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By Dawit Endeshaw September 14, 2019



The US Embassy in Addis Ababa condemned the gruesome killings, targeting aid workers. Two staff members of Action Against Hunger have tragically lost their lives, *The Reporter* has learnt.

The two Ethiopian aid workers were killed in Gambella region by armed men on September 5, 2019.

"This attack on a clearly marked humanitarian vehicle is reprehensible, and we urge the quick arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators of this crime. Any attack on organizations that provide emergency nutritional care and humanitarian assistance is fundamentally an attack on the most vulnerable and impoverished families in Ethiopia," reads the statement from the Embassy.

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"The United States condemns any violence inflicted on those engaged in humanitarian activities, and we appeal to every level of government to act in their highest capacity to protect all aid workers in the country," said the embassy.

The killings took place just five kilometres from a refugee camp called Nguenyiel in Gambella, where armed individuals allegedly wearing a regional police uniform stopped a vehicle that belongs to the aid workers and attacked them killing two, with the third one managing to escape.

An update from the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations indicated that the situation particularly in Gambella is deteriorating from time to time.

"The situation in Gambella has been very tense over the past year, due to unsolved ethnic tensions between the Anuak population (mostly indigenous) and the Nuer," reads the update. "Clashes between both groups have occurred on a regular basis creating security and access challenges for humanitarian partners."

"Most humanitarian partners have suspended their operations in Gambella and are demanding action from the regional and national authorities," adds the report.

In this regard, Emily Bell Tyree, Associate Director of Communications, Action Against Hunger confirmed to *The Reporter* that the aid group has now suspended its full operations in Gambella.

"Action Against Hunger has suspended full operations in Gambella, but are maintaining the provision of life-saving assistance," reads an email response from Tyree.

Action Against Hunger has worked in Ethiopia since 1985. In 2018 alone, the aid organization has reached more than 832,829 people in the country.

Nevertheless, this is not the first time this type of incident, affecting aid workers, particularly in Gambella, take place.

It can be recalled that back in May, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was forced to briefly suspend its operation in Gambella Regional State due to security concerns.

Incidents in the region which has resulted in civilian fatalities, including refugees and a humanitarian worker were some of the reasons which forced UNHCR to suspend its operation.

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Media and communications Center.
Cameroon Street, Awlo Building 7th floor,
E-mail: mcreporter@yahoo.com
Phone Number: (+251) 116-616-184



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