

ADDA BILISUMMAA OROMOO (ABO-WBO)

OROMO LIBERATION FRONT



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The Fragile Foundations of Abiy Ahmed's Power and the Road Ahead in 2026 (OLF-OLA Press Release)

As we enter the new year, Abiy Ahmed's hold on power remains anchored in three interlinked but increasingly fragile pillars for his day-to-day survival.

The **first pillar** rests on the irresponsible diversion of a grotesquely disproportionate share of national wealth toward military expenditure. An army apparatus that has been fundamentally weakened now survives only because extraordinary levels of public resources and external assistance are being funnelled into it at the expense of the essential needs of the country and its people. Even then, the extravagance has produced little more than inflated army numbers and some technological acquisitions. But numbers alone do not constitute an effective force. They cannot substitute for professionalism, morale, or genuine commitment. Tactical military technology is also no longer monopolized by the regime; it is increasingly accessible to opposition forces as well.

The security sector is also growing more fractured. Significant segments of Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF), federal police, intelligence services, and regional forces are increasingly dissatisfied—whether over the inequitable distribution of resources within the ranks or disillusionment with the political direction in which Abiy Ahmed is steering the country.

Parts of these forces continue to function primarily as instruments of political coercion. Throughout the past year, they have been deployed to suppress dissent, intimidate communities, and project an image of control. However, the loyalist core of the ENDF also continues to erode with: battlefield losses, mass desertions, and collapsing morale. The regime now relies on forced conscription, emergency recruitment drives, counterfeit militias, and irregular formations to fill its ranks. Overextension across multiple fronts has laid bare fatal weaknesses in command, logistics, and strategic coherence. OLA's engagement with these forces over the past year stands as a testament.

Summary of Our Military Engagements with Abiy's Forces in 2025

Geographic and temporal Scope

- Western: Western and Wollega zones: Repeated overruns of military camps, interdiction of supply routes, and ambushes on ENDF units and militia forces;
- Central: Shewa zones (North, West, Southwest, Special Zone/Shaggar): Frequent engagements near key logistical corridors and in proximity to the capital;

- East and South: Arsi, Hararge, Guji, Borana, Wollo, Matakal, Benishangul: Sustained operations reflecting the geographic spread of resistance and the regime's difficulty in stabilizing any single conflict.
- Operation Cichoomba Kaayyoo (Q1 2025): A nationwide offensive marking a shift to a coordinated multi-front offensive.
- Operation Thousand Fronts (April 2025): A 10-day campaign across 50+ districts, validating deep operational reach and simultaneity.
- Sustained Campaign (Q2-Q4 2025): Continuous, high-tempo operations across all Oromia zones and beyond, systematically targeting command structures, supply lines, and recruitment efforts.

Cumulative Impact (Jan-Dec 2025):

- Regime Personnel Losses: Conservatively, at over 7,500 killed in action and 8,000+ wounded across all major engagements.
- Material Gains: Capture of thousands of small arms, hundreds of crew-served weapons (PKM, DShK, sniper rifles), and vast ammunition stocks.
- Other impacts: Hundreds of political prisoners have been liberated from prison raids, repeated interdiction of the critical Ethio-Djibouti supply corridor, and the forced embedding of civilian officials in military camps for their protection.

The military pillar of Abiy's survival remains in name, but it is increasingly stretched, reactive, and dependent on external financial and political support.

The **second pillar** of Abiy Ahmed's rule is the systematic deployment of propaganda, information control, and narrative manipulation. State media, affiliated proxies, and cyber units orchestrate narratives aimed at manufacturing legitimacy, discrediting opposition forces, and masking abuses. Restrictions on independent international media, internet shutdowns, platform restrictions, and the harassment or criminalization of independent journalists remain standard practice. Coordinated online campaigns attempt to portray military setbacks as isolated incidents and to depict resistance movements as illegitimate or externally manipulated.

This tool has also been central to the previous regime's survival. What distinguishes Abiy Ahmed is the unprecedented scale and brazenness of the disinformation. The regime blatantly fabricates figures on captured opposition fighters, deploys its own militia and stages fictitious surrender spectacles out of thin air. It has, for example, recently informed multiple diplomats that it has killed over 40,000 OLA fighters without any hint of irony.

It also routinely falsifies economic data on growth, inflation, and general macroeconomic performance. This is partly enabled by the dismantling of institutional mechanisms for factual reporting, including the removal of a semblance of professionalism from the Central Statistical Agency following the dismissal of non-cadre professionals.

For a time, these tactics helped sustain Abiy Ahmed. Today, however, they are approaching their natural limits. Independent local media increasingly refuse to echo official narratives. Opposition voices are finding new platforms. Social media, diaspora outlets, and citizen reporting continue to expose contradictions in the regime's claims.

Leaks from within the security establishment and local administrations reveal internal fractures. Attempts to repackage repression as “reform”, mismanagement as “capital city face-lift” and impunity as “transitional justice” are now met with open disbelief at home and growing scepticism domestically and abroad.

A third pillar of Abiy Ahmed’s survival is a deliberate attempt to widen existing political, social, and ethnic faultlines to prevent solidarity among the opposition across the political divide. Local conflicts are fueled or instrumentalized. Ethnic and communal identities are selectively mobilized. Suspicion between communities is encouraged.

Abiy uses this primarily to make cross-sectional solidarity difficult. It also allows the regime to present itself as the “guardian of unity” against alleged fragmentation, even as its “policies” deepen the very fractures it claims to manage. Over the year, this approach has attempted to increase the risk of localized violence and revenge cycles, and undermine prospects for cross-cultural political cooperation.

Despite these attempts by the regime, our internal efforts to consolidate the Oromo Liberation Army with major Oromo opposition leaders and key supporters within the regime have continued to bear fruit and will be further strengthened.

Beyond the Oromo political sphere, our commitment to building principled solidarity with all forces that share our democratic aspirations remains unwavering. We will continue, with full determination, to work with all opposition forces toward empowering our peoples to freely and collectively determine their own destiny.

The foundations of Abiy Ahmed’s rule—fear of repression, confusion through falsehood and fragmentation of opposition—are no longer in place. They are brittle, strained, and exposed. The year ahead will be decisive.



OLF-OLA High Command
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