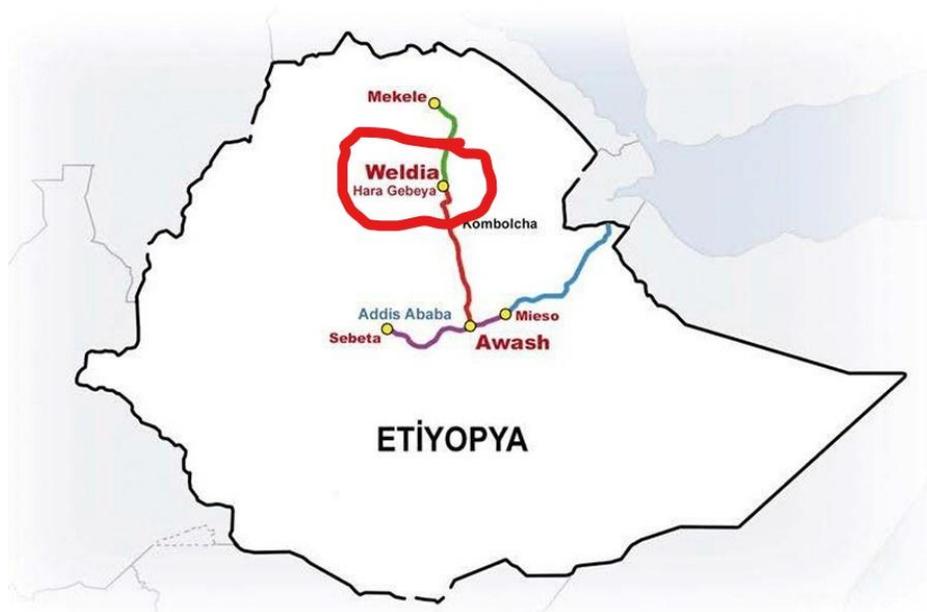




Press Statement

22nd January, 2018

Ethiopia: AHRE condemns killings of civilians in Woldia town during a religious festival



Ethiopian security forces have shot and killed individuals who had convened to celebrate a religious festival on 20th January 2018 in Woldia, a town in Amhara region, northern Ethiopia. This triggered more anti-government demonstrations in the town in the following two days, which led to more casualties. The exact number of the deceased is not yet confirmed, but multiple sources put the number as high as 12; several others also sustained gun shots.

According to reports, federal forces shot at civilians who were chanting anti-government songs at the annual St. Michael's Day, in the aftermath of the national Epiphany holiday. The local police head, Commander Amare Goshu told national TV that "security forces fired at crowds, because they were throwing stones at security forces".

AHRE is a non-governmental, non-partisan, and non-profit organization dedicated to ending the cycle of impunity for human rights violations in Ethiopia, promoting the prevalence of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

yaredh@ahrethio.org, Phone: +32 486 336 367, www.ahrethio.org, <https://www.facebook.com/AHREthio.org/?fref=nf>



AHRE finds it very disconcerting that the federal police killed peaceful protestors barely after two weeks after Prime Minister Haile Mariam Desalegn notified the public that his government would release prisoners as a token of gesture of “creating national consensus and expanding the democratic space”. This largely puts into question the sincerity of the government’s call for national reconciliation.

AHRE once again reiterates that the government should refrain from firing at protestors and allow its citizens to demonstrate peacefully. We urge the government to keep its recent promise of opening the political space by bringing all perpetrators to justice; releasing the thousands of political prisoners; and beginning the process of national reconciliation at all levels.

AHRE is a non-governmental, non-partisan, and non-profit organization dedicated to ending the cycle of impunity for human rights violations in Ethiopia, promoting the prevalence of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

yaredh@ahrethio.org, Phone: +32 486 336 367, www.ahrethio.org, <https://www.facebook.com/AHREthio.org/?fref=nf>