



Oromo regional police officers wait in a pick-up car/PRESS TV

Ethnicity in Ethiopia has been responsible for a massive number of violent outbreaks for quite some time now. This weekend, the eastern part of the country witnessed another horrible act of viciousness when at least 40 people were killed by paramilitary forces, as held on Monday by a regional officer with considerable seniority.

Negeri Lencho, the spokesperson of the regional administration of Oromiya said that a number of heavily armed members of a paramilitary force from Somali carried out cross-border attacks in Oromiya's East Hararghe district. The deaths over these past few days are reportedly being blamed on the Somali regional state's paramilitary force, which is the Liyu police. "We still do not know why Liyu forces raided the areas on Saturday and Sunday," he said, referring to the soldiers. "At least 40 were killed in the attacks." Oromia region's justice bureau communication head, Taye Dendea confirmed before Lencho's statement that 31 people had been killed, of whom five were women. Children and the elderly were among the victims. Trusted portals, including Addis Standard, among others, said that this attack took place in three different areas in Oromia's East Haharghe Zone. Lencho also added, "The victims were all ethnic Oromos. The perpetrators were members of a paramilitary force."

The main cause of this attack is being labelled as mob loots in Somali: the properties of ethnic minorities were stolen a week earlier in the Somali region's capital Jijiga. Regional officials had a falling out with the authorities on addressing issues of rights abuses. Officials claimed that the Government was forcing them to resign illegally and hence Liyu forces took part in the attack under their orders. Previously, Oromiya has seen anti-government protests over land rights in 2015 and unrest broke out along the borders of Somali and Oromiya in September last year, which led to the dispatching of nearly a million people. This current act of violence is said to be the biggest domestic challenge facing Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who took office this April. Oromiya officials are assuring everyone that they are trying to restore security and come up with a permanent solution to this problem.

Federal forces are possibly planning on teaming up with the Liyu forces to restore peace.

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At least 40 killed in Ethiopia as ethnicity triggers another war

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