

## News Alert: Ethiopia Rights Commission confirms Eritrean soldiers massacred civilians in Axum, calls for comprehensive investigation in Tigray

MARCH 24, 2021



Partial view of civilians who were massacred by Eritrean troops in Axum. Credit: EHRC

[Find the preliminary report here](#)

**Addis Abeba, March 24/2021** – The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC/Commission) has released a preliminary report highlighting grave human rights violations and an attack against civilians in Axum city, Tigray region.

After several weeks of attempts, EHRC was able to deploy an investigation mission to Aksum from February 27 to March 5, 2021. The Commission's rapid investigation mission spoke to survivors, 45 families of victims, eyewitnesses and religious leaders in the city. It also led a focus group discussion with 20 residents of the city and spoke with local kebele officials as well as medical personnel of Saint Mary and Axsum Referral Hospitals. The mission has obtained documentary evidence that includes video, audio and photographs from families of victims and relevant authorities.

### Witnesses, residents, and members of victims' families described gruesome killings of victims in the presence of their children, wives, and mothers.

Accordingly, the preliminary investigation confirms that during the period covered by the report, and the two days of November 28 and November 29, 2020 in particular, grave violations of human rights were committed and that in Axum, over one hundred civilians that included residents, persons displaced from other parts of Tigray, and visitors from other parts of Ethiopia who came to mark the annual Axum Tsion celebration, were killed by Eritrean soldiers. Witnesses, residents, and members of victims' families described gruesome killings of victims in the presence of their children, wives, and mothers.

These widespread human rights violations committed by the Eritrean soldiers who were present in Aksum city at the time of the incident, are not ordinary crimes, but constitute grave contraventions of applicable international and human rights laws and principles. The intentional attacks against civilians, looting, destruction and appropriation of property not justified by military necessity – including religious institutions and health facilities – may amount to crimes against humanity or war crimes. EHRC states that this underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive investigation into the overall human rights situation in Tigray.

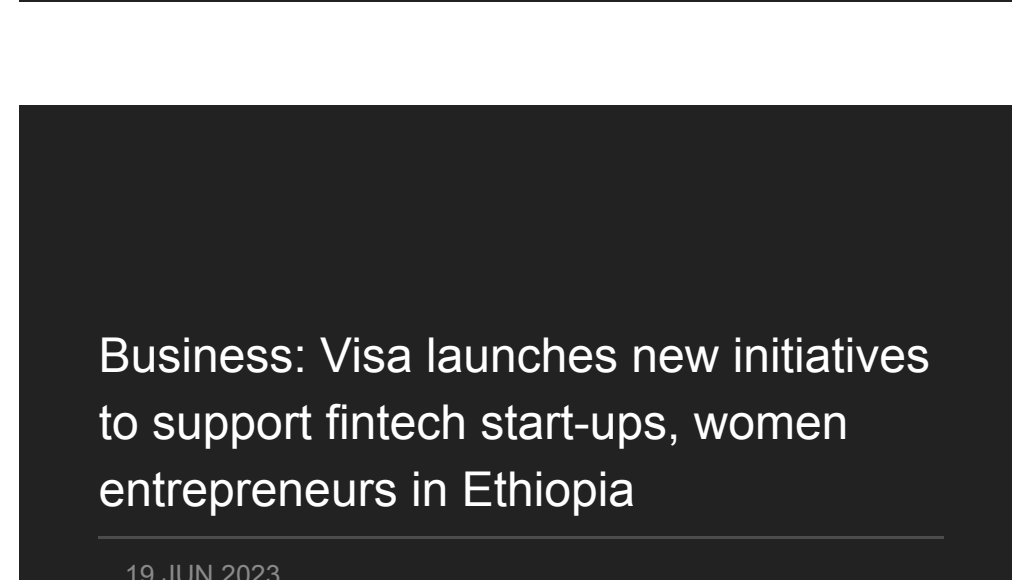
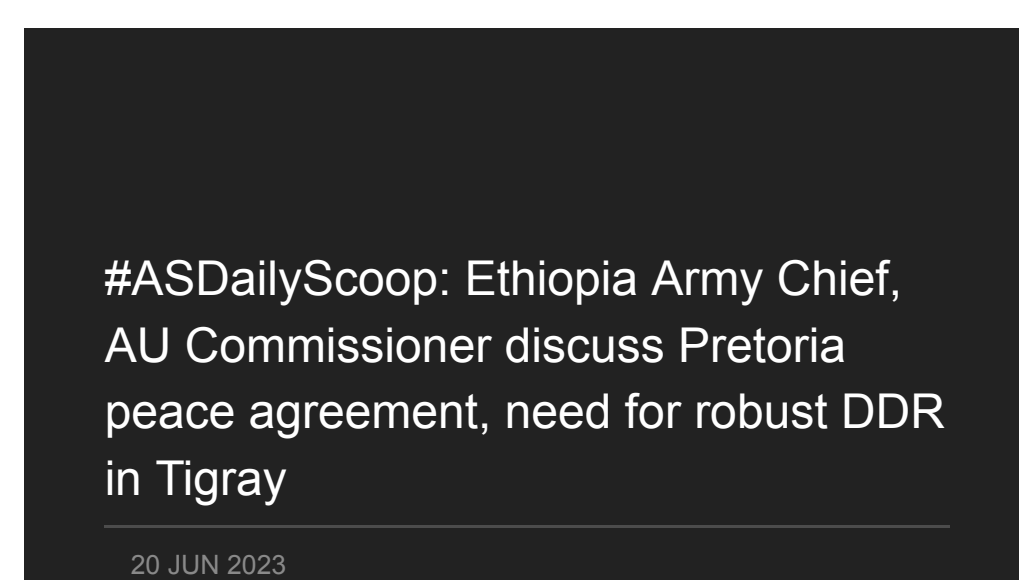
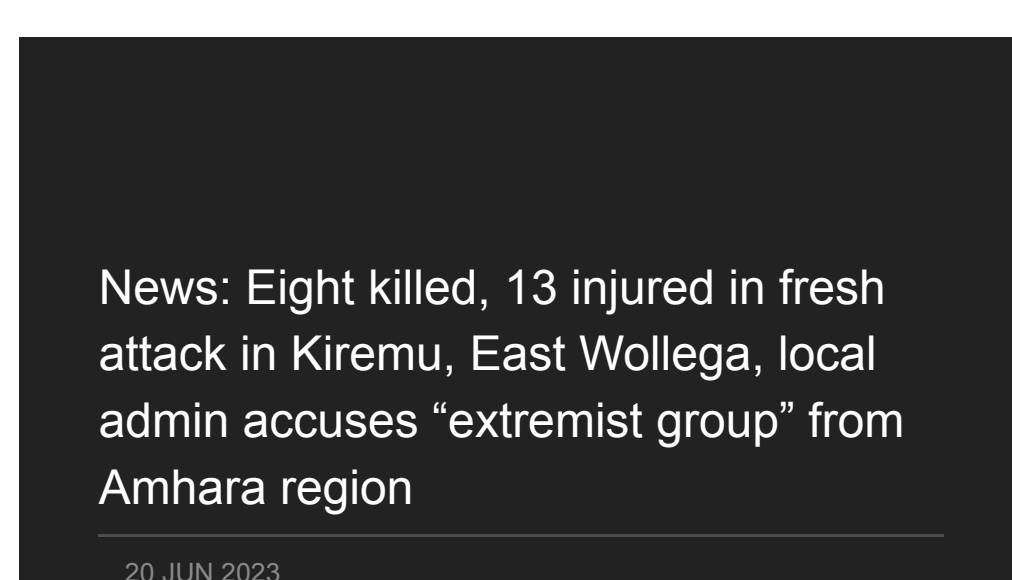
Law enforcement measures and actions taken by security forces enforcing a curfew have also resulted in deaths and severe injuries. The Commission expresses grave concern over such actions and calls for an immediate end to the use of disproportionate measures. Investigations into human rights violations related to the application of curfew regulations including the response from security authorities will form part of the full investigation.

"The federal government's announcement that it would commit to a joint investigation by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission into human rights violations in Tigray is a step in the right direction," said Daniel Bekele, Chief Commissioner of EHRC.

"While members of the military serve their country and people by even paying the ultimate sacrifice, those who commit human rights abuses should be held accountable for their actions. It is therefore imperative to assist the joint investigation to this end."

WRITTEN BY ADDIS STANDARD

#### Posts you may also like



#### 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@addisstandard.com](mailto:info@addisstandard.com) / [addisstandard@gmail.com](mailto:addisstandard@gmail.com)

#### NAVIGATION

[Contact Us](#)  
[Legal & Privacy](#)  
[Terms & Conditions](#)  
[Privacy Policy](#)  
[Cookies](#)

