

ADDA BILISUMMAA OROMOO (ABO-WBO)

OROMO LIBERATION FRONT



جبهة تحرير أوروامو

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Re: The Proliferation of Kidnapping and Ransom

Kidnapping for ransom has recently evolved into a significant socio-political and security challenge affecting civilians across the country. There is a complex interplay of economic incentives, political decay, security paralysis behind the uptake of this criminal conduct.

To shed light on the reality we observe on the ground, a taxonomy of actors and incentives driving them should be understood. On a systemic level, the Prosperity Party (PP) political leadership uses kidnapping and ransom as a political device to vilify its opponents. These are planned by Koree Nageenya at the regional executive level and executed by Shimelised Shane robbers (state-led OLA-counterfeits) across Oromia. The effect of such operations on the civilian population are often secondary to political objectives, not unlike the use of food and famine as a weapon of war by the Ethiopian authorities. Elsewhere, it is non-state actors who are engaged activities such as kidnappings to undermine government authority. In Ethiopia, the role is completely reversed. As there is not much government authority left to be undermined, it is the government itself that engages in kidnapping of citizens to malign its opponents. This reversal of the usual role is also in keeping with PP government's actions in other domains.

The second groups of actors are local ruling-party cadres, spies and security forces who coordinate with them. At this level, mainly economic incentives are at play. Kidnappings operated by lower-level cadres and state intelligence officers for economic reasons are often overlooked by the political leadership as long as it is also used to denigrate political opponents. Given the regional state's uncoordinated and knee jerk reaction, the recent incident of kidnappings around Garba Guracha of North Shewa appears to have been orchestrated by the state intelligence officers and lower-level party cadres. The regional state reacted only after the US Embassy in Addis took up the issue. This is something they would have otherwise disregarded. Impunity has long become a culture.

Third, there are a few jobless and hopeless youth groups whose government had abandoned them. The Authorities in 4-kilo are preoccupied with civil wars and vanity urban projects. For youth groups so organized, a non-existent law enforcement also means that the risks of kidnapping are outweighed by the potential financial rewards.

For such a systemic problem, countermeasures should be equally systemic. A state preoccupied with civil wars and vanity urban projects, and a security force thinly spread across the land the eliminate the political opponents of the ruling party cannot oversee the restoration of the rule of law. Those who claim to administer the country, must demonstrate a commitment to face systemic issues that permeate the country`s seemingly undefeatable political and security challenges, beyond the nominal call for peace which hitherto amounts only to the surrender of resistance movements.



OLF-OLA High Command

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