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**For Immediate Release**

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**Mass Killings of Oromo Civilians in Gidda Ayana of Eastern Wollega**

**Washington DC -** Oromo Center for Civil and Political Rights (OCCPR), vehemently denounce the horrific acts of mass killing of Oromo civilian persons in September 2023 in a place known as Dicho in Gidda Ayana district of Eastern Wollega. Reports received by OCCPR indicate that armed gunmen from Amhara’s Fano insurgency group raised a temporary roadblock and pulled random vehicles off and started conducting indiscriminate killing. Citing eyewitness, Ethiopia’s largest online media Addis Standard reported “they instructed everyone in the vehicle to disembark the vehicle, but they specifically targeted men, including young men and adults, to join the march. Then they started shooting,” Multiple injured individuals were transported to the nearby Gida Ayana Hospital where eleven individuals were admitted; and out of these, five succumbed to their injuries, according to Addis Standard.

The atrocities committed in the region have resulted in a profound humanitarian crisis, causing immense suffering and loss of innocent lives to civilians who have no direct part in hostilities.

Hika Lamu, Former Chief Judge in Wollega’s District Court said, “Wollega has recently become the center of mass killing of Oromo and other ethnicities. The government’s glaring failure and lack of interest to resolve conflicts in Ethiopia could be an aggravating factor. Failure to protect the peace and security of its citizens, the basic function of a government, is a blatant violation of the fundamental principle of human rights, peace, and coexistence.”

Awel Abdu, Former Lecturer of Law at Adama and Arsi University Law School, said in his statement, “The killing of such kind is not the first. This has become a pattern. Failing to launch an official investigation and even failing to make an official statement about this horrific act by the national human rights institution in particular the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission indicates the government involvement in the act. This biased, dismissive approach of the human right institutions resulted in miscourage of justice and failed to bring legal remedy for the victims.”

OCCPR calls on the regional and federal government to take necessary steps to maintain peace and security of its citizens. Failure of such basic duty may be an indication of indirect involvement in the breach of civil rights violation. OCCPR also expects the government to hold legally accountable those responsible for these heinous acts.