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Abdi Mohamoud Oma
President
Somali Regional State
President's Office
Jigjiga
Ethiopia

31 October 2016

Your Excellency

CALL TO ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES: ENABLE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION INTO EXTRA-JUDICIAL EXECUTIONS IN SOMALI REGIONAL STATE

Recalling our letter of 14 July 2016 to your office and your lack of response to the same, we are now issuing this open letter regarding extra-judicial executions (EJEs) and other violations of international human rights law allegedly committed by the Regional Special (Liyu) Police in different districts of Somali Regional State. Amnesty International is again asking, this time publicly, that you take all necessary measures to initiate independent investigations into these crimes.

Amnesty International finds there are substantial grounds to believe the Liyu Police committed the EJEs of 21 villagers on 5 June 2016. Amnesty International is in possession of the list of names of these 21 people (seven women, five children and nine men).

These EJEs arose from an initial collision between a Gaashamo ambulance and an unidentified vehicle without a number plate. The collision provoked an oral confrontation between the Revenue Authority and the owner of the unidentified vehicle. The latter subsequently disappeared. The Revenue Authority informed the Liyu Police of the collision and confrontation.

According to Amnesty International sources, the Liyu Police then went to the village closest to the collision, Jamaa Dhuubed, to inquire as to the whereabouts of the owner of the unidentified vehicle. When the villagers were unable to identify the owner of the unidentified vehicle, the Liyu Police killed 21 people—14 of the 21 were killed at a village mosque as they prayed. The Liyu Police then burnt the village. When relatives of those killed came from neighbouring villages to mourn and bury the dead, the Liyu Police demanded payment for the graves, alleging that the relatives were 'foreigners.' The Liyu Police also threatened to kill the relatives.

This is not the first time that officers of the Liyu Police have reportedly committed EJEs. According to communications Amnesty International has received, the Liyu Police may also be responsible for the executions of:

- 73 people in Malqaqa village, Galaalshe on 17 May 2010;
- 23 people in Gunagado District in February 2012;
- Ten people on 17 March 2012 in Gashaamo;
- Eight people in Dhabajirisom Birkod District on 27 May 2012;
- 14 people in Qoriile, Danot District on 6 September 2012; and
- 11 people in Harshin District on 11 September 2012.

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The organisation has also received multiple accusations of rape of women by members of the Liyu Police in cities and villages of Somali Regional State. Female survivors have told Amnesty International their experiences of rape while in detention at Jail Ogaden. The survivors allege that members of the Liyu Police who committed these rapes ranged from high-ranking officials to the lowest.

Ethiopia is obliged to respect and protect the rights set out in relevant regional and international human rights treaties to which it is party. Therefore, Amnesty International is requesting that you:

Take all necessary measures to institute an independent, impartial, thorough and prompt investigation into all EJE's and rapes alleged to have taken place and bring all members of the Liyu Police suspected of having committed these crimes, as well as their superiors, to justice through criminal proceedings before ordinary civilian courts that meet standards of fair trial, without recourse to death penalty;

Suspend from duty all those suspected of criminal responsibility for the EJE's and rapes, pending the outcomes of such investigations;

Provide full reparations to victims or their families, including public criminal prosecutions, official publication of the list of names of those extra-judicially executed, including those in Jamaa Dhuubed on 5 June 2016, public apologies and compensation; and

Take measures to ensure the non-repetition of similar crimes and human rights violations by the Liyu Police.

Amnesty International looks forward to receiving your response on the measures the Somali Regional State has taken in respect of the above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Muthoni Wanyeki', written in a cursive style.

L. Muthoni Wanyeki
Regional Director – East Africa, the Horn and the Great Lakes