



Press Statement

April 6, 2021

The Orthodox Tewahedo Church Against Genocide in Ethiopia (OTAGE) is a subsidiary organization under the umbrella of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Global Outreach (EOTCGO), which is registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The mission of EOTCGO, under the leadership of Archbishop Theophilus Alemu and other executive members, is to protect and safeguard Christians in Ethiopia and abroad from social, economic, and political pressures that threaten their wellbeing and faith. OTAGE is a humanitarian organization dedicated to bringing to justice those responsible for genocide and crimes against humanity targeting any Ethiopian, irrespective of their faith color, ethnic background or language.

Today OTAGE has entered into an agreement with an international legal firm specializing in international crimes, and has thus begun the process of bringing to international justice the perpetrators of genocide and crimes against humanity in Ethiopia. Specifically, OTAGE has identified for prosecution, under international law, the following partial list of individuals, in relation to the first two cases, i.e., out of a total 13 cases we are studying to submit to the international legal firm. The two cases are the Metekel/Benshangul Gumuz and Shashmene/Arsi Zone:

1. Mr. Shimelis Abdissa, President, Oromia Regional State,
2. Mr. Ashadli Hasen, President, Benishangul-Gumuz, Regional State.
3. Mr. Adem Mohammed, Chief of Staff
4. Mr. Demelash Gebre Mikael, Head of Security
5. Mr. Ararsa Madrassa, Commissioner of Police, Oromia Region
6. Mr. Abebe Geresu Chief of peace and Security, Oromia Region
7. Mr. Gadissa Husein, Head of Police, Shashmene, Oromia Region
8. Mr. Dejene Wossene, Chief of Police, Western Arsi Zone
9. Ambassador Misganaw Admassu, Former Vice President, Benshangul Gumuz Region
10. Mr. Adgo Amsaya, Vice Administrator, Benshangul Gumuz Region
11. Mr. Getahun Ejigu, Adviser to the President of Benishangul Gumuz Region
12. Mr. Gawa Jane, Member of Parliament
13. Mr. Abera Bayita, Chief of Peace and Security, Benishangul Gumuz Region
14. Ms. Alemnesh Yibas, Spokesperson of Benishangul Gumuz Region
15. Mr. Atinkut Shenkut, Chief Administrator, Metekel Zone



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16. Mr. Admasu Morka, Head, Organizational Affairs
17. Mr. Mariye Anbesa, Chief of Metekel Security
18. Mr. Mulualem Albaro, Head of Civil Service

We believe that this day will go down in history as a landmark event, as it shall put on notice the perpetrators of crimes against humanity that there is international accountability for crimes committed with impunity in any country.

Ethiopia is a land of majestic history, colorful diversity and heroic people. It is a country that has hosted both Islam and Christianity since long before these religions were even known beyond the Middle East, a country that defeated colonialists decisively, and has been a melting pot of diverse cultures and languages. It is a country that has come to be known as a Promised Land for blacks across the globe. However, with the introduction of the digital age and the accompanying intense global competition to control the region, the country is under assault from multiple fronts, with the objective of destabilizing and fracturing it. Presently, ethnically-motivated genocidal violence is widespread, and an anachronistic constitution is tearing apart the fabric of the country that has bound the people together for generations.

The current project led by OTAGE is an attempt to make those in leadership positions, who have either allowed, incited or participated in the commission of genocide and crimes against humanity, accountable at the international court of justice. OTAGE is obliged to take this action because of the negligence of the government in power that has been unable or unwilling to prosecute the perpetrators.

Over the last three years, members of the Amhara ethnic group and followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox church have incessantly faced genocide, crimes against humanity and internal displacements. It is hoped that the measures now taken to bring those responsible for such crimes to justice can serve as a means of prevention, and possibly open a door for the participation of all Ethiopians to assemble peacefully and chart a new future to this troubled country.

The disinformation and manufactured history by the internal enemies of Ethiopia, supported by external elements, is so systematic and intense that the unemployed and uneducated youth and other sectors of society in the Oromia and Benishangul-



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Gumuz regions have caused incalculable death and destruction against minority groups in these areas. Mostly hidden from the international community, the brutalities in rural Ethiopia are unprecedented in the history of the country, and eerily reminiscent of the Rwandan genocide.

The incidents of crimes are rarely talked about in the government-controlled media or by international journalists. The so-called international human rights organizations, which seem to look at gross human rights violations through separate prisms and moral values, have generally been silent in the face of the brutal crimes committed in full view of the public, while focusing more on sensational issues, such as the imprisonment of political figures. These entities have inexplicably ignored to report repeated incidents of gruesome slaughtering and decapitation of innocent civilians that include the murder of pregnant mothers and butchering of their unborn babies, as well as the burning of churches and destruction of properties.

These brutal acts in Ethiopia have been documented through videotapes and eyewitness accounts of surviving families, who have told stories of how they their parents, brothers, sisters and mothers were brutally killed and raped right in front of their eyes. The social media is overwhelmed by the ghastly images and horrendous stories. Today Ethiopia has the largest number of displaced people in Africa, primarily because of the unbridled ethnic cleansings that are deceitfully neglected by the government and methodically and cunningly enabled by regional authorities.

There are several questions for which the people of Ethiopian are seeking answers. Why do human rights organizations, activists, and the media become selective in their reporting of the ongoing crimes against humanity being executed in Ethiopia? Why have these incidents not challenged the conscience of the human rights organizations and the journalists who are supposed to inform the world? Have we not learned enough from the Holocaust and more recently from the Rwanda genocide? Is the “Never Again!” slogan going to be a hollow phrase once again?

OTAGE calls upon all credible human rights organizations and members of the media to investigate and learn firsthand about the crimes being committed against



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Amharas and other members of the Orthodox Church in the Oromia and Benishangul-Gumz regions.

The case of OTAGE is solid against the regional and federal officials, who could have prevented these crimes, but instead have either participated, instigated or by commission or omission enabled these crimes to take place. OTAGE has presented thousands of pages of documents, numerous hours of video tapes of testimonies, and thousands of still images to support its case against the perpetrators. These are all recorded, and we want the world to know that the news coming out of Ethiopia is not only about the recent conflict in Tigray region, but also in other regions, where people, especially Amhara's and Orthodox Christians, are being killed for who they are.

OTAGE has uncovered the truth for the world to see once again, this time through its international legal counsel and, eventually, in the International Criminal Court. The international community has the moral responsibility, mandate and the means to stop history from being repeated. It is hoped that the court will find these and other unnamed officials guilty of crimes of genocide, and OTAGE expects the international community to stand by it and vigorously support its efforts.

OTAGE was established in 2020 under the chairmanship of Archbishop Theophilus Alemu. The Ethiopian Orthodox church has always been in the forefront of the struggle for independence, peace and harmony in Ethiopia. OTAGE has as its main objectives the protection and safety of all Ethiopians, irrespective of their religion and ethnic background. Since its inception, it has assembled volunteer experts in diverse fields, including lawyers, data analysts, media experts, technologists, and public relation experts. OTAGE has collected data from within the country to support its case and has written letters, on the humanitarian crises in Ethiopia, to the UN Secretary General, the Prosecutor General of the ICC, to the ICJ, to the European Human Rights Commission, and international journalists and all human rights organizations.