 civilians killed in a fresh attack

News: Amhara region police says it's requesting federal gov't to intervene or be given the task to solve security crisis in neighboring Benishangul region

Analysis: Civilians continue to suffer from repeated violence in Metekel. What we know so far

Analysis: Weeks long attacks on civilians leave several dead, injured in Metekel zone, Benishangul Gumuz region

News: Deputy PM recommends arming civilians in Metekel, Benishangul Gumuz region as spate of attacks by armed men leaves dozens killed

WRITTEN BY ADDIS STANDARD

Posts you may also like

#ASDailyScoop: German Chancellor scheduled to visit Ethiopia 27 APR 2023

News: Ethiopia welcomes EU's move to normalize relations, opts to strengthen partnerships 27 APR 2023

News: Regional states presidents, city mayors visit Tigray's war ravaged factories in Wukro 27 APR 2023

#ASDailyScoop: Regional states presidents, city mayors, senior party officials headed to Mekelle 27 APR 2023

ABOUT US

Addis Standard Publications is a tri-lingual independent media in online and print formats, publishing public interest contents in English, Afaan Oromoo and Amharic languages. Based in Ethiopia, Addis Standard Publications is owned by JAKENN Publishing P.L.C., which is registered with the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia under license number 1552/2003 and recognized by the Ethiopian Media Authority's Online Media Certificate in accordance with the Ethiopian Media Law, Media Proclamation No. 1238/2021.



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@addisstandardard.com / addisstandard@gmail.com

NAVIGATION

- Contact Us
Legal & Privacy
Terms & Conditions
Privacy Policy
Cookies